

November 4, 2018  
Sunday Morning Service  
Series: Luke  
Community Baptist Church  
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Greer, SC 29650  
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## **FRUIT, TREASURES, AND HOUSES**

### **Luke 6:43-49**

Jesus was the consummate teacher. When He spoke people listened, even when they disagreed with Him. When He taught, the multitudes who heard Him often concluded that they had never heard any teaching like it. Compared to the official teachers of first century Israel, Jesus taught with an authority that was foreign to the teachers. The difference was that Jesus taught the truth He knew as the second member of the triune Godhead in heaven. Jesus simply brought the truth from heaven and taught it to people on earth. That is why the people were so impressed with what He said.

That Jesus taught heavenly truth was also the reason the religious leaders of His day were so offended with Him. They were, as Jesus pointed out, of their father the devil (John 8:44). They were completely deceived about God, righteousness, and the good news about salvation from sin. They, being like their spiritual father Satan, were proud of the fact that their religion, which was made of up of laws no one could keep – including themselves – was the right religion.

Though Jesus was the consummate teacher who taught truths directly from heaven, He communicated with the common people on a level they fully understood. In fact, time proved that Jesus's teaching was plain enough to cause most of the people to walk away, unwilling to make the commitment necessary to be His followers. Jesus often made the deep truths of heaven understandable by couching those truths in stories, illustrations, or parables. In our text are three examples.

According to Luke's account, in chapter six we found Jesus appointing twelve mere men to learn and continue His ministry of

telling the Good News of salvation. Then Jesus came to a level spot somewhere near Capernaum where He unpacked that amazing and sometimes almost paradoxical truths about kingdom citizens. He taught that people who truly trust in Jesus Christ and follow Him are humble people who recognize their spiritual poverty and know they have nothing with which to buy or trade for salvation (v.20). He said that we are people who hunger and thirst for righteousness (v.21). We are persecuted and misunderstood because of our association with Jesus (vv.22-23). And yet we do not get even, but respond by doing good to our enemies (vv.27-36). We do not judge unrighteously, but we do desire to help our brothers be better Christians (vv.37-39). And before we try to help others, we check our own spiritual condition first (vv.40-42).

This is the essential practice of Christ's followers. It stands in contrast to the many false teachers, who like the religious hypocrites in Jesus's day, claim to be teachers of truth but are devoid of truth. They might present interesting sermons, lectures, or arguments. But in the end they offer only empty platitudes, or worse, error that leads to eternal condemnation. Because of our love for truth and our love for fellow Christ-followers, we need to identify and expose all false teaching and teachers.

### **Truth Teachers Produce Good Fruit (vv.43-44).**

The first picture that Jesus gave us to explain a right relationship to His truth is that of trees. He reminded listeners that trees produce according to what they are. *"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit"* (v.43).

Jesus gave this same metaphor in another setting according to Matthew's account (Matthew 12:22-37). In that setting, Jesus had just released a victim from demon possession. The people were amazed and began to wonder if this display of power indicated that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The Pharisees retorted that Jesus actually cast out demons by the power of Satan. In response Jesus laid down the very important warning that blaspheming (slandering, rejecting) Him was a sin that could be forgiven, but blaspheming the Holy Spirit would never be forgiven.

The point to which Jesus was driving is as follows: He had just done a work through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees rejected the Holy Spirit's demonstration of power and attributed it to Satan. Jesus allowed that maybe the people could be confused about Him, being the man from Nazareth, but also being the incarnate Son of God. However, He left no room for confusion about the Holy Spirit's work. The chief work of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin; and if we reject it or deny it, there is no way we will be regenerated by the same Holy Spirit.

In that setting Jesus told the Pharisees and people who were watching that they needed to make up their minds. He said, "*Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit*" (Matthew 12:33). The verb Jesus chose here for *make* (*poieo*) means to do or cause. Here the word takes on the meaning of "to make a decision, make a commitment, make up your mind." The point is that either Jesus was a good tree that produced good fruit or He was a bad tree that produced bad fruit. Either the Pharisees were good trees that produced good fruit or they were bad trees that produced bad fruit.

The principle Jesus taught in that setting given by Matthew is the same as the principle in our text. The tree is known by its fruit. As we apply this principle, we must realize that when Jesus was talking about trees and fruit, He did not give a lesson in horticulture here. Everyone in Jesus's audience gathered on the level place knew very well that good trees produce good fruit and bad trees produce bad fruit. It was a matter of the health of the tree. It wasn't that some trees had bad personalities and some were amiable. More often than not the problem was in the tree's root system or even in the soil to which it was attached.

Jesus took that very practical, well known picture and applied it to the peoples' setting. He used the picture to explain the previous warning about spiritually blind teachers. In our previous study we read, *He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher"* (Luke 6:39-40).

