

welcome to the
fruit factory
What fruit is your life producing?



Pastor Hugh's Message Series Sundays 9am & 10:30am

Dying for Some Fruit (Jn. 12:20-26)
February 2, 2025

John 12:20-26 (CSB)

20 Now some Greeks were among those who went up to worship at the festival. 21 So they came to Philip, who was from

Bethsaida in Galilee, and requested of him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

23 Jesus replied to them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. 25 The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

- A. Welcome to the Fruit Factory! As I have been sharing each week, as a Church and as Christians we are to be fruit factories for Jesus.

Your life should be producing the fruit of Jesus.

And in fact, the longer you live for Jesus, the more fruit of Jesus you should produce.

- B. Last week we heard one of the stories of Jesus about a fig tree that had been planted in God's vineyard and what was missing on the tree? Figs! FRUIT!

And what was God's instructions to Jesus?

Cut it down.

But praise God, Jesus pleaded with God to give the tree more time; and He will work the soil around the tree, and hopefully, next season, that tree will produce fruit.

And if so, wonderful, but if not, then cut it down.

- C. And then we read about Jesus, the day after His triumphal entry in Jerusalem.

Jesus see a fig tree with lots of leaves, but what did it NOT have? Figs! FRUIT.

And what did Jesus do to the fig tree?

He cursed it.

And the next morning, the disciples saw the dead fig tree.

And does anyone remember Jesus' response to the disciples?

He said, "Have faith in God."

- D. The reason Jesus cursed the fig tree was because it had lots of leaves, but no fruit. And lots of leaves on a fig tree was indicative of a tree that should be loaded with fruit.
In other words, this tree had the appearance of fruit.
But upon inspection by Jesus, it had no fruit.

And the same was true for Israel. Which is why Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God."

- E. That fig tree represented the spiritual state of Israel.
It had lots of leaves. Lots of religion. Lots of church.
Lots of rituals. Lots of Bible. Lots of children's ministry.
Lots of student ministry. Lots of worship ministry. Lots of Grow Groups. Lots of preaching...BUT GUESS WHAT?
THEY DIDN'T HAVE FAITH.

- F. As I said last week:

The fruit God is looking for is not your religious acts or just knowing the biblical facts, but do you have FAITH IN JESUS?

That is, a faith that is mobilizing you to treasure Jesus, trust in Jesus, and become more and more like Jesus.

You should be more FORGIVING like Jesus this year more than last year. You should be more GIVING... more LOVING...IN LOVE with Jesus this year than last year.

- G. And if that is not a testimony of your life, you may have lots of religion, but you don't have the fruit of real faith.

And what's needed in your life is REPENTANCE, turning to God for either SALVATION (meaning, you need to get saved) or turning to God for SUBMISSION (meaning, you need to get back on God's page).

So, God saves us to produce His fruit in us.

- H. Now that brings me to this thought:

- How many of you have ever made a request from God?
- What requests have you made from God?

Maybe you've asked God for healing, help, peace, money, wisdom...all those are appropriate requests from God.

- I. What if I told you there's a request of God that ought to be at the top of your request list?

And after salvation, this is one of the most important requests you could ever make to God.

What's the request? How?

How do I produce the fruit of real faith?

- J. I would dare say most of us have never asked God that question.

In fact, it's probably not on your request list.

But knowing that we are to be fruit factories for Jesus, it ought to have us asking God, HOW?

How do I produce fruit for You, O Lord?

In fact, let's practice that:

"How do I produce fruit for You, O Lord?"

- K. Good news, God is going to give you the answer.
And the answer is found in the words of Jesus in Jn. 12:24-26.

Here's his answer:

1. The Word about Fruit

Jn. 12:24

24 Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit.

- A. What's Jesus' word about fruit?

I think it is amazing how God uses what He has created to teach us about the Creator.

In other words, God uses the **physical** to teach you about the spiritual. He uses the **visible** to teach you about the **invisible**. He uses **Earth** to teach you about **Heaven**.

God did not just on a whim and with little thought create this world. He created the world that you might know the Creator.

