

## Preserve Trees that Give Life

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Deuteronomy 20:19-20 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

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The tree of the field is man's life.

- This obscure little law in Deuteronomy holds great significance to the issue of the Christian life of today.
- It's a law that ensured care be given to the means by which food might be obtained by a city.
- Do not destroy that which is intended for life and food.
- Careless destruction may be followed by a need for the very thing that was destroyed.

However, there is more significance than this.

- We see a fruit tree that is said to be man's life preserved in cities.

In the New Jerusalem, we read of this:

Revelation 22:1-2 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

A city, with fruit of Life!

The bible speaks of people as trees.

- Two kinds of trees.

Matthew 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Only two kinds of fruit – good or evil – because there were two kinds of trees that were very spiritual and effective towards man's spirituality.

- Tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Since we are made from the dust of the ground, and seeds are in the fruit, and seeds are planted in the ground, our lives grow like one of two trees.

The element in the fruit tree of Life that differs from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the fact that it gave life.

- God said the forbidden tree would bring death.
- The law in Deut. stated that the fruit trees give life, and therefore must be preserved.
- But the forbidden fruit tree was contradictory to this truth.
- It was a fruit tree but did not give life.
- It gave death.
- Therefore, it cannot be preserved.
- It will be cut down.
- And that is the reason that in the City of Revelation there is only the tree of life, and not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- All other life giving trees will be cut down and burned.

Matthew 3:7-10 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones

to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Notice the words of verse 8.

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:"

The margin reads, "answerable to amendment of life".

LIFE!

In other words, bring forth fruit of life, or be cut down!

- That is just like the law of Deuteronomy!
- Life-giving fruit trees must be preserved.
- All others may be cut down.

Something that is an amendment is something that IMPROVES upon an existing item.

- Amendments are made to existing laws and constitutions in order to, hopefully, improve those laws.
- And to say that fruit must be answerable to amendment of life is to say that one must live a life that manifests the symptoms of a desire that seeks to IMPROVE itself towards LIFE.
- These "fruits" correspond to the desire to do God's will.

God Adam that obedience to His will would cause Adam to live.

- So "amendment to life" means adding to one's existence the things that correspond to LIFE from God.
- In other words, aligning one's life up with the will of God.
- A heart that seeks to do the right thing and to please God is a heart that bears fruit answerable to amendment of life.

We need to be people whose hearts seek to do the will of the Lord.

- To search out the will of the Lord.

- To want to do His will so much that we look for it.
- And when we find it, we obey it.
- These kind of hearts will be preserved by God forever in the City of all cities – The New Jerusalem!

Psalm's 1 speaks of trees with fruit that God ensures will last forever.

Psalm 1:1-6 **Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**

These people who delight on God's law are those who delight in God's will.

- They meditate on the law of God always because they are people who make an effort to know the will of God since they have such a strong desire to please God.
- They do not stand in the way (manner or habit) of sinners, meaning their lives are good lives.
- They are true believers.
- They do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, for they do not seek to do wrong, but to do right.
- THIS PSALM SAYS IT ALL!

Psalm 1:3 **And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**

God is going to ensure these TREES last forever!

- Why?
- Because people need to FEED FROM THESE KIND OF CHRISTIANS!
- God told Israel to preserve the fruit trees that give life in the cities during war because people need those trees for life.

- God sees how sinners need something that will give them life, so He preserves those Christians whose lives are so desirous of doing His will.
- Sinners who see Christians like that are like starving and hungry people seeing a tree full of fruit.

I want to do the will of God.

It's not just escaping a hell of fire that moves me to do His will, but it's for HAPPINESS and JOY.

- Nobody can enjoy happiness while living a life contrary to the will of God.

One of the Bible writers said:

1Joh 1:4 **And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.**

The Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 **After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

Note verse 13.

- Lead us not into temptation.
- But Deliver us from evil.

