

## Producing Fruits of Righteousness

(Go To Meeting)

Albert Jones, April 28, 2023

Tonight I want to talk about something that is dear to my heart, and from perspective that I can say I deal with on a daily basis. This art of producing through agriculture and this message has a hint of it. Those of you who are farmers will probably relate to it, probably in a way that's different from those who don't an agrarian background.

But I think the Scriptures are clear for us to learn a very valuable lesson. So much of what we have as God's people is derived from the earth and through some method of production that comes from agriculture, forestry or some use of a natural resource that God has given us.

So, in thinking about our journey to the Kingdom of God, and our walk with Christ, just like in farming, that farmer relies completely and totally upon the blessings that come from God. Everything else is on loan. We don't own the land in truth, it belongs to God. He tells us to treat it well and rest it at its appropriate time.

So, truly we have nothing that we didn't receive! Like farmers we start with nothing, and everything we receive is from God. Any increase that we have in our lives is coming from God. We're thankful to God for His blessings in our lives in that way.

With that being said, let's think about the things that God wants us to produce. We're going to focus on one specific area with this message. We can talk about many other fruits of God's Spirit, but today we're going to kind of sum it up in *righteousness!*

- we are called to righteousness
- we are called to be cultivators of fields, vineyards, olive groves, gardens
- we are like the workers hired by the master

Matthew 20:1: "The Kingdom of Heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in *the* morning to hire workmen for his vineyard. And after agreeing with the workmen on a silver coin *for* the day's *wage*, he sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' And they went. Again, after going out about *the* sixth hour and *the* ninth hour, he did likewise. And about the eleventh hour, he went out *and* found others

standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all the day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive.'" (vs 1-7).

Verse 8: "And when evening came, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the workmen and pay them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.' And when those who *were hired* about the eleventh hour came, they each received a silver coin. But when the first ones came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a silver coin. And after receiving *it*, they complained against the master of the house, saying, 'These *who came* last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have carried the burden and the heat of the day'" (vs 8-12).

Verse 13: "But he answered *and* said to them, 'But he answered *and* said to them, 'Friend, I am not doing you wrong. Did you not agree with me on a silver coin *for the day*? Take *what* is yours and go, for I also desire to give to the last *ones* exactly as I gave to you. And is it not lawful for me to do what I will with that which *is* my own? Is your eye evil because I am good?'" (vs 13-15).

Verse 16: "So, **the last shall be first, and the first shall be last; for many are called, but few are chosen.**"

- we have been called by God *to produce*
- we have been called by God *for a special purpose*

*He has enlisted us of this charge of growing in knowledge, grace and producing fruit!* The Father calls and it is His will that is being done in this relationship we have with God. God the Father empowers us to do the good work and produce the fruit He seeks.

Let's take a look at these ideas of workers that God is working with ourselves as workers within God's service.

Colossians 4:8: "I [Paul] sent him to you for this very reason, that he might know your circumstances and might encourage your hearts; together with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all the things *that have taken place* here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you

received instructions (if he comes to you, receive him); and Jesus *who is* called Justus; who are *all of the* circumcision. They *are my* only fellow workers for the Kingdom of God who have been a consolation to me” (vs 8-11).

Verse 12: Epaphras, a servant of Christ who *is* from among you, salutes you. He is always striving for you in *his* prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear witness to him that he has much zeal for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and *for* those in Hierapolis” (vs 12-13).

Verse 14: “Luke, the beloved physician, salutes you, and Demas *does also*. Salute the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church in his house” (vs 14-15).

So, we’re seeing that God is calling individuals into His fellowship and various churches were being raised up. These are the folks who were principle there with Paul.

Verse 16: “After you have read the epistle, see that it also is read in the Church of *the* Laodiceans, and that you also read the one from Laodicea.”

Paul goes on to express this close knitness that they had as a body. Let’s put some additional meat on this:

Once again, Romans 16:3: “Salute Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, (who have laid down their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles)” (vs 3-4).

