

FRUIT DOESN'T LIE

The nature of the tree is seen in its fruit. Good trees bear good fruit while bad trees invariably bear bad fruit.

Matthew 7:17–18 (NKJV)

17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

In other words, true Christians bear Christian fruit while non-Christians may play the game for a while, but eventually it comes out in their BAD fruit that they are not real Christians. Their real nature comes out.

The fruit of true Christians is seen in the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:9; Gal. 5:22-23). It is seen in the reality of Christ in the life, certainly to some degree.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

If Christ is not seen in the life, it is evidence that the person is not a true Christian. If a person shows no interest in Christ, never talks about Christ, has no desire for worship or learning about Christ, they are just fooling themselves. Christ in a person changes their whole orientation to where Christ is their life.

The Pharisees knew a lot about God's Word. They were skilled in the finer points, but their lives were not really about God. Instead of God-likeness, self-centered legalism defined them. Instead of caring about people, they were judgmental, self-righteous, hypocritical, and harsh. They did not know God, and it showed!

Note how certain Christ is in stating this: "***A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.***" The fruit in the life will absolutely be consistent with the kind of person they really are. Those who are truly regenerate – truly born again will bring forth good fruit. Now indeed, as Christ taught elsewhere, there are differing degrees of fruit bearing– some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some a hundredfold (cf. Mt. 13:8). But the point is they all bring forth good fruit to some degree.

In contrast, those who are unregenerate do not bring forth any real good fruit – it is all just an act that really plays to a self-serving agenda.

“Everything in nature produces after its kind, and this is also true in the spiritual realm.” – **Warren Wiersbe**

If a person’s profession of faith has not changed their life in a Christ-oriented way, then in truth they are not a Christian. The fruit tells! No one is saved BY good works, but every true believer is saved FOR good works.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John the Baptist seeking the ritual of water baptism, John told them to go and “bear fruit worthy of repentance” (Mt. 3:8). Their manner of living exposed their false profession of claiming to know and love God.

The apostle Paul said that in obedience to his gospel mission mandate given to him by the Lord, he preached everywhere that people “***should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.***” (Acts 26:20). You see, if people are truly repentant, the expectation is that it will show in good fruits in their lives. That is in keeping with true repentance.

Faith is the root – good works are the fruit! And where the root is good, so will be the fruit!

Matthew 7:19 (NKJV)

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Bearing no good fruit is a picture of the unregenerate life. Where there is no good fruit, the tree is cut down and thrown into the fire. In context, it would seem this refers ultimately to hellfire. In Matthew 3:10, John the Baptist used this same language in warning the Pharisees and Sadducees concerning the need for true repentance.

Jesus, in the next few verses, goes on to speak of mere professors to whom He will say, “I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Mt. 7:21-23).

“The only thing bad trees are good for is firewood, a striking metaphor of the future judgment for false prophets.” – *ESV Study Bible*

Matthew 7:20 (NKJV)

20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Satan is a master deceiver. It’s what he does best. And he is constantly trying to infiltrate the followers of Christ with false prophets and false teachers who can inflict damage as they seek to carry out their SELF agenda!

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 (NKJV)

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Satan and his agents are very deceptive. They make themselves look like ministers of righteousness who really stand for what is right. They can appear so convincing, which is what makes them so effective.

But if you look carefully – if you are a discerning “fruit inspector” you will know them by their fruits. Their fiery end will be “according to their works”. Like Judas, they might fool everyone for a time, but they will never fool God. Only fools try to fool God!

Jude 4 (NKJV)

4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 12–13 (NKJV)

12 These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried

about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

13 raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

But Christ's point here in Matthew 7 is that if we are faithful to "beware" and apply diligent and careful discernment, we will normally be able to discern those who are ravenous wolves by their fruits.

2 Timothy 3:13 says of the last days, "evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

If ever there was a time we need to BEWARE of false prophets, it is now!

There is what we call orthodoxy (right doctrine), and there is orthopraxy (right practice). A life of good fruits involves both. Jesus said, "By their fruits you will know them." Sooner or later, by their fruits everyone is known. Eventually, the truth will be known.

God help us to be wise fruit-inspectors – not hypocritical judges, but discerning fruit-inspectors who are concerned for the spiritual welfare of all involved.

Final JUDGMENT is God's prerogative alone, but we are called to be discerning FRUIT INSPECTORS.

God help us to that end!