- B. How many of you have discovered that God has put His fingerprints all over His creation? And the more you study it, the more you can learn about God.

Perfect Example:

- (1) **Color** – how many basic colors are there?

3: Blue, Red & Yellow

- (2) **How many natural light sources** does the earth have?

3: Sun, moon, stars

- (3) **How many states of matter** are there?

3: Solid, liquid, Gas

- (4) **Water**: How many molecules form water?

3: H₂O (2 hydrogens, 1 oxygen)

- (5) **Atom** – how many parts?

3: Protons, neutrons, electrons

- (6) **Man** – how many parts?

3: Body, Soul, Spirit

So, from those fingerprints, what do we learn about **God?**

He's 3 in 1: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- C. God designed the world to teach you about Himself.
So, by studying the physical, you can learn a ton about the spiritual.

And Jesus wants you to learn how to produce fruit.
So, how does He teach you?

By showing you something God created – **a SEED!**

- D. And what do you know about a seed?
It has a lot of potential to produce lots of what? fruit.
But the only way it's going to produce any fruit is how?

It has to DIE!

The seed must be planted/buried in soil, and the embryo inside the seed dies, breaks through the shell and produces a new plant that will bear fruit.

And in every seed-bearing plant the seed must die if it is to bear fruit.

Wheat: That one kernel of wheat dies and out sprouts a stalk full of kernels of wheat.

And when all those kernels are planted, they produce an abundance of wheat with more kernels than you can imagine.

- E. In fact, someone has calculated that you can plant 1 kernel of wheat and then plant all the seeds from that one crop, and then repeat that every year.
Guess how long it will take to fill all the earth with wheat?
14 years.

- F. What's the lesson God wants you to get?

Fruit is only possible through DYING!

If there is no DYING, there's no fruit.

That's Jesus' word about fruit.

Lesson learned straight from God's creation!

Notice the second truth about fruit. Jesus gives us:

2. The Way to Produce Fruit

Jn. 12:25-26

25 The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me.

- A. What is the way to produce the fruit of Jesus in your life?

Notice, Jesus did not give us a Sunday School answer.

What's a Sunday School answer?

They are common answers you hear in SS:

- Just pray about it.
- Turn it over to Jesus.

- Just do what the Bible says.
- B. Jesus didn't give us a SS answer about producing fruit. Truth is, He gave us a hard answer about producing fruit.

In fact, if most of us are honest, we will not like one word that He says.

- C. And folks, let's be frank: Jesus had lot of wonderful things to say, but there's a lot He said most of us don't like.
- "Love your enemies"
 - "Forgive those who sin against you."
 - "Don't hate or you've committed murder"
 - "Don't lust or you've committed adultery"
 - "Turn the other cheek"
 - "Go the extra mile"
 - "Do not judge."
- D. And Jesus had a hard saying when it comes to producing fruit for God.

Here it is:

25 The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

What's Jesus saying?

You won't produce fruit for God as long as you love you. And if you love you, you're going to lose your life.

And you will only produce fruit for God when you hate you. And that's how you know you have eternal life.

- E. Jesus is not giving us the way to be saved. There's only one way to be saved, and that's through the blood of Jesus.

But Jesus is giving us the way we can SHOW we are saved.

And what's the way we can SHOW we are saved?

ANSWER: DYING TO SELF!

- F. The only way you can produce the fruit of God in your life is by DYING.

And what does Jesus say you must die to? YOURSELF.

In fact, on numerous occasions Jesus preached DIE TO YOURSELF.

Mt. 10:38-39

³⁸ And whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.³⁹ Anyone who finds his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life because of me will find it.

Mt. 16:24-26

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his

cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

SAVE = you want to keep/preserve your life (and all it's "goodies"), and fill your life with the pursuits and pleasures of this world

LOSE = your life will be utterly ruined.

Jesus is saying, if you are living for the stuff of Earth, your life is ruined. You won't get any of the stuff of Heaven.

²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

The only thing of this world that is going to last is your soul. You can't take this world's stuff with you.

People have tried.

- I know about a man who was buried sitting on his Harley Davidson motorcycle.
- Another man was buried in his Cadillac.