Saluting the brethren and recognizing those who are fellow workers in this work that God has called us to. Not all the workers are ministers. Each and every one of us have a work to do in our individual lives, and we have a work to do in sharing the gifts that God has given us with the Body. This is going to be very closely tied *as we’re going to see as we go through this idea of **growing in righteousness!*** All of these are righteous works of God!

Romans 16:3: “Salute Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, (who have laid down their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles)” (vs 3-4).

Again, recognizing that this work that God has called us to is a joint work of God. Each and every one of us have a part in it. A major part of what God has called us to is this idea that:

- we are responsible for one another

- we are to encourage one another
- we’re to love one another
- we’re to help and support in every way possible as brothers and sisters within the house and Family of God

Philippians 4:2: “I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in *the* Lord. And I ask you, *my* true yokefellow... [those who pulling together in this work, working in tandem with one another]: ...**to assist these women, who labored with me in the Gospel,** and with Clement, and the rest of my fellow workers, **whose names are in the Book of Life**” (vs 2-3).

So, we see a work that God is doing, not just through the ministry, but throughout the Body of Christ. We all have a responsibility in this calling. Not only just to stay in the righteousness of God, not to just stay in the commandments. Yes, that is a very important aspect of our calling, to be that example of righteousness. But also to recognize that we are to preach the Gospel, but also to support the Family of God. All of us have a part there!

You’ve heard me say in the past ‘from the pinky toe to the top of the head’ that are all very important in this work. We thank God again for allowing us to be a part of it, and giving us His Spirit so that we can understand and truly rejoice in it.

Yes, the Father calls and it is His will that is being done. He empowers us to do the good works that produce the fruits that He is seeking.

Christ is seeking fruit, and let’s understand this point. Christ is seeking fruit, righteous fruit. He’s seeking fruit worthy of the calling that we have, good, abundant fruit. He wants us to have that increase!

The Bible talks about 20-fold, 30-fold, 10-fold all being significant from where the individual starts. So, it isn’t how big of a fold, it is about whatever you are able to produce with God’s Spirit working within you and the effort you put into it. Depending on one’s effort, this is what you can have. Let’s look at that:

Matthew 17:13: “Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them about John the Baptist. And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him, and saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is insane and suffers miserably; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples, but they were not able to heal him’” (vs 13-16).

Verse 17: “Then Jesus answered *and* said, ‘O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall

I be with you? How long shall I bear with you *in your unbelief*? Bring him here to Me.’ And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it departed from him; and the boy was healed from that hour” (vs 17-18).

Verse 19: “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately *and* said, ‘Why were we not able to cast it out?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Remove from here,’ and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you” (vs 19-20).

Understanding this walk that is with God to produce the kind of outcome that God was desiring to have is through faith, an active faith that determines what it is.

Matthew 12:31: “Because of this, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men except the blasphemy against the *Holy Spirit*; *that* shall not be forgiven to men. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming *age*” (vs 31-32).

So, we’re starting to recognize that what God has given us through His Holy Spirit is a very precious and a very essential part of God’s work in our lives. It is from God, from His very own self that He shares with us a very small minute part of Himself. Not only the Spirit of the Father, but also the Spirit that comes from Christ.

We’re seeing that God is very much encouraging us to produce fruit. That we have something that is tangible for the investment that God has placed within us. That is all that He has done is for us to be able to grow and to become more like Him, more like Christ. Putting on those **fruits of righteousness** that are so essential to who we are.

The inner-action that God has with His Church is pointing to us in that growth process. It is not unlike all the effort that goes into preparing for planting a crop, a vineyard, an orchard, or whatever it may be. It does require work, and God is indeed looking for it to produce fruit.

Matthew 21:18: “Now, early in the morning, *as He was* coming back into the city, He hungered...”

Yes, God in the flesh got hungry, and that was not uncommon. One of the things that I admire about relationship between Christ and His disciples that He was able to break bread with them. Anytime that He did—whether it was fish and honeycomb or just broiled fish—He would always enjoy that time.

Verse 19: “And seeing a fig tree by the

road... [He’s hungry and looking for something] ...He came *up* to it... [a vibrant growing tree, but no fruit] ...but found nothing on it except leaves only. And He said to it, ‘Let there never again be fruit from you forever.’ And immediately the fig tree dried up.”

