

October 15 2017

Scriptures

Philippians 4:1-9

Luke 6:43-45

Galatians 5: 22-25

Sermon “Productive Living

Did you know that Washington State is the leading producer of blueberries in the entire United States? The story was on the front page of the Spokesman Review this morning. Washington is number #1. Can you guess which state is number #2? Oregon! I thought the news was amazing. That is another reason for my husband to sell his store and move to Washington because he wants to raise blueberries.

We are going to talk about fruit this morning. We are going to talk about Heart Work and there are several sermons that I am going to bring to you. We are going to think of different ways and easy strategies and attitudes of how we can change our selves inside out to be more faithful to the Lord. We are going to start with scriptures of John 15 verses 16 and 17 and I am going to wander around a little bit. There are several scriptures that fit really well to help us understand what it means to bear spiritual fruit. In John chapter 15 we find Jesus in the upper room; it is the night before he is going to be betrayed, crucified, buried and be raised from the dead. He is trying to give his disciples those things that are very important to him and which he wants them to hang onto when he is no longer physically with them. He talks about that I am the true vine and his father is the grower. He talks about that I am the vine and you (disciples/believers) are the branches. You receive your sustenance and nourishment when you are connected with me. He gives them a lot of examples about vines, plants, grape vines, figs, wheat and in chapter 15 in verses 16 and 17 he said something that I think is most profound and is sometimes we forget—“you did not choose me but I choose you and I appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. This shows us we are here because of God’s call. He didn’t just choose us that we would eventually be in heaven with him or we would have our name on the list in a church or anything. He chooses us so that we are to bear fruit-much fruit. He chooses us so that we would be fertile. He chooses us so that we would be fruitful. In the absence of Jesus’ presence but by promise of the Holy Spirit we are to bear much fruit. We stand in a long line of believers in the Old Testament, every time you hear about the land bearing fruit, the land of milk and honey, or the people bearing fruit that was always a sign that God was with them. But if people were not bearing fruit at all or bearing bad fruit that was a sign of an absence of their dependence on the Lord. If that happened Jesus said he

would take his ax to the trunk of the tree that is not producing and was just taking up space, taking nourishment out of the soil or taking up water. The expectation is that if we allow Jesus to live in us and we in him, then we will bear good fruit. Remember the story of the sower and the seed in Matthew chapter 13; everyone who hears the word and understands it, will indeed will bear fruit. They are the ones who have heard, who have heard the word and with an honest and good heart and will hold it fast, will bear fruit.

Then if we turn to Luke 6:43-45 it talks about our bank account with the Lord. “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.”

I think of the bad witch in Cinderella, evil, I think of other persons who are evil, they just don't generate evil, and they are evil deep within. Then you think of truly good person, we often say he or she has just a good heart. Don't we want be known for that and remember for that. In fact Matthew 7 Jesus said by your fruit you will be known by who you are and what you do.-When Jesus was speaking of false prophets, “You will know them by their fruit. Are figs gathered from thorns or grapes from thistles, so by the same token every good tree bears good fruit but bad trees does not bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire, thus you will know them by their fruit. Speaking of false prophets, you'll know whether their heart or fellowship is with God or whether they are totally about themselves; whether they are about falsehood or anger or whether they are in line with God's purposes. Everybody bears fruit but it is the quality or nature. God anticipates that we will live godly lives pleasing God in every way. Our fruit needs to be keeping with who we are and where we are in our lives. Now I hope you are convinced that you are called to bear good fruit. I know you pretty well and I think there is a lot of good fruit in this room.

