

FRUITFULNESS

[Wellsford Christian Fellowship - 30/7/89 – EKB]

1. **Reading:** Parable of the Sower, *Mk 4:3-9,14-20*.
2. What is **God's purpose** for His Word in our lives?
Answer: That it produce fruit - 30,60,100 fold, *Mk 4:8,20*.
3. The **parable of the barren fig tree**, *Lk 13:6-9*. Jesus gave this parable three months before the Cross. If the fig tree does not bear fruit, it will be cut down.
4. **Jesus cursed the fig tree which had no fruit**, *Mat 21:18-22, Mk 11:12-14,20-24*, one week before the Cross.
5. **The parable of the wicked vinedressers**, *Mat 21:33-43*. This told the religious Jews who refused to believe in Him that God was taking away the Kingdom of God from them and giving it to a nation, (the church), who would bring forth the **FRUIT** of it, *Mat 21:43*.
6. God gives us His **Word** and His **Life**, and expects us, and requires us, **to bring forth fruit**.
7. The Lord promised Abraham **exceeding fruitfulness**, *Gen 17:1-6*, and confirmed this promise to Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. *Gen 26:12, 35:11, 48:4, 41:52, 49:22*
8. *Gal 3:7,9,13,14,29* tells us that if we believe in Jesus Christ we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise. The promises God made to Abraham extend to all who believe in Jesus. Therefore God promises us **exceeding fruitfulness**.
9. *Jn 15:1-8* is the parable of the **true vine**, and Jesus tells us that the key to fruitfulness is by **abiding in Him**. Abiding in Christ is keeping a fresh living relationship with Him, by depending on His Life flowing into us, through faith in His Word. **Fruitfulness** is the way we glorify God and show that we are His disciples, *Jn 15:8, Mat 7:15-20*.
10. **Fruit is:**
Firstly fruit is inward in our character The fruit of the Spirit, *Gal 5:22,23*, is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, faithfulness, faith, mercy, kindness etc. This is becoming like Jesus in our nature, *Rom 8:29*, and is "fruit unto holiness," *Rom 6:22, 2Pet 1:3,4, 2Cor 7:1*. Holiness is the life of God in the soul.
Secondly fruit is outward in words and actions. It is speaking the truth in love, *Eph 4:15*,
and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, *Ac 1:8, 1Thes 1:8*. It is doing all things for Jesus and giving Him the glory, *1Cor 10:31, Col 3:17,23*, and doing good works of mercy, love and compassion, *Mat 25:35,36, Mat 5:16, Ac 10:38, Eph 2:10*.
Outward fruitfulness is seeking first the Kingdom of God, *Mat 6:33*, and bringing the lost to salvation in Jesus Christ, *Mat 9:13, Mk 16:15,16*.
11. **Hindrances** to fruitfulness, *Mk 4:4-7,15-19*.

12. The first hindrance to fruitfulness is **hardness of heart**. The soil of the wayside is trodden hard and satan removes the seed of the Word completely, *Mk 4:4,15*.

Hardness is caused by pride	<i>Dan 5:20</i>
legalism	<i>Mk 3:1-6</i>
rebellion	<i>Heb 3:7,8, Zech 7:8-12</i>
lies of satan	<i>Heb 3:13, 1Tim 4:1,2, Col 2:8, 2Cor 4:4.</i>

All these add up to an inability to receive and understand God's Word, *Mk 6:52, 8:13-21, 2Cor 3:14, Eph 4:18*. We soften our heart to receive God's Word by:

- a. **making Jesus Lord**, Master, King, of our life, *Hos 10:12*. Seek Him as Lord. Surrender all to Him, *Rom 10:9*.
- b. **humbling ourselves** and denying self will. *Lk 9:23, 1Pet 5:5,6, Lk 18:14*.
- c. **taking a place of service** to others, *Gal 5:13*.
- d. **focusing our attention on God's Word** daily, *Heb 4:12, Pro 4:20-22, Is 66:2*.
- e. **calling out to God**, *Ps 51:7-13*, and believing His promises to give us a pure heart, *Ezk 36:25-27, Ac 15:9*.

13. **The second hindrance** of the stony ground is the inability to endure through times of testing and persecution, *Mat 13:21, Mk 4:17*. This is caused by:

doubt. *Heb 3:12, Mat 14:31* **fear** *Mat 8:26, Lk 8:22-25*
self pity or self concern *Lk 10:40, Mat 19:16*.

These things cause "**shallowness**" and **inability** to hold on to our faith under pressure. As with all problems which arise from the old nature of the flesh, they are overcome and removed, by:

- a. **recognising and admitting** them, *1Jn 1:9*, and confessing them to God.
 - b. **Rejecting** and standing against them in Jesus' Name.
 - c. **Believing the promises of God to set us free** from every bondage of sin. *Rom 6:6,11,12,14,22, Phil 2:13, 1Jn 1:9, Ezk 36:25-27* and many others.
14. **The third problem area** that hinders fruitfulness is in the thorns of *Mk 4:7,18,19*. This is failure to separate from the world system of cares and worries, ("I won't have enough"), ("how can I keep what I've got?"), the love of riches and possessions, pleasures, entertainment, amusement, excitement, *Lk 8:14*.
- Jesus said we can't serve God and money, *Mat 6:24*.
 Cares and worries hinder faith, *Mat 6:30*.
 Living in pleasure is living in death, *1Tim 5:6*.

There needs to be a separation from the ways of the world, its values, goals, standards, attitudes, *1Jn 2:15-17*, and a receiving of the ways of God. In *Mat 6* for example Jesus tells us that when we give to the poor or pray to God, we are not to boast and show off before men, but pray or give unto God alone. Do not pray thoughtless repetitions but pray meaningfully. When you fast do not show off to man but fast unto God. Do not lay up money and riches on earth, but do things to store up riches in heaven. Be not be anxious about food, drink and clothes, but seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness.

15. But those who hear the Word of God and understand it, who believe it, hold to it and act on it, bear fruit: some thirty fold, some sixty and some one hundred fold, *Mat 13:23*.