What good was it! It’s purpose was to produce fruit. It wasn’t producing fruit and there’s a lesson here.

Verse 20: “And after seeing *it*, the disciples were amazed, saying, ‘How quickly the fig tree has dried up!’ Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, if you have faith...’” (vs 20-21).

Recognizing that walk with God, belief that He is and have faith in this work that we’re doing. A farmer has to prepare for seeding time, in hope and in faith, because the essential aspects of the resources that are going to be needed can’t be provided by them. **They come from God!**

I think there’s a very important lesson being learned in the western states at this time, who are in the grips of severe drought. Unless that blessing of water and rain comes from God, you won’t get it. So, trusting and looking to God in everything is the lesson that we learn from this experience.

Christ says if they had that faith they could do great things, as well.

Psalms 11:1—*Psalm of David*: “In the LORD I have taken refuge; how *then* can you say to me, ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain’? For lo, the wicked bend their bow; they make ready their arrow on the string, so that they may secretly shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? The LORD is in His Holy Temple... [at the right hand of the Father] ...the LORD’S Throne is in heaven. His eyes behold; His searching gaze tests the children of men. The LORD tries the righteous... [our walk with God is in righteousness, but also one of faith] ...but His soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone; and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup, for the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; **the upright will behold His face**” (vs 6-7).

We see that this is God’s desire for us, to produce fruits of righteousness. He gives us the resources that we need to be able to do that.

To produce anything in this life from an agrarian point of view, farmers will tell you this very fact: *they need water!* To even attempt growing crops without water it futile; without water food production is dead. It is good if you have a good supply of it. It is God that provides this critical,

needed resource. Let's see what God has to say about this:

John 4:4: "Now, it was necessary for Him to pass through Samaria. And He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. And Jacob's fountain was there; Jesus, therefore, being wearied... [recognizing that He was God in the flesh with every weakness that we have] ...from the journey, sat there by the fountain. *It was about the sixth hour*" (vs 4-6).

Verse 7: "A woman came out of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me *some water* to drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city, so that they might buy provisions. Therefore, the Samaritan woman said to Him, 'How *is it that* You, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, to give *You water* to drink? For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.'" (vs 7-9).

Verse 10: "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you had known the gift of God... [having this incredible relationship that we have with God] ...and Who it is that said to you, "Give Me *some water* to drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'"

Verse 11: "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing with *which* to draw *water*, and the well is deep; how then do You have the living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it, and his sons, and his cattle?'"

I pause here just to say: *if she only knew! If she truly only knew!*

Verse 13: "Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; **but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; rather, the water that I will give him shall become a fountain of water within him, springing up into everlasting life**'" (vs 13-14)

That verse carries a lot of weight, and stretches into eternity! The water that makes the difference, that is essential for all things to grow, physically, is compared to the water the Christ Himself provides us through the Spirit. That springs up into eternal life! *Again, we have a responsibility and need to be:*

- yielding to it
- desiring it
- seeking after it
- praying for it
- asking God for it

*So, the woman is beginning to catch on:*

Verse 15: "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I will not thirst or *need* to come here to draw *water*.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband and come *back* here.' The woman answered and said, 'I do not have a husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have spoken well in saying, "I do not have a husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband. This you have spoken truly'" (vs 15-18).

Christ has made clear that having the water that He provides—the living water—is an essential part of who we are.

Verse 35: "Do not say that there are yet four months, and *then* the harvest comes. I say to you, look around. Lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are already white to harvest."

Jesus is pointing to the fact that His work is being done. The resource that He was referring to, to the woman at the well, is being given. We ourselves are partakers of that gift. God has sent His Spirit to us as promised. We entered into baptism and the hope of receiving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

Verse 36: "And the one who reaps receives a reward, and gathers fruit unto eternal life; so that the one who is sowing and the one who is reaping may both rejoice together. For in this the saying is true, that one sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that in which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor" (vs 36-38).

