



HARVESTER

"Therefore said he unto them, 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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FRUIT

Any product of plant growth; product or result - so is fruit defined by the dictionary. A plant in nature has as its main function reproduction of more plants of its own likeness. On the third day of creation, God commanded the earth to bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit whose seed is in itself. Christians need this nature of producing more Christians both now and planting seed for the future generations.

On a number of occasions, Jesus focused the thoughts of his followers on the necessity of bearing fruit. In the parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:8) He stated that seed sown in good ground brought forth fruit--some an hundredfold,

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some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. Jesus spake a parable in Luke 13:6-9 regarding a fig tree planted in a vineyard whose fate was to be cut down if it did not bear after having ample opportunity and care. Another time (Matt. 21:19-20), Jesus saw a fig tree and when He came near found nothing on it but leaves only; and He cursed it so that it withered away.

There is no doubt that Jesus had in mind spiritual things and that He wants His servants to teach others. His words in Matt. 9:37 were, "*...the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.*" He declared in John 15:8, "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.*" One measure of discipleship is fruit-bearing. The 2nd verse of the same chapter contains this serious and sobering thought, "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.*" What type of branch can we honestly say that we are? If you were the gardener, would you retain all of the branches like yourself? Keep in mind, too, that the Lord also said that every branch which did bear fruit would be purged that it may bring forth MORE fruit. Our yield then must be ever-increasing.

The admonition in Mark 16:15-16 was to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Many of us fall far short of this. What might the reasons be for lack of fruit in this area? Perhaps an absence of enough effort. Amos 6:1 declares, "*Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.*" Haggai, chapter 1, condemned the people of his day because they had time for their own affairs but not to build the Lord's house. Likewise, Malachi warned the people they had dishonored God by making Him last on their list of priorities.

Maybe we need to be more converted. Jesus said

to Peter, "...when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Do we really believe what the Bible says about heaven and hell? Shouldn't we warn others?

Is it that we know few people will respond to the gospel and we do not like rejection? In Acts 17 we read of Paul at Athens, a city wholly given to idolatry. But he preached a stirring sermon to skeptics and philosophers, and apparently also some honest souls. Some mocked, some thought they ought to hear more another time, and some believed. We must keep in mind that there is a wide gate and a broad way which leads to destruction and many go in thereat. We can be assured that we do not work alone--Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Further, he said, "*For we are laborers together with God...*" In II Cor. 9:6 he expounded a principle that salesmen today still utilize, "*He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*" While the specific subject under consideration was relief for the poor saints, it certainly applies to all Christian endeavors--especially spreading the word. The power of God's word is explained in Isaiah 55: 11, "*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*"

Do you remember who first introduced you to the gospel of Christ? What if that individual had not spoken or not invited you to hear? Can we do less to others? The Bible tells us that Andrew brought Peter, Philip brought Nathanael, Cornelius had his friends and near kinsmen at his home to hear what God wanted him to know and do. Timothy was taught in his home by his mother and grandmother. You are probably someone else's fruit--who will be your fruit?

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While extremely important, it is realized that souls won for Christ is not the only measure of fruitfulness. Acts 9 shows that the woman Dorcas was full of good works and almsdeeds. The Thessalonians were "*ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.*" Of the Romans, it was said, "*...your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*" Peter said that if we add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity we shall not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If fruit is lacking in our lives, if we are in danger of being removed from Christ (who said He is the vine), surely we should begin to remedy our situation by taking Peter's advice.

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FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

ABOUT THE EARTH CREATED BY GOD

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.(Gen. 1:1)

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and

thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. (Neh. 9:6)

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. (Psa. 102:25)

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else. (Isa. 45:18)

I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. (Jer. 27:5)

He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. (Jer. 51:15)

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: (2 Pet. 3:5)

Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the foundations of waters. (Rev. 14:7)

AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS

(A Series to Promote Church Attendance)

"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil." (Eccl. 5:1)

This illustrates another reason why many brethren are slack in their attendance. When we go to the house of God, we are not "more ready to hear". We do not seem eager to listen to the

"words of life". Seriously, sometimes we skip services because we do not like the preacher. Or we do not like his style of delivery or the tone of his voice or his subject matter. When we go to church, it should not be because of the presence of a certain individual, but because we want to praise and worship the Lord. Yet, some members go so far as to not even show up for Sunday night services unless their favorite preacher is speaking.

