



March 25, 2007 (Vol. 7)

The Lord's View Of Fruitlessness

Jerry Fite

Our view of things is certainly important to the Lord. On one occasion certain inhabitants of Jerusalem were thinking that some Galilaeans were great sinners because Pilate was able to kill them as they offered sacrifices. Jesus responded with, *"Think ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:2-3). Jesus wants all to know that just because sudden and horrible things happen to some, it is not conclusive evidence that they are greater sinners than those in Jerusalem who are still alive.

Jesus follows up with a parable teaching the Jews that they themselves have been given time to produce the fruit of repentance in their own lives. If they do not, they will be cut down and perish (Luke 13:6-9). God's patience ended when in A.D. 70 He brought the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem. The parable of the barren fig tree manifests how our lord views us as potential fruit bearing trees, and how he views us when we do not produce good fruit in our lives.

The Lord expects all of us to bear fruit. The vineyard owner in the parable *"came seeking fruit...three years come I seeking fruit from the fig tree..."* (Luke 13:6,7). One would certainly not continually come seeking fruit from a tree that was not created to produce fruit. The owner of the vineyard came in each season seeking fruit because producing figs was what a fig tree was created and planted to do. We, as God's people have been *"created in Christ Jesus for good works"* (Ephesians 2:10). If we are Jesus' disciples and plan on glorifying God, we must *"bear much fruit"* (John 15:8). Being good soil, we may produce *"some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"* (Matthew 13:7,23), but a good and honest heart, a true disciple, or a new creature in Christ will not continue as such without bearing good fruit in one's life.

When we do not bear fruit, we are not only *useless* to the Lord, but we *hinder* His cause. The fruitless fig tree needed to be *"cut down"* for it was not fulfilling God's plan. The vineyard owner adds, *"why doth it also cumber the ground?"* (Luke 13:7) The Lord views fruitlessness as taking up precious space. Are you a church member who seldom attends worship services, gives only pennies to its support, and never actively cooperates in the work the church has undertaken to do? With such lack of activity, you are probably not too fired up in being *"light"* and *"salt"* nor interested in *"good works"* that give glory to God (Matthew 5:13-16). Take a moment and see yourself as our Divine owner sees you: you are in the way, and hindering space that could be occupied by those who produce fruit.

The Lord does not want you to get out of the way, but desires you to change and begin bearing precious fruit. The loving vinedresser steps in and asks, *"Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down"* (Luke 13:8-9). Our God is patient. He is willing for constructive efforts to be expended to change fruitlessness into fruitfulness. Our view should focus not only on what we are doing, but on what we are not doing. The Lord is approaching to see fruit. If we are not producing, we are useless to Him. Repent or perish!

HOW DOES LOVE FIT WITH HERMENEUTICS

Jason Trick

The word *"Hermeneutics"* means the science and methodology of interpretation (Webster's Dictionary). In other words, hermeneutics is the art of interpreting the Scriptures.

Today, preachers have taken liberties to apply broad principles such as love to change the application of definite commands. One preacher, Mr. Holt says, *"I believe the broad principle of love is sufficient authority and that it should inform us in addition to the kinds of specific authority we are used to leaning on"* (Jack Holt *Hermeneutics* p.2). The fallacy of this concept is, even though a direct command is given, the broad principle of love will allow us to lay aside the command in certain circumstances. However, in Ezra 9-10 the Israelites married pagan wives which was unlawful. Did Ezra because of *"the principle of love"* allow the Israelites to continue in these marriages because breaking up families would have been awful? No!! Ezra commanded them to

put away their pagan wives. Applying love means I will keep God's law even when difficult circumstances arise.

Ladies and gentlemen let's examine some of these concepts Mr. Holt is trying to establish on the principle of love and answer them.

Referring to Luke 6:1-2 Mr. Holt says, "Jesus uses a broad, general principle to provide authority for His disciples' conduct. This was authorized by the principle of love." (Jack Holt Hermeneutics p.1-2). Jesus and His disciples were traveling on a Sabbath through some grainfields and the disciples were plucking the heads of the grain and eating them. The Pharisees said they were violating the Sabbath. When was it ever unlawful to eat on the Sabbath? Never!! The disciples were plucking and eating the grain not threshing grain in the field. The Pharisees were replying that plucking the grain was a violation. Deut. 23:25 confirms that plucking grain and threshing grain are two different actions. Love, the seeking of one's physical well being is contained in the law, allowing the legitimate satisfaction of hunger.

Referring to John 8:3-11 Mr. Holt says, "The law clearly states that those who commit adultery should be stoned, but Jesus did not command that in this case. Instead, He replied upon the principle of love to extend mercy and forgiveness to this woman" (Jack Holt Hermeneutics p.2). The scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses said a woman who committed such act was to be stoned.. Jesus replied, you without sin cast the first stone. The Pharisees being convicted in their hearts left one by one. Then Jesus said, did no one condemn you? Neither do I. Jesus applied the law. In the law of Moses a person could not be put to death on the testimony of less than two witnesses. (Deut. 17:6). Jesus asked, where are those who accuse you? She replied, there were none. Jesus said, neither do I

condemn you. Jesus did not condemn her because of "the principle of love." The law was not going to unjustly accuse someone without two witnesses. Jesus referred to the law which contained loving justice.

As you have seen both love and law work together in God's word. One does not override the other as Mr. Holt's concept has led him to believe. When we keep God's law we are abiding in love.

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Othena Kinnard (At home), Jo Miller (At home), Wesley Geer (Life Care 316), Mag Bumbalough (Life Care 518), Ethan Rece, Nathan Hill, Thelma Cunningham, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Rose Taylor, Dorris Williams, Robert & Betty England, Johanna Fletcher, Ed Williams, Joe Smith, Lydia Poe, Mike Tenpenny, Thelma Klein, DeLeesa Price (expecting) and Alisa Fletcher (expecting), Kenley Streeval. Also, Reba Jones (Dorris Williams' niece), Jackie Tindle (cancer, relative of the Sims), John Ross Key (Mary Cox's son), Marci Miller (Alisa Fletcher's mother), Ocia Bell Jones (Doris William's mother), Ruth Williams (Betty England's niece), Pauline Hickey, Nanny Witaker, Dylan Roberts (grandson of Marilyn's friend); Kitty Mahan (Kathy Tenpenny's mother), Dwayne Williams (Dorris William's son), Jeff England (Robert & Betty's son), Paul Grissom, Carl Williams (Ed's brother), Danny & Michelle Cunningham (Lydia Poe's brother & his wife).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Home Bible Study - Sat., March 31
- Business Meeting - Sun. March 25.
- Ladies Class - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- GM - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- GM - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- GM - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

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