Verse 39: Now many of the Samaritans from that city believed on Him because of the word of the woman, who testified, 'He told me everything that I have done.' Therefore, when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to remain with them; and He remained there two days. And many more believed because of His word; and they said to the woman, '**We no longer believe because of your word, for we have heard Him ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Christ, the Savior of the world**'" (vs 39-42).

Very much a lot of benefit occurred from stopping at a well for a drink of water. This is a beautiful example of how Christ was allowing His presence to have impact even in the community.

God tells us in Deut. 11, as it relates to His Law and commandments, and understanding this relationship that we have with Him.

Deuteronomy 11:8: "Therefore, you shall keep all the commandments which I command you this day, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land where you go to possess it, and so

that you may prolong *your* days in the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their seed, ‘a land that flows with milk and honey.’ For the land into which you go to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt from which you came out **where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, like a garden of vegetables.** But the land which you are entering to possess, it *is* a land of hills and valleys that drink water from the rain of heaven. It is a land which the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God *are* always upon it from the beginning of the year *even* to the end of the year” (vs 8-12).

Verse 13: “And it will be, **if** you will hearken diligently to My commandments, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, **then** I will give the rain of your land in its due season...” (vs 13-14).

This relationship is an agrarian example, but a spiritual parallel can be easily seen here. By obeying God, walking and doing that work that He has called us to do, the necessary resources to have that righteousness produced is possible. It comes from God, and is a relationship!

“...the first rain and the latter rain...” (v 14).

That’s very important; you need water at essential periods and the seasons there in the ‘promised land’ are attuned to that in God’s relationship with His people. God goes on and lets them know:

“...that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.... [stills, vineyards, groves, all of that production described there is what God is blessing] ...And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock so that you may eat and be full” (vs 14-15).

Again, there’s a spiritual parallel that one can draw in terms of partaking of the blessings that God pours out from heaven upon us, to have us to be fed with the dew from heaven that comes from Him.

Physically and spiritually, this relationship in righteousness produces this kind of thing.

Ezekiel 34:25: “And I will make a covenant of peace with them, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land. And they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them, and the places around My hill, a blessing; and I will bring down the shower in its season. There shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. And they shall be safe in their land, and **they shall know that I am the LORD,** when I have broken the bands of their yoke,

and have delivered them out of the hands of those who enslaved them” (vs 25-27).

We can project ahead to our time from this prophecy that God is pouring out from heaven blessings! Those blessings are enabling us to produce the kind of righteous fruit that God desires from His people, from His Church, from His Family!

When Nathan the prophet came to David about the sin that he had committed with Bathsheba, he cried out:

Psalms 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge” (vs 1-4).

Verse 5: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which You have broken, may rejoice” (vs 5-8).

Verse 9: “Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me” (vs 9-11).

God’s Spirit, which enables us to produce and have the kind of mind that God wants us to have.

Psalms 58:1: “Do you indeed speak righteousness, O mighty lords? Do you judge uprightly, O sons of men? Yea! In *your* heart you work wickedness; you weigh out the violence from your hands in the earth. The wicked are estranged from the womb; they who speak lies go astray from birth. Their venom is like the venom of a serpent; he stops his ear like the deaf adder, which will not listen to the charmer’s voice, *though* a skillful caster of spells” (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: “O God, break their teeth in their mouth; shatter the fangs of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away like waters which run off continually. When he aims his arrows, let them be as though they were cut off. Let them be as a slug which is melting away; as a miscarriage of a woman, so they may never see the sun” (vs 6-8).

Verse 9: “Before your pots can feel the thorns, He shall take them away as with a whirlwind—whether green or dry. The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he shall bathe his footsteps in the blood of the wicked, so that a man shall say, ‘Truly, there is a reward for the righteous; **truly, there is a God Who is judging in the earth**’” (vs 9-11).

Yes, there is a reward for having those fruits of righteousness in your life. If we are producing fruit of unrighteousness, God will remove His blessings!

Who is that wise and faithful servant of Matt. 24? Christ is our Source for an abundant harvest. The Holy Spirit is the water needed to grow the fruits of righteousness, providing water and nutrients necessary to produce those fruits. What fruits are we looking for? *Fruits of righteousness!*

We talk about fruits of God’s righteous perfect presence; His Spirit within us. The fruits of the Spirit are what God is wanting us to grow in more and more.