This was an appeal to be aware of the false teachers in the culture to which Jesus ministered. They brought a false teaching that denied the purpose and work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They offered a substitute law, substitute religion, substitute way to be made right with God. While presenting themselves as all-wise, all-knowing, all-perceiving, they were actually spiritually blind. They were characterized by the same spiritual blindness that all of us have because we are born in sin. So how did the spiritually blind expect to lead the spiritually blind to spiritual light?

And the greater danger was that these blind leaders appear to be so helpful, useful, and on our side. Speaking about them Jesus warned us to watch out for them and described them like this: "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?*" (Matthew 7:15-16). Ravenous wolves will destroy the sheep. And bad trees don't produce good fruit. So it is the responsibility of Jesus's followers to investigate very closely the supposed sheep who comes into our assembly and take a good look at the fruit of the tree.

The lesson we should learn speaks of the importance of identifying trees by their fruit. Jesus said, *For each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush* (v.44). We realize that no one gathers figs from thornbushes. No one picks grapes from brambles. Comparing our culture and circumstances, we would say that no one would expect to find apples on a pecan tree.

That is the kind of conclusions we should reach when we identify teachers by their teaching. If a person is at odds with God, what kind of fruit would we expect to find? This is our Lord's challenge for us to inspect fruit. The majority of people in our culture claim to believe in God and even in Jesus. But do they produce fruit that indicates they are attached to the main trunk and root system Jesus?

Our Lord expects us to investigate, ask questions, and draw sound conclusions. That is the meaning of the Greek word behind *make* as we saw it used in Matthew 12:33. How do we investigate the fruit? Be just or righteous in measuring others with the same

measuring stick you use for yourself. Be patient realizing that we are not looking at snapshots of fruit but of overall fruit-bearing (movies). Every apple tree produces a bad apple once in awhile. We have pecan trees that produce virtually no fruit every other year. And sometimes a Christian will carelessly act like a sinner for a short season.

We need to be helpful, because some Christians simply need a little pruning and fertilizing to produce better fruit. Be accurate, using a biblical standard for fruit. The biblical standard is the fruit of the Spirit and the character of Christ. The right standard for assessing spiritual fruit is not our preferences or traditions. While we investigate a “tree’s” fruit, we need to be loving, desiring to find genuine Christlikeness in the tree we are investigating. And if that fruit is missing, we should desire to see it produced. That is what love looks like. Be transparent, considering the possibility of a log in our own eyes.

#### **Truth Teachers Offer Good Treasure (vv.45-46).**

It seems logical to conclude, as our text does, that good people offer different treasures than bad people. The challenge might be in trying to identify the good and bad people. *The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil (v.45a)*. Again the issue here is good people versus bad people. We live in a world that is quite sure that even this statement is unfair, unjust, and unacceptable. But in reality, everyone is not good in their own way.

I knew an older woman who was known to respond to the mention of someone’s name, “Oh, he is a such a good boy.” But on one occasion, I knew that the man who she was pronouncing good was a user of illegal drugs and most likely dealt drugs to others to the end that they were also ruining their lives. That is not a good boy. That is an evil boy! We are supposed to be able to discern the difference.

What is the standard for discerning between good and bad people? Jesus’s person and teaching draws a very clear line between good and bad people. Good people are redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ, the price He paid for their sins. Bad people are still guilty before God for offending Him by their sins and have,

heretofore, rejected the truth of Christ’s sacrifice. Our task is to determine what kind of person we are talking to, associating with, being influenced by. How do we determine if the teacher, friend, family member, neighbor, co-worker is a good person or evil person? One of the most obvious manifestations of fruit is displayed through a person’s words.

In keeping with this second metaphor about treasure, we learn that the treasure is what the person speaks. *For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks (v.45b)*. Jesus made this direct connection between fruit and words when He was arguing with the Pharisees about blasphemy. He warned them, *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:33-34)*. We are not off base to wonder how the evil Pharisees could speak good. That was Jesus’s point.

Given enough time, careful observation proved Jesus’s point about the Pharisees. They loved the praise of others but stole from their parents (Mark 7:10-13). They abandoned the truth of God’s law in favor of their own traditions. Ultimately, they rejected the Son of God and killed Him though He was innocent. Their hearts were full of hate and that hatred become obvious as they shouted, “Let Him be crucified.”

The Pharisees who often argued with Jesus proved His point, that our words are simply the overflow of our heart. The unredeemed person will reveal his sin by the things he talks about, the way he responds. But even Christians live in a sinful flesh and are responsible to control our thoughts so that we can control our words. *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless (James 1:26)*. “To use a different analogy, the tongue is the sound system of the heart. Whatever is in our souls gets amplified whenever we put it into words. Our angry words come from a murderous heart; our salacious words come from an adulterous heart; our complaining words come from an envious heart. It is “out of the overflow of the heart” that the mouth speaks.” (Philip Ryken, “Luke,” *Reformed Expository Commentary*, Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing Co., 2009, 296.)