This is even true among those of us who speak behind the pulpit from time to time. Some speakers seem to be so engrossed in themselves that they never find time to listen to anyone else. They are always "too busy" to attend a meeting held by another but never "too busy" to hold the meeting themselves. *"They consider not that they do evil"*.

For such men, we can only say this: *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"* (Jas. 1:19). All talk and no hearing is not good for mankind. There is a reason why God gave us ONE mouth and TWO ears!! That person will learn more about God's commands when he stops to listen and then obeys. *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* (Jas. 1:22) So, when will we ever come to church with the attitude of *"more ready to hear"*? Who knows? We might learn something new if we pay attention and not do *"as the manner of some is"*.

RAY

SUN HILL ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

Extends a Welcome to All

Wednesday 7:30pm

Sunday 10:30am & 6:00pm

"HOW READEST THOU?"

It's one thing to read the Bible through,
Another thing to read to learn and do.
Some read it with design to learn to read,
But to the subject pay but little heed.
Some read it as their duty once a week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek;
While others read it with but little care,
With no regard to how they read, nor where.
Some read it as a history, to know
How people lived three thousand years ago.
Some read to bring themselves into repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;
While others read because their neighbors do,
To see how long 'twill take to read it through.
Some read it for the wonders that are there, --
How David killed a lion and a bear;
While others read it with uncommon care,
Hoping to find some contradictions there!
Some read as though it did not speak to them,
But to the people at Jerusalem.
One reads it as a book of mysteries,
And won't believe the very thing he sees.
One reads with father's specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father said.
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed, --
Hence understand but little that they read;
For every passage in the book they bend,
To make it suit that all-important end!
Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the book instead of being taught,
And some there are who read it out of spite--
I fear there are but few who read it right.
So many people in these latter days,
Have read the Bible in so many ways
That few can tell which system is the best,
For every party contradicts the rest!
But read it prayerfully, and you will see,
Although men contradict, God's words agree.
For what the early Bible prophets wrote,
We find that Christ and his apostles quote:
So trust no creed that tremble to recall
What has been penned by one and verified by all.

Author Unknown

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
May 9-11 (F-Su)	Sun Hill Road Birmingham, AL 7:30pm (6:00pm Sun.)	Sammy Dick Cave City, KY
May 24-25	Rincon, GA	Kelsey Avants Marlow, OK
June 1-7 (Su-Sa)	Taylor's Crossroads Roanoke, AL 7:00 each evening	Wilbur Bass Auburn, AL
June 2-8 (M-Su)	Rich Hill Church Casey Co., KY 7:00 pm (EST)	Sammy Dick Cave City, KY
June 8-13 (Su-F)	Freefield Church State Line, MS [fellowship & singing on June 7]	James McDonald Woodbury, TN
June 8-14 (Su-Sa)	Pleasant Grove Church Alexander City, AL (10:30am Sun.) 7:00pm	V.W. Boland Gadsden, AL
June 8-15	LaPrada Church Mesquite, TX	Local Brethren
June 9-15 (M-Su)	Mt. Zion Church Crab Orchard, KY 7:30 pm (EST)	Sammy Dick Cave City, KY
June 15-20	Claud Church (between Claud & Tallassee, AL)	V.W. Boland Gadsden, AL
June 15-20	Ephesus, GA 7:30 pm (EST)	Bill Prince Jr. Oxford, AL
June 15-20	Thomaston, GA	Doug Farmer Rainsville, AL
June 15-21	Cold Springs Church Bogue Chitto, MS	Terry Newell Earlsboro, OK
June 15-22	Yukon Church Oklahoma City, OK	Harry Cobb Conley, GA
June 22-27	Mt. Carmel Church Woodland, AL	Wilbur Bass Auburn, AL