Jesus explained what this meant when he said,

- **LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION:** Matt 7:13-14 **Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**
- **BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL:** Matt 7:15-17 **Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.**

Being led into temptation corresponds to Jesus' words about walking the broad way that leads to destruction.

- And then the thought is emphasized again with the words about being delivered from evil in speaking about ensuring we do not bear false evil fruit.
- We are trees.
- And we must ensure we are bearing good fruit, and not thorns and thistles.

Note that after Adam sinned, God cursed the ground for his sake and declared the ground would bear thorns and thistles.

Genesis 3:17-18 **And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;**

Since Adam was made from dust of the ground, we see a picture here of people whose lives bear good or bad fruit.

- Adam would have to weed through the thorns and thistles to eat herbs, making it a toilsome task to actually find food to eat.
- This is often the case too many times in sinners who are seeking life from so-called Christians whose lives are full of bad fruit.

Hebrews 6 uses this picture of herbs and thorns and thistles and speaks of people's lives.

Hebrews 6:7-9 **For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.**

He says this is a picture of HUMAN LIVES.

- "We are persuaded better things of you."

Note that earth (human lives) which bears thorns and briers is rejected and nigh unto cursing.

When sin occurs in our lives, it is due to our hearts.

- Sins occur due to evil desires in the heart.
- So the desires of the heart must be considered.

When we sin we need to seek God's forgiveness.

- God is faithful to forgive us if we admit in prayer to Him that we sinned, and are truly sorry for the sin.
- (He knows if we are truly sorry or not.)
- (Many people are not sorry for their sins, but are only sorry they were caught in sin).

However, what about committing the same sin again in the future?

If we had a desire to commit the sin, although we also had a desire to be forgiven and were truly sorry, what is to say we will not commit that same sin again?

- Would not the desire still remain there, despite a desire to be able to stop committing it?
- It is not strange at all to desire two things.
- To desire to sin and to desire to cease sinning is common in people.
- The reality is that although they desire to stop sinning, it is actually the consequences of sinning that they desire not to experience.
- The desire for the sin, itself, is still there.

So seeking forgiveness and obtaining it is one thing.

- But is there not hope beyond forgiveness?
- YES THERE IS.

David committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and wrote an entire Psalm of repentance in Psalm 51.

He sought forgiveness.

Psal 51:1 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

He understood he sinned against God.

Psalms 51:4 **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.**

Many people sin and do not realize they directly violated God's law and actually sinned against GOD!

This affects God!

- We need to realize this.
- We've broken God's law, and have to deal with Him when we sin.

David appreciated the fact he actually sinned against God, and not only against his wife and family.

This is important.

But he went beyond seeking forgiveness.

Psalms 51:6-10 **Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**

Get it!

- He realized God wants TRUTH on the inside!
- In the heart.
- The inward parts.
- The outward act of sin needs to be forgiven, but what good is trimming the hedges if the life of the tree is evil?
- It will only grow evil fruit again!
- So David went beyond seeking forgiveness.
- He asked God to CREATE something in Him.
- That is beyond seeking forgiveness.

You would think a person is the way that a person is – period.

- How can a HEART CHANGE?
- One's desires are simply there and one has them – period.
- However, David's faith knew better than that.
- He believed God for something that many Christians do not even consider a possibility!
- A faith that God can CHANGE HIS DESIRES!

Many people simply believe that people are the way they are, and they will always be that way.

- Stubborn people will always be stubborn people.
- Some preachers believe that trouble-makers will always be trouble-makers.
- Problem saints will always be problem saints.
- And no CHANGE is ever preached to them.
- But you're listening to a preacher who believes and preaches that GOD CAN CHANGE PEOPLE and their DESIRES!

God can CREATE IN YOU A CLEAN HEART.

- He can create in you a DESIRE-SOURCE that is clean and pure!

Your heart is where your desires are formed.