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith... [additional fruits come from this presence of God and through His Spirit in our life]: ...meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. But those who *are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit” (vs 22-25).

Our walk, our work, and all that we are producing, is through the Spirit of God to produce fruits of righteousness.

Verse 26: “We should not become vainglorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another.”

God has called us out of this world, out of darkness and out of the evil that is in this world into His perfect Light. So that we can produce the kind of outcome and fruits that He’s looking for.

Ephesians 5:8: “For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in *the* Lord. Walk as children of Light, (because the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and Truth); proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*” (vs 8-11).

This is where God is telling us to be able to discern between good and evil, light and darkness, not leaning to our own understanding. But through the power of God’s Spirit working within us. The very mind of Christ being perfected within us.

You see this power, this relationship flows from Christ unto us. If you are indeed that wise and faithful servant, workers—men and women—God will give us the increase. If we are about our Father’s business, doing what God has called us to do, applying the necessary practices that produce fruit, God will bless us!

Farms don’t run themselves! Those who are ranchers, farmers or a husbandman recognize that they need care every day. A farmer gets up early and goes to bed late. I don’t have the words, but if you do get an opportunity to listen to the Paul Harvey advertisement that he did, it think he paints the image very clearly.

This relationship that we have with God is one similar. We are dedicated! Committed! We’re early to rise to do His will, and we are late to slumber to His will!

We care for that which is within our care: our own family, brothers, sisters in Christ and the relationship that we have with God. All of this is a wonderful example in relationships that I truly admire and love; both in my physical life as well as in my spiritual life.

One of my closest friends with in the Church passed away several years ago, and my wife and I spent some quality time. She exemplified so many positive aspects of this production of righteousness in her life, in the way that she loved and served the brethren. This is all very much a part of God’s calling for us to do and to have.

If we were wise and faithful servants, workers doing God’s bidding. God will give us the increase.

Romans 6:18—*Paul speaking*: “And having been delivered from sin, you became *the* servants of righteousness. I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh; for just as you *once* yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto sanctification” (vs 18-19).

In other words, you’re setting yourselves apart to do the things that God has called you to do, to produce the kind of fruit that God desires from you. You can’t produce Godly fruit by producing ungodly things. You can’t produce wheat by trying to grow rice. ***God has called us to a specific calling, and He has called us to do those thing that produce righteousness!***

Verse 20: “For when you were *the* servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed?...” (vs 20-21).

There was no fruit in them, because it does not produce the outcome that God desires. You have to walk in the prescription that God has given. He is the One Who is a master at this!

“...For the end result of those things... [which we were doing before] ...*is* death” (v 21).

As I said, trying to produce a crop without the essential ingredients that come from God is a *dead work!* You’re not going to be successful.

Verse 22: “But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and **have become servants of God**... [workman, the ones whom God has placed in this relationship to produce] ...**you have your fruit unto sanctification**... [set aside for God’s purpose and use] ...**and the end result is eternal life.**” *If we are holding fast and doing that what God has called us to do!*

Verse 23: “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God... [though this relationship that we have with Him] ...*is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul I telling us that the Father owns the fields, the seed and all the resources of power to produce the righteous fruit that He desires.

As it was in the Garden of Eden, trees producing all manner of fruit that was good for food that we might have life and live forever! *This is what God has called us to!* God has called us to this type of relationship! Yes, God can increase your fruit harvest. He gives the increase.

2-Corinthians 9:8: “For God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you so that in every way you may always have sufficiency in all things, and may abound unto every good work... [this work that He’s called us to; those are the good works of God] ...according as it is written: ‘He has scattered abroad, and he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever.’ Now, may He Who supplies seed to the sower, and bread to eat, supply *your seed* and multiply your sowing; and may He increase the fruits of your righteousness, *so that you may* in every way be enriched unto all bountifulness, which causes thanksgiving to God through us” (vs 8-11).

Our relationship with God is one to grow and produce the kind of fruits that God is looking for. He responds directly in a direct way! To our positioning ourselves to receive from Him and acting on that which gives to our acting on faith through works.

