

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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KNOWN BY THE FRUIT

Perhaps you have heard the expression of a wolf in sheep’s clothing. This usually means a person that appears to fit in and be harmless but who is actually someone very different and dangerous. As sheep are typically gentle and harmless, a wolf is greedy for food and will attack and harm the other sheep. Jesus actually taught about this in Matthew 7:15-20:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bring-

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eth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Jesus says to beware of false prophets because they are the wolves in sheep's clothing. False prophets claim to be bringing a message from God but in reality their message is not from God. They know that they have not heard from God but they desire to deceive others. Over the years, there have been prophets who have claimed that God or an angel spoke to them and gave them a revelation. Beware if you encounter such a one. It is also possible that you will encounter religious leaders who intentionally misinterpret or misapply the biblical scriptures and deceive others to follow them. I do not think this applies to all individuals who have an incorrect understanding of the scriptures. Jesus called the false prophets ravenous wolves. That means that these individuals desire to deceive, cause harm and gain from their work. Jesus said, "*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*"

Jesus gave us an important principle.

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

When you look at people who claim to be Christians, how can you tell if they are genuine or not? You can tell by the fruit that they bear. Genuine followers of Jesus will bear good fruit. There are three kinds of fruit that I would like to address in this context.

The first kind of fruit is good works. There are many scriptures that teach us to have good works. Here are a few:

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,

being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Col. 1:10)

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; (1 Tim. 6:17-18)

Examples of good works are given by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-36 as giving food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, and visiting the sick and those in prison. James teaches us to help orphans and widows in their trouble (Jas. 1:27). Praying for those in need is a good work. Telling others about Jesus is a good work. There are many opportunities to do good works. The genuine follower of Jesus will be rich in good works. The false Christian will not be busy in good works. Instead, he is selfish and spends much of his time for his pleasure.

The second kind of fruit is the words that come out of the mouth. Jesus taught in Matthew 12:33-35,

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

The words that are spoken show what kind of heart that someone has. If the words are critical, harsh, condemning, containing falsehoods, and expressing unrighteousness, that shows that the heart is not good. If the words are truthful, kind, loving, caring, praising, and blessing, then the heart is good.

The third kind of fruit is the fruit of the Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-25)

When one has the Holy Spirit of God living within him and leading him in his life, he demonstrates this fact by the fruit of the Spirit that he shows. He is loving, joyful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and he demonstrates self-control in his actions and peace with God and his fellow man. You know the genuineness of a Christian by the fruit of the Spirit that he displays. A false Christian is missing this fruit.

What kind of fruit do you bear? Are you rich in good works? What kind of words come out of your mouth? Do you demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in your life? You can tell what kind of person someone else is by his fruit, but what does your fruit tell others about yourself? Sometimes the fruit I bear demonstrates that I need to make some changes.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (Mat. 7:3-5)

People are known by their fruit. Before you are too critical of the fruit of others, evaluate the fruit in your life and make whatever corrections are necessary.

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LIGHT

Most children, and some adults, are afraid of being in the dark. Kids often want a nightlight or a light on in the hallway that allows them the ability to see a little as they are trying to go to sleep. The difference between light and darkness is so important that God created light on the first day.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Gen. 1:3-5)

God also created the sun, moon, and stars to help distinguish day from night and to provide different types of light.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. (Gen. 1:14-18)

Light is very important. Symbolically we are told that we are the light. Shining our light for Jesus through the darkness of sin. This is something that we can easily relate to because of the typical fear of the dark. We are told to be a light for Jesus daily.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine be-

fore men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Mat. 5:14-16)

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. (Luke 11:33-36)

We are not to hide our light; we are to shine brightly. It is also important to note that light travels very quickly. Often you hear of the speed of light. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. If you think of the symbolism of us being a light for Jesus, that means that what we do can travel quickly when done in the right way. Light is a form of energy just like we are to be energy for God. Always working for His glory and always striving to serve Him. If we do that, we are going to shine a light.

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (1 The. 5:5)

Light has many different qualities. Light can reflect. When we see light, it is typically reflecting off objects into our eyes. It also can refract, bending and shaping through different objects. Light can diffract, splitting up into multiple beams (especially if you look directly at a light). Light can also cause an interference pattern where the crests of waves will reinforce and get bigger, but in other places the crest of one wave will meet the trough of another wave and the two will appear to cancel out. I mention all these things to say that light is not a singular thing. It has many abilities and many features that create it as a complex part of our lives. While acknowledging

its many abilities, we should see how we as lights for Jesus should take all these qualities of light as we shine for Him through the darkness.

Shining through darkness is our primary purpose. We all know John 3:16, God loved us so much that he sent His Son to die for our sins. What about the words that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus shortly after that verse?

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (John 3:19-21)

Men loved darkness and those that do evil hate the light. Sometimes the darkness does not even recognize the light.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:4-5)

Can you recognize the light in yourself or in others? Are you striving to be that light in a city set on a hill? Lighthouses are very important. They keep ships from hitting land masses and shine through the darkness. We are to be a lighthouse for all of those around us. Shining the light of Jesus in all that we do to keep others from hitting things in the darkness. God has delivered us from darkness so that we are able to help others.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Col. 1:12-13)

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (1 The. 5:5)

We need to let our light shine before men to see our works for God and to see what it truly means to serve Him in all that we do.

A. D.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. On what were the Ten Commandments written?
2. What relationship was Ruth to Naomi?
3. What did Jesus do to each of the disciples during the Last Supper?
4. At Christ's crucifixion what did the soldiers place on his head?
5. Who wrote the letter to Philemon?

...ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

And remember last month's questions?

1. Who spotted Moses in the Nile placed in an ark of bulrushes? PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER (Exo. 2:5)
 2. Who was the successor to Moses? JOSHUA (Jos. 1:1-6)
 3. Who preached, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"? JOHN THE BAPTIST (Mat. 3:1-2)
 4. To whom did Jesus say "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"? NICODEMUS (John 3:3-4)
 5. Who does Paul say is head of the woman? MAN (1 Cor. 11:3)
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THANK YOU

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