

The Distinction Between Your Gifts and Producing Kingdom Fruit

There is a moral rift in the foundation of our nation. But the Bible is very clear that judgment begins with the house of God.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:17, "For the time [has arrived] for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will [be] the end of those who do not respect or believe or obey the good news (the Gospel) of God?"

God's judgments are good. Judgment is different from wrath. Wrath is God's destruction against sin. Judgment is God's righteous discipline bringing redemption and restoration. God's wrath destroys. His judgments redeem.

As we look upon our nation today, we can quickly see our moral foundations decaying. But this is just a sign that there is a much deeper problem. Not only is there a crack in the foundation of our nation, there is a crack in the moral foundation of the church.

If we are to see God's hand of blessing and favor remain upon America, the church within America must repent of all compromise and sin. We must allow God to cause His fruit to grow in our lives. This fruitfulness in the church will not only have a profound impact upon us, but upon our nation as well.

Jesus Is Looking for Fruit

Jesus is looking for fruit in the lives of His people. It's not enough to look good from a distance. He's looking for fruit up close.

Mark 11:12-14 says, "On the next day when they had returned from Bethany, He was hungry. Seeing from afar a fig tree with leaves, He went to see if perhaps He might find anything on it. When He came to it, He found nothing except leaves, for it was not the season for figs. Jesus said to it, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And His disciples heard it."

From a distance things can look great. The fig tree looked great from a distance. It was filled with leaves. But when Jesus got up close, He discovered there was no fruit on it.

I want to draw a broad parallel here between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. From a distance the operation of the gifts of God in our lives can look great. The gifts are without repentance. You can start off right. You can begin operating in gifts of the Spirit because of your relationship with God. But it's not enough just to start right. We have to finish right. It's possible to begin with a strong relationship with God, but then begin to ride on the gift God has given you and stray from Him in your heart.

It's possible to have strong gifts that can be seen from a distance. But you can only see what fruit there is on the tree when you get up close.

In Season and Out

Our true fruit is revealed through the relationships closest to us. Only when you really get to know a person can you see what fruit they really have. Jesus not only wants us to be leafy trees operating in gifts. He wants to find fruit. His destiny for us is that we would be fruitful trees.

Jesus took this so seriously that even when the fig tree was out of season for bearing figs, Jesus still held the tree responsible for not having fruit. The truth is, no matter what season it is, no matter what our circumstances are, no matter if it's a good day or a rough day, Jesus wants us to be bearing fruit. It will not always be easy to bear good fruit.

It requires a death to the desires of the flesh and to the self-life. But God wants us to be ready in season and out of season.

In 2 Timothy 4:2-5, Paul writes: "Preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but they will gather to themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, having itching ears, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn to myths. But be self-controlled in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and prove your ministry."

God Is Determined to Have a Church That Bears Fruit

Joel prophesied in Joel 2:22-24, "Do not be afraid, beasts of the field, because the wild pastures flourish, because the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their abundance. And children of Zion, exult and rejoice in the Lord your God, because He has given to you the early rain for vindication. He showers down rains for you, the early rain and the latter rain, as before. Then the threshing floors will be filled with grain, and the vats will overflow with new wine and oil."

As God continues to work in His people, He will cause wilderness places to become green pastures. He will cause dry, dead places to come alive. He will cause the tree to bear fruit and the vine to have full strength. God is releasing a strength in His people to bear the fruit He desires us to have. He's making His people strong in Spirit.

Full Maturity and Harvest on the Threshing Floor

As God releases a heavy latter rain upon His people, He is going to cause every sown seed to spring forth to full maturity and harvest. Every seed of God's Word that has been sown on the inside of us will spring forth to maturity. In

other words, God is causing His people to grow up. He is bringing His corporate body into a place of maturity.

One of the signs that you are growing into a place of maturity is that things that offended you before will no longer irritate you. You will be less offendable. You will have less reactions from your flesh and will be led more by the Spirit. Another sign of spiritual maturity is that you are learning to resist temptation and walk and live in a way that pleases God. Spiritual maturity will be reflected in your thoughts, attitudes and behavior, especially with those closest to you.

It's time we really evaluate ourselves in the light of God's presence and truth. It's time to deeply repent of the besetting sins of our flesh, turn away from ungodly attitudes and offenses and fully surrender to God's dealing in our lives.

The threshing floors will be full of grain. This speaks of a mature harvest. It will not only be a harvest of souls, but it will also be a harvest of God's Word in you, causing you to be a mature son or daughter of God. Every area of our lives that has been placed on the threshing floor will produce a harvest of maturity and fruitfulness.

The Impact of Living Out of the Overflow

The vats will overflow with new wine and oil. Out of a place of maturity and harvest, God is bringing His people into a place known as "overflow." We are going to live out of the overflow of God's presence and anointing in our lives. It's not just a new season. It's a new dimension. God's people will carry so much of His presence and power that there will be an overflow of His presence from our lives, changing the atmosphere around us. This overflow of fresh anointing will not only transform us but will have a profound impact on the world around us.

God is not a God of just enough. He is always a God of more

than enough. He doesn't want to give you just enough anointing for yourself. He wants to give you so much of Himself that His presence and power overflows out of you to reach the world around you.

Prayer of Agreement

Father, I humble myself before You today. I build an altar in my life. I give myself to You. I repent of every area of sin and compromise. Forgive me for offending You. Cleanse me and make me righteous in Your eyes. Holy Spirit, help me to live in a way that pleases You. Cause Your fruit to grow in my life. Bring me to a place of maturity in every area. Release a fresh anointing and empower me to live in the overflow of Your Spirit. Fill me to overflowing with your power. I repent of all hypocrisy and besetting sin. Heal my spirit, soul and body. Restore Your abiding presence in my life. Father, heal our nation. Turn America back to You. In Jesus' name, amen.
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