What is that? *That is believing faith, which is faith in action! **Believing faith is faith in action!*** Remember that Christ said ‘it would not be a cake-

walk’! The way is narrow and difficult. Farming is not an easy labor! It is the hardest job you would ever love, because it has reward. To be physical and actually produce something and see it grow, to see that increase! Something for me was the first time in my adult life that I had bought laying hens. I grew up with them, of course, but a few years ago I started growing laying hens again. That first family of young chicks that I grew from infancy unto adulthood. The first batch of eggs that we received from our laying hens—I went out and collected them and brought into the house and shared showed them to my wife—I placed the basket on the counter and said, ‘Look, look at our increase!’

All the labor that we put into it produced those eggs. So much so now that God has blessed us to be able to share them with our brethren. This is how God empowers us and gives us the blessings.

Matthew 7:13: “Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it; **for narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it**” (vs 13-14).

No, it’s not an easy one, but it is one filled with joy, love and appreciation! We see God’s work in our life and one another’s life. Yes, the way of this world, and the fields of this world are cursed! We have to deal with the thistles and thorns that we encounter. These are things from the Garden of Eden and the choices that were made there. So, this world is full of Satan’s inspired snares to take us out of God’s way, to take us out of that relationship.

God wants us to be aware of this. He advises us! He wants us to be aware of Satan’s devices.

Gen. 3—this is the condition of the fields today and why it is a lot of work to produce a crop. We have to contend with the curse of the thorns, thistles, weeds and all the different things that we have to manage around in order to get a crop.

Genesis 3:15: And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.’ To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception—in sorrow shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ And to Adam He said, ‘Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat *of* it!”—the ground *is* cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life”’ (vs 15-17).

God has placed before us a difficult way because of the sin of Adam. That is the state of things; hard work is a part of life. Working to achieve the outcomes still has its rewards. So, He wants us to seek after righteousness despite the difficulties.

In summary, here it the key to an abundant harvest of righteousness. One needs a supply of water, a supply of Light, and Christ has brought that Light to us, and Christ provides that water to us.

One needs good seed, and God has provided the good seed. One needs good soil; that seed needs to fall on good soil. That good soil is developed in our personal lives, and is especially developed in the Body of Christ, because that's where God brings new seed to grow, within the Body of Christ, the Church.

We need labor, and Christ provides the labor that we need. The Father is the Master of it all!

1-Corinthians 3:6: "I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for **it is God Who gives the increase.** Now, he who plants and he who waters are one... [same purpose, same outcome] ...but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; **and you are God's husbandry, even God's building**" (vs 6-9)—*in this walk!*

Christ laid this out for us very clearly in John 15; this relationship that I've been discussing here.

John 15:1—*Christ tells us:* "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [we see the Master of this work is the Father through Christ] ...but **He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit**" (vs 1-2). *His objective is fruit production in us!*

Verse 3: "You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you bear fruit unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, *and you are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing" (vs 3-5). *That is a Truth that one cannot escape!*

- everything that we produce in life
- everything that is good
- everything that is sanctified for God's use
  - is perfect as the Father
  - is perfect is from above

and made possible through this relationship that we have with God.

**Are we producing fruits of righteousness as God wants?**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 20:1-16
- 2) Colossians 4:8-16
- 3) Romans 16:3-4
- 4) Philippians 4:2-3
- 5) Matthew 17:13-20
- 6) Matthew 12:31-32
- 7) Matthew 21:18-21
- 8) Psalm 11:1-7
- 9) John 4:4-18, 35-42
- 10) Deuteronomy 11:8-15
- 11) Ezekiel 34:25-27
- 12) Psalm 51:1-11
- 13) Psalm 58:1-11
- 14) Galatians 5:22-26
- 15) Ephesians 5:8-11
- 16) Romans 6:18-23
- 17) 2 Corinthians 9:8-11
- 18) Matthew 7:13-14
- 19) Genesis 3:15-17
- 20) 1 Corinthians 3:6-9
- 21) John 15:1-5

AJ:bo  
Transcribed: 5/22/23

Copyright 2023—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.