

Living a Fruitful Life Getting Rooted by Assembling with saints

Intro: In our first lesson we saw from Scripture six reasons to want live a fruitful life for the Lord.

- To demonstrate true repentance
- To escape the judgment of God
- To avoid losing the privileges of divine sonship
- To fulfill the purpose of salvation
- To prove that we are true disciples
- To bring glory to God

In our last two lessons we've seen five requirements to living a fruitful life.

Bearing fruit requires:

- Relying up God's creative power, not merely our self-exertion
- Dying to self and yielding to God
- Abiding in Jesus Christ
- Overcoming barriers to receiving the nourishment of the vine
- Following the leading of the Holy Spirit

What these principles teach us is the need to avail ourselves of the provisions God has made to empower us through His word. Today I want to talk about "Getting Rooted by Assembling with the Saints"

Getting Rooted...

If we are to be fruit-bearing disciples we must get our roots deep down into the teaching of the Spirit. The psalmist put it this way:

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3)

This OT verse shows us the great potential for fruitfulness we have when we get our roots down deeply into God's word.

Paul also shows us how God's word produced its fruit in the Colossians:

We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; (Col. 1:3-6)

Could it be that many Christians are spiritual dried up because they have never gotten rooted in the word of God? Consider the importance of the assembly in helping us do that.

The assembly--God's provision for spiritual fruitfulness

When the church was originally established the apostles established a regular day for disciples to come together—the first day of the week. They did so because God wanted His people to gather together. They did so because God's people needed opportunities to hear His word so that they could live fruitful lives for the Lord.

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. (Heb. 10:19-25)

Today many people in the religious world treat attending the church's assemblies like it is a spiritual option. The NT writers made it a manifestation of the disciple's faith in and commitment to Christ and His people.

It reveals our desire to “draw near” to God as His priests.

It reveals our commitment to “abide in Christ” who is the source of our hope and to “follow the leading of the Spirit” who teaches us.

It reveals our commitment to our fellow-disciples who we hope to help and encourage in the Lord.

Why assembling with the saints will increase our spiritual fruitfulness

It will increase our personal knowledge of the word of God.

I would say that probably no religious group in the world puts more stress upon doing good Bible study than the churches of Christ.

Virtually every service is centered not only upon honoring God in worship, but seeking to understand His word. We have taken seriously God's statements about the purpose of the congregation:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Eph. 4:11-16)

God's plan was to bring teachers and disciples together in order that spiritual growth could take place and with it spiritual fruit-bearing. Interestingly, John Allen Turner on his Faith 2.0 blog recently asked, *"First of all, it baffles me why there are still some churches who meet on Sunday night. What could possibly be the point of that?"* He was serious! Let me answer his question.

Virtually all of our assemblies have a significant time of spiritual instruction. If you come to all the services of the church, you have the opportunity to grow in your knowledge of the Scripture.

If you attended church services on Sunday morning last year, you heard over 50 lessons on the kingdom of God (A study of the entire Sermon on the Mount and the story of the kingdom of God).

But if you attended Sunday evening services you heard an additional fifty lessons studying paragraph by paragraph Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians and his first letter to Timothy. If you attended the Sunday morning classes, you had the opportunity to learn about great women of the Bible and God's wisdom from Ecclesiastes, how to live with joy from Philippians, and how to read and understand the Psalms, to learn more about the Holy Spirit, to study the Gospel of John. If you attended the Wednesday evening classes, you were able to hear evidence to build your faith in God and the Bible and to learn about the life and letters of the apostle Paul, learning about the world in which he lived and taught and the messages of his letters; and an in-depth study of one of his letters (Galatians). All this is a single year!

Let's just take a moment to quantify what I've said.

If you attended all the Sunday morning services you received 26 hours of spiritual instruction.

If you came to all the services and classes you received 126 hours of spiritual instruction, nearly five times more teaching!

Now put this in the perspective of an ongoing habit.

How would this difference work out over a decade?

(260 vs. 1260) A difference of 1000 hours!

Over a lifetime (1820 vs. 8820)! 7000 hours!

And this doesn't completely tell the story since what we are able to learn in our public gatherings accentuates and accelerates our personal efforts.

Now which would be more likely to have the better knowledge and the stronger faith?

Conclusion: If we are totally serious about bearing fruit for the Lord, then we will want to avail ourselves of every possible opportunity to grow in our knowledge. The assembly of the church is not a man-made invention; it is God's provision for a fruitful life.

I want to challenge you to get rooted in the word by assembling with the saints.