So now we have the Why- that is how God hard-wired and made us for being faithful and gracious disciples. How do we produce a harvest-good fruit- abundant fruit? I want to make it sure that you understand the difference between God's expectations of us and that it is not does not a measure of our salvation by our fruit. The world is obsessed to produce, it is anxious, it is driven to perfection. We are not to produce good fruit trying to win God's favor. We have been called, we have been chosen to be his children and to bear good fruit is the natural result of being planted, nourished and freely choosing to live in the light of the Lord. We will hear more of this next week when we talk about Revelations. It is not a test but how our heart is continually being transformed and shaped that our desires match God's desires. We are becoming sanctified, that is an old fashioned word that we heard a

lot about in the Methodist church. Sanctification follows justification we are put in line with God when he calls us and claims us. Sanctification is an ongoing process until the day we die as continue until we are more and more like Jesus. It is a circular process of our thoughts, of our conduct which affects our store house. When you are kind, loving and sharing, I believe, you become more kind and loving and sharing. Then that store house inside becomes more like that. That storehouse is continuing nourished by the word of God and working and learning what God wants us to be. It all comes out in our behavior. It is an ongoing process. We can't bear fruit unless we are nourished and it all begins with God's word that shapes our lives. It begins with our increasing our relationship day by day with Jesus. This is much more than injection of the word on Sunday morning. It is much more than a little prayer in the morning saying-"God help me it is going to be a hard day on Monday". Jamesj says. "Come near to God and God will come near to you." Jeremiah said, "If you seek me, I will be found, if you seek me with your whole heart, I will be found" There is nothing half way about this commitment to bearing fruit we must be continuing nourishing our treasure house. Galatians 5:22-25 is the common scripture that is used to teach about the spirit and maybe you know them by heart

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

When we live that way, it is much like the way that fruit appears in the orchard. We developed a willingness to listen, a sense of commission and conviction of a basic hope. We find ourselves involved in a royal commitment able to marshal and direct our energy. Legalism is helpless and only gets in the way of anything connected with getting our way and responding to what everyone says are necessities and is killed off for good, is crucified

And this is the key phrase. Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the spirit, let us make use sure that we hold it as not just an idea in our head but it is worked out in every part of our lives. We will not compare ourselves with each other that we one of us was better; we will have far more interesting things to deal with in our lives. Each of us is an original. It is not just idea or a sentiment but work it out in every detail of our lives. There are a couple of translations that if our lives are centered in the spirit, then let us be guided by the spirit, be led by the spirit, let us be centered in the spirit and be in step with the spirit. I am going to leave you with that thought if you are going to increase your heart condition full of love ability to live and be someone who wants to bear fruit for the Lord. Keeping in step with the spirit is everything. Know where the spirit is going, not getting ahead, not lagging behind and certainly not pushing the spirit out of the way. I think of it as being in a marching band I liked being in the marching band, we used to wear these heavy wool uniforms with these heavy top hats and the only thing

that showed was your face. This was when we went to the Apple Blossom Parade. We would get to the end of the parade and strip off the outfits and put on our shorts and tank tops because it was in creditable hot. And if you are in a marching band you have to make corners-either round or square corners and you have to watch front, back, side, and watch the drum major, got to listen, and at the same time play your instrument. In Wenatchee we were on cobble stones. I liked it but it was like step of the spirit-in the band you mind had to be tuned and your mind can't be on Mars or you find yourself on an another street or there would be a big pile up. You can't go ahead, you can't go behind, and you have to be in step. If you are going to win awards you all have to be on the left/right foot at the same time. You got to aware of wherever you are thinking of where the Spirit is leading and praying with your eyes open. I am visiting with the neighbor or I am with a business person today; I am going to be working in the pharmacy,-open my eyes to the needs. And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. As we focus on changes, it is a desperate world today full of negative conversation, and is not always about us, we need to have courage to say, may I pray for you? Or I think God could help you in your situation. Let us be God led. We don't want to put our heads in the sand but put things in perspective about how we can bear fruit in every situation. Peterson said, since we have chosen a spirit-led life; let us make sure to work it out in every detail of our life.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord we thank you that called and that you choose us. We thank you entrust us to bear fruit let us be fruitful. Amen.