Good treasure is created from what Jesus teaches. Some people claim they listen to their “Lord.” But who is their Lord? Jesus asked those people, “*Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord’?*” (v.46a). They actually call Jesus Lord, which is supposed to mean that they recognize Jesus as their Master. Many of the Jews in Jesus’s day claimed to believe that He was the promised Messiah, but they did not submit to His teaching.

Of all the false religions, Judaism is the closest to the truth the Bible teaches. They appeal to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their fathers and founders. They adore Moses and claim to respect or even obey the law God gave through him. They believe in heaven and hell. They believe in a sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, unchanging God. They believe the Old Testament. They believe in a resurrection. They believe we should pursue righteousness and avoid sin. Their beliefs are very close to that of Christians.

But those are precisely the people Jesus addressed with this question! Still there are people like this who either think of Jesus as their Lord or they address Jesus as Lord. But they are not doing what Jesus teaches. Like the Pharisees, they do *not do what I tell you?* (v.46b). Submission to Christ is a requirement, yeah, a demand of salvation. No one has embraced Jesus by faith and not submitted to Him. We will study later in Luke’s Gospel how Jesus clearly articulated that requirement. *And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels (Luke 9:23-26).*

The only way to prove submission to Christ is to do what He says. The *good treasure* that a good person produces out of his heart is not just good teaching, but obedience that shows how the good teaching changes a life. True faith is inseparably connected with obedience (Romans 1:5; 15:18; 16:26). People who follow false teachers will take on the character of the false teachers. People who follow Jesus will take on the character of God the Son.

## **Truth Teachers Build on the Solid Foundation (vv.47-49).**

Some people hear and do the truth (vv.47-48). Notice how Jesus gave a threefold description of the truthful person. *Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them (v.47a).* First, the truthful person comes to Jesus. The verb is used to describe the simple action of coming to someone or something. However, this movement reveals a special relationship. We “come to” those to whom we are attracted. The crowds gathered around Jesus because they were attracted to Him, His teaching, His displays of divine authority. Jesus is still attractive, but not everyone who comes to Him is ultimately characterized by truth.

Second, the teacher of truth hears Jesus’s words. More than just hearing a sound is meant. The word comes from a root that means to put your arms around. Therefore, the person who is coming to Jesus must perceive what He says, give serious consideration to what He says, embrace His truth.

Third, truth teachers do Jesus’s words. But being attracted to Jesus and even listening carefully to what He teaches does not make a person a conveyer of His truth. The truest profession of our faith is the practice of our faith. Everyone must make a choice! We must hear the truth of Jesus and do it or reject the truth of Jesus. If we are not obeying His truth, we are rejecting it. There is no middle ground.

Jesus showed us what this person who comes to Him, hears Him, and obeys Him is like. The person who embraces and obeys Christ’s truth builds on the rock solid foundation. *He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock (v.48a).* The house is the religious building, a demonstration of our faith, a picture of what we believe. You are building this religious edifice. Everyone is building a religious edifice. What we build has eternal significance.

When Jesus pictured His words as the foundation for a solid spiritual house, He claimed deity, equality with God the Father. Only God’s Word is sufficient to stand against the tests of eternity. Who else but our Creator as the authority to tell us to build our spiritual house on Him?

Jesus picture someone building a spiritual edifice on His truth as the foundation. In time, circumstances arose to put the house to the

test. *And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house (v.48b)*. This flood might be Satanic, demonic attack. It is often the difficult circumstances of life. It is the persecution, the rejection, the separation that comes from being in Christ. It can even be the testing that God permits like He did with Job. Or it might even appear to the world to be a positive situation like a new job with a huge raise or popularity.

In response to the spiritual test, the spiritual house built on Jesus Christ stands. *And could not shake it, because it had been well built (v.48c)*. This not a well built house because the person is so wise. It is well built because Jesus built it (His truth, His power, His sustaining).

In contrast, Jesus taught about other people who reject the truth (v.49). They hear Christ's teaching but refuse to do it. *But the one who hears and does not do them (v.49a)*. A lot of people will not even give ear to the truth of the gospel. Many people do listen and even contemplate the truth. But they never get around to applying the truth to themselves and never obey the gospel. Where there is no obedience there is no faith.

Jesus said that people like that are like foolish builders. They are like a man who builds a house with no foundation. *He is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation (v.49b)*. All the philosophies of human wisdom together do not offer a solid foundation. Personal opinion and preferences are no foundation.

When the tests of life break against the house built on personal opinion or human wisdom it will be ruined. *When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great (v.49c)*. The circumstances of life can cause the house built through human strength and wisdom to crash. The ultimate flood will be final judgment.

What kind of religious house are you building? What kind of fruit do you produce? What kind of treasure is in your heart? Have you come to Jesus? Have you listened to the gospel of Jesus? Have you obeyed and embraced the good news by faith?