

Sermon: The Fruit of our Lives

Text: John 15:1-17

Discussion Questions:

“He who dies with the most toys wins.” *Malcolm Forbes*

I think the first time I saw this quote was on a bumper sticker back in the ‘80’s or ‘90’s. It has always stuck with me. It just seems to summarize, in a few short absurd words, the collective operating system that is running in the background of our entire current American culture.

- When you see this quote, what does it make you think about?
- What kind of toys do you think Malcolm Forbes was referring to?
- Do you see this kind of thinking being lived out in the lives of people you know?

I don’t think Forbes originally added a second sentence to this quote. But over the years, others have tagged on an additional phrase: ***“He who dies with the most toys wins. But he still dies.”***

- How does this second sentence bring a dose of reality to the first sentence?
- Take both sentences together, and restate them in your own words.

“In other words...”

What do you think happens to you one second after you die?

- Does what YOU think happens match what your unsaved/unchurched neighbor across the street think happens?
- What does the media portray as what happens?
- What does the Bible say happens immediately after you die?
- What light do these passages shed on the “one second after you die” question?
 - Luke 23:39-43
 - Luke 16:19-31
 - Hebrews 9:27-28
 - Matthew 25:31-46

In light of this discussion, there are two conclusions that the Bible makes absolutely clear:

1. We live on beyond this life. There is a good place in the presence of God (paradise), and a dark and terrible place separated from the presence of God.
2. How we live the one life that God has given us makes an eternal difference.

- Do you agree with these two conclusions? Why or why not?
- What do you think your unsaved neighbor across the street thinks about this?
- What lies of Satan cause people to doubt or completely ignore these conclusions?

This morning, we are focusing on the “fruit” that we produce in our lives. In John 15:16, Jesus said: *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”*

- What is the difference between fruit that lasts, and fruit that doesn’t last?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in our capacity to bear fruit that lasts?

Examination:

- Read **John 15:1-8**:
 - Re-read verse 1. Jesus states that HE is the TRUE VINE. The metaphor driving this passage is that of a grape vine: the branches and leaves that sprout from the vine—and the luscious grapes that are produced at the end of the branch. Jesus is calling Himself the vine, and God the Father is the one who tends the vines and harvests the grapes. Focus in on why Jesus calls Himself the TRUE vine. The obvious implication here is that there are also FALSE vines—vines that appear to be life-giving but really aren't. What are examples of false vines? What is the sure-fire way you can tell if a vine is false?
 - How does Satan entice us to look for life in false vines?
 - False vines produce dead branches that bear no fruit. What happens to those branches (see v. 6), and what do you think Jesus means by this?
 - The work of God the Father is the pruning of vines to make them more fruitful (v. 2). What do you think this fruit is? How does this relate to the larger discussion we are having regarding discipleship?
 - At the bottom of page 6 of our King Street Vision Booklet, we read:

*“This guide is not meant to be a performance review as though our salvation depends on it. Rather it is an acknowledgement that as we live out our faith in the context of where we see God taking us as a church family, we believe we will see these things as **the fruit of our lives**, individually and together.”*

 - Why do you think so many people are so attracted to what might be called “checklist Christianity” (wanting to boil their faith down to a list of do's and don'ts)?
 - What are some practical ways that we might see the fruit of obedience being produced in our lives?
 - What does verse 8 tell us about the connection between bearing fruit and discipleship?

- Read **John 15:9-17**
 - What is the key to remaining in God's love (v. 10)? What do you think this means?
 - How is joy a by-product of obedience (v. 11)? Have you ever experienced this joy?
 - What does love look like with respect to the way we relate to others (v. 13)?
 - Is it possible to be a friend of Jesus—and NOT obey Him (v. 14)?
 - What is the relationship between being a disciple of Jesus—and being a friend of Jesus? (v. 15)
 - In the same way that Jesus approached Peter and John, and told them to “follow me”—the truth is that if you're a Christian, Jesus has also done the same thing with you! We didn't choose Jesus, Jesus chose us!
 - How does that make you feel?
 - How can this change the way we view discipleship?
 - Do you believe that discipleship may be as much about Jesus believing in us, as it is about our believing in Him?

Application:

If you don't already have one, grab a copy of the King Street Vision Booklet. Read it through cover to cover. Take some time with it. Look up the Scripture passages that support each of the 15 Missional Life Marks. Read and consider the various quotes. Jot down some commitments you're willing to make in the blank spaces provided.