

Trees of Life

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

Introduction:

1. We must remember why we assemble. If we forget or get confused, we will begin to die as a church.
2. We must remember the deceitfulness of sin. If we forget to help one another, we cannot make it alone.
3. Soul winning has been corrupted with the idea of a one-time salvation decision for eternal life, rather than lifelong exhortation and encouragement and correction for spiritual perfection.
4. We are receiving new members this very weekend, which brings thankful joy and greater responsibility.

I. The CALL

- A. The two great commandments direct us first toward the LORD and then toward others.
- B. The goal - “He delighted in God above all others, and he was a tree of life to all others.”
- C. We are called to bear fruit with spouses (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:28-30; I Cor 9:5; I Pet 3:1-2).
- D. We are called to bear fruit with children (Deut 6:6-9; Psalm 34:11; Pro 13:22; Eph 6:4).
- E. We are called to bear fruit with families (Genesis 18:19; Joshua 24:15; I Timothy 5:8).
- F. We are called to bear fruit with others (Eph 4:16; I Thess 5:14; Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25).
- G. A righteous man will be a tree of life; and a wise man will win souls (Proverbs 11:30).
 1. A righteous man will affect the lives of others as a tree provides fruit for men.
 2. A wise man will affect the lives of others by winning them from death to life.
 3. Such men give wisdom (Prov 3:18; 8:35; 12:18; 13:14; 15:24; 16:22; Eccl 7:12).
 4. A righteous man feeds many, and he feeds them life willingly (Prov 10:11,21).
 5. What is your sharpening reputation? Do you sharpen well? Many? (Pr 27:17).
 6. Hearty counsel is a great blessing and rejoices the hearts of men (Proverbs 27:9).
 7. Do you have a neutral or beneficial affect on few or many of the lives near you?
 8. The commendation of those who save brethren ought to provoke us (Ja 5:19-20).
 9. Job had the good reputation for using words to strengthen the weak (Job 4:3-4).
 10. What kind of tree are you? Without fruit (Lu 13:6-9)? Evil fruit (Jas 3:8-12)?
 11. Jesus called us to serve others, not to seek it from others (Matthew 20:25-28).
 12. Are you a giver or a taker? What you can do for your church is far more important than what your church can do for you.
 13. Christian saints must be true friends, and they are born for adversity (Pr 17:17).

II. The VALUE

- A. Compound growth is “interest on interest.” It is an accelerating concept of growth based on each growing part helping others grow. It is a geometric progression.
- B. Ministerial training results in a “multi-level” succession of four ministers (II Tim 2:2).
- C. Child training can have incredible results over generations (Psalm 78:1-8; Joel 1:2-3).
- D. A church grows properly as each member invests in compounding growth (Eph 4:16).
- E. Living and dying without influencing others for the Lord means your life is worthless.
- F. The fullest lives and happiest people are those who invest much in others (Acts 20:35).
- G. Consider Daniel’s high praise for those who turn many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3).
- H. Jesus will take recognition at the last day of your fruit helping others (Matt 25:34-40).
- I. Solomon taught that relationships exist for four beneficial aspects (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

III. The DEFINITION

- A. A tree of life is NOT working hard and earning a paycheck to provide for the family.
- B. A tree of life is NOT providing a home for your family and “raising” children.

- C. A tree of life is NOT helping your children understand nutrition, politics, or finance.
- D. A tree of life is NOT making sure your children graduate from high school or college.
- E. A tree of life is NOT merely attending assemblies and talking to other church members.
- F. A tree of life is NOT helping others move, loaning them money, and buying lunch.
- G. A tree of life IS helping perfect another to grow spiritually, as Jesus, in favor with God and man, and to hold fast their profession of faith without wavering until Jesus comes.

IV. The OBSTACLES

- A. Selfishness is the greatest obstacle. Some love themselves too much to care for others.
 - 1. It is a rule of Christ's religion for us to more highly consider others (Phil 2:3-4).
 - 2. It is a mark of self-love to serve those who can return the favor (Luke 6:32-34).
 - 3. It is easy to spot a selfish person. Listen. They can only talk about themselves.
 - 4. Selfless service seeks out the helpless (Romans 12:16; 15:1-2; Galatians 6:1-2).
 - 5. Such people will never do anything for anyone that might personally cost them.
 - 6. Look for excuses or thinking like Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9).
 - 7. It is hard at the end of a day to invest precious time and emotion in the family.
- B. Slothfulness is an obstacle. Being a tree of life to others requires much time and effort.
 - 1. Ministering to other saints is called a work and labor by brother Paul (Heb 6:10).
 - 2. Both Moses and Paul knew the pain of serving (Nu 11:10-15; II Cor 11:23-28).
 - 3. Everyone finds time for their own things, and we must find it for one another.
- C. Fear is an obstacle. Some are so fearful of correcting another they just compromise sin.
 - 1. There is a mechanism to handle anyone not receiving correction (Mat 18:15-18).
 - 2. If we fear losing a friend, we have neither faith (Pr 28:23) nor love (Lev 19:17).
 - 3. Of course we are all sinners, but that doesn't mean we should not correct others.
- D. Ignorance is an obstacle. Growth requires craving the Word of God and preaching.
 - 1. If you have not hid God's word in your heart, then you have nothing to offer.
 - 2. If you live a carnal life, then your spiritual perception and wisdom are weak.
- E. Immaturity is an obstacle. Only mature men and women are able to teach others.
 - 1. Like young children, some can only think about their own little problems.
 - 2. Like young children, some can only talk about their own lives and experiences.
- F. Bitterness is an obstacle. If you have allowed offences to go unresolved, it kills fruit.
- G. Materialism is an obstacle. Pursuit of worldly things will choke time and affection.

V. The MEANS

- A. You first must have something to give others; so you must walk with God yourself and acquire spiritual wisdom, which does not come overnight or easily (Philippians 1:9-11).
- B. Learn to communicate, not talk (Prov 10:11,21,31-32; 12:18; 15:