

LIVING WATER

The Official Newsletter of Southside Church of Christ

BEARING FRUIT

by Christopher Bennefield

In life, we are always striving for the best. It can range from wanting to be the best in your field of work, wanting to build the best garden, or wanting to excel in a sport. We do this in the world, more often than not, to be recognized by those around us and/or put to good use the talents we have so that they are not wasted. So, with this in mind... the question I want to ponder in this article is; **do we strive for the best in our spiritual life?**

Let us look at the parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9 to help us ponder over this question.

"And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."

At times in our spiritual life, we may be 'barren' and are not producing 'fruits.' We may be quick to assert that we are useless or have the attitude of "why even try?". This seems to be the same thoughts of the person that planted the fig tree expressed in verse seven, but compare that to the vinedresser's attitude. He realized that even though this tree wasn't fulfilling its purpose, he said to wait and give it a chance to be able to produce its fruit. Not only that, the vinedresser helps the tree in its efforts by digging around it and putting fertilizer (manure) to help it grow!

If you feel like the person who planted the tree, know that it is never too late to repent and start producing that good fruit! Take advantage of the Lord's longsuffering towards us while we still have the opportunity (2 Peter 3:9-10). For it is by these good fruits, in this life, that we can know we are a child of God, as shown in John 15:4-5. It reads,

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

So, I want to take this time now and humbly ask you to examine yourself; see how you can strive to serve the Lord better and start either producing fruit or produce even more fruits! (Gal 5:22-23). If in this evaluation you understand that you are in sin, then take advantage of the Lord's longsuffering and patience as seen in the vinedresser's parable. Turn to God in repentance and follow him, because Jesus came here for you! (Luke 13:5, Luke 5:32)

Lastly, I want to emphasize the question I stated at the beginning; ***are you striving for the best in your spiritual life?***

Our Lord and King Jesus Christ came down on this earth in the flesh and was sin for us all so that we can be reconciled back to him. Take this and let it strike your heart with a fire to serve the Lord with your all. You have a place in the kingdom, don't let the condition of your barren tree deceive you. For you were created in God's image, and can do great things for the kingdom of God. Don't limit yourself! Bear as much fruit as you can for our Creator, our Lord, and our Savior Jesus Christ, for He is worthy of our efforts!