And if life for you is all about getting all you can out of it, GO FOR IT, but hear me, you will PAY FOR IT WITH YOUR SOUL.

In fact, Jesus says you will lose your soul.

v. **26b Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

Why would you sacrifice what's eternal for what's temporal? Why would sacrifice your soul that will last forever for this evil world system that is headed for Hell.

G. And that's Jesus' point about dying to self. And that is:

- Dying to Ruling Yourself
- Dying to Indulging Yourself
- Dying to Your Wants & Wishes
- Dying to the World's Wants & Wishes

In fact, Jesus tells us to hate ourself.

Jn. 12:25

25b and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

What does Jesus mean by hating ourself?

He does not mean it literally.

He means for you to realize:

YOUR LIFE DOESN'T MATTER MUCH.

H. And this is when you are getting the right attitude for producing some amazing fruit for God in your life – when you can say, **"MY LIFE DOESN'T MATTER MUCH."**

That's the essence of dying to self.

And when you have such an attitude about yourself, you then get the right ATTITUDE about God. And what's the right ATTITUDE about God?

GOD MATTERS MOST.

So, put it all together:

MY LIFE DOESN'T MATTER MUCH. GOD MATTERS MOST.

And when that's how you choose to live your life, get ready, because fruit's coming.

- I. Because that ATTITUDE leads to ACTION.

Again, listen to Jesus.

Jn. 12:25-26

and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant also will be.

What's the action? YOU WILL FOLLOW JESUS.

- J. Where? Wherever He says. Wherever He goes. And you'll do whatever He wants.

WHY? Because my life doesn't matter much. Jesus matters most.

So, when Jesus tells you:

- **Bless those who persecute you.**
You'll say, sure, because my life doesn't matter much. Jesus matters most.
- **Share Jesus with your friend**
You'll say, sure, because my life doesn't matter much. Jesus matters most.
- **Go on that mission trip**
You'll say, sure, because my life doesn't matter much. Jesus matters most.
- **Give your paycheck to help that family in need.**
You'll say, sure, because my life doesn't matter much. Jesus matters most.

The way to producing lots of fruit for God is by living everyday knowing MY LIFE DOESN'T MATTER MUCH. JESUS MATTERS MOST.

And that brings me to Jesus' final truth about fruit.

3. The Worth-it-ness of Producing Fruit

Jn. 12:26b

If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

- A. What does Jesus say about dying to self and living for Christ?

What does Jesus say about "My life doesn't matter much"?

You know what He says.

IT'S WORTH IT.

- B. Because God will honor you for it – in this life and the next.

And when you arrive in Heaven, all the fruit you produced on earth will be rewarded by God our Father in Heaven.

That ought to motivate us to produce as much fruit as possible.

Conclusion:

Jim Elliot was a promising student at Wheaton College in Illinois. He was a champion wrestler, honor student, amateur poet, and was warmly admired by students at Wheaton. He dated and married the prettiest girl at the school. He was truly the "big man" on campus.

In his studies, he read the words of Jesus about dying to self and took them seriously.

During his senior year, he wrote: "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

God called Jim to take the gospel to the Auca Indians in Ecuador. They had never heard about Jesus. But he was tragically speared to death by those Indians.

Jim gave up what he could not keep, his earthly life, to gain what he could not lose, his eternal life.

But his life wasn't a waste. Because of Jim Elliott, his wife and other missionaries took the gospel to the Indians, and they all came to Jesus.

Years later, a young man traveling in Ecuador wanted to visit the place where Jim Elliot died.

But he was told:

"Jim Elliot did not die in Ecuador."

"Jim Elliott died before he got to Ecuador."

"Jim Elliot died as a student at Wheaton College and he yielded his life to God "because his life didn't matter much."

- A. What is God telling you today?

Have you died?

Have you died to your wants & wishes?

Have you died to this world?

Here's what God wants you to do:

Wake up each morning and say:

MY LIFE DOESN'T MATTER MUCH. JESUS MATTERS MOST.

And then ask God, "What do you want me to do for You today?"

- B. And when you live that way every day, watch God produce some amazing fruit out of your life.