- Bad hearts produce bad fruit.
- However, GOD CAN CREATE A CLEAN HEART IN YOU.

Recall that David said,

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

He then prayed...

Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Adam was cast away out of the Garden where God's presence was when he took the evil fruit of death into his life.

- David's words actually reveal that a bad heart is like a tree bearing bad fruit that causes one to be cast from the presence of God as Adam was when he ate the forbidden fruit.
- The forbidden fruit brings forth in our lives after its kind.

- The seed is in the fruit to cause reproduction.

Fruit of life are the manifestations from a true Christian's life that are FOOD for the lost souls of the world around us.

- And a man who committed adultery due to the existence within himself of an evil heart asks God to create a clean heart in him.
- And then he says:

Psalm 51:12-13 **Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.**

After David's heart was evil, he asked God to create a new heart in him.

- And then he said he would be able to teach transgressors the ways of God.
- Sinners would be converted to God after David was given a new heart.
- In other words, DAVID'S LIFE WOULD BEAR FRUIT OF LIFE for sinners to eat and actually receive life themselves by coming to God.
- David's life after his adultery would be holy.
- His desires would be CHANGED.
- Instead of bearing fruit of sins that only hurt and sting like thorns, and do not give life, he would bear fruit of life!

How?

- God would CREATE a clean heart in him.

This corresponds to Jesus; words:

John 15:1-3 **I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**

He purges the branches that bear fruit.

- Psal 51:7 said PURGE ME WITH HYSSOP.

Jesus said we are CLEAN through the word he spoke.

- Psal 51:10 said create in me a CLEAN heart.

Jesus said it's done by THE WORD WHICH HE HAS SPOKEN.

Does "creation" and the "Spoken Word" ring a bell?

God created all things by the spoken word in Genesis.

David said RENEW, CREATE and RESTORE.

Psal 51:10 **Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**

Psal 51:12 **Restore unto me...**

The same Word that was spoken and created all things that God said were GOOD, can be spoken to you again to RESTORE, CREATE what He originally made GOOD.

God's WORD makes everything GOOD!

Have faith for more than just forgiveness.

- There is hope beyond forgiveness.
- Hope for God to CHANGE YOUR HEART and your DESIRES so that you cease from sin and bear fruit of a life that DESIRES THE THINGS OF GOD.

Do you lack desire for the will of God, and have too much desire for that which is evil and wrong?

- Ask God to create in you a clean heart.
- Ask Him to give you the desire to do His will.
- HE WILL ANSWER THAT KIND OF PRAYER!

How do we get the love of God in our lives?

Romans 5:5 **And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**

By the Holy Ghost!

You do not want to be destroyed and cast away.

- All who bear not fruit that gives life will be destroyed in this great battle of life between good and evil.
- But trees bearing fruit of life will God spare for all eternity.

Proverbs 11:30 **The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.**

Notice that salvation of souls and the fruit of a tree of life are associated.

Jesus spoke of the fig tree in the vineyard.

- Did you ever stop to ask yourself what a fig tree is doing in a vineyard?
- Like the fig tree, we do not belong to this world.
- And if we're going to be here, we better bear fruit!

Luke 13:6-7 **He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?**

God does not think very highly of believers who do not produce fruit for souls to feed from and live.

- It cumbereth the ground.
- It makes the ground idle.
- It's a waste of space in the ground.
- The ground could better make use of another tree that bears fruit.

Don't cumber the pews and chairs you sit on in church.

- Don't cumber the places in the world where you pass through each day.
- Don't waste those opportunities of sinners seeing real Christians whose lives bear fruit that cause them to know God's way.
- God can put someone else in those places if you are going to cumber the ground.
- **MAKE YOUR LIFE COUNT!**

- Ask God to CHANGE YOUR HEART to desire God's will.
- AND BEAR FRUIT ANSWERABLE TO AMENDMENT OF LIFE!

CHANGE MY SAP, GOD!

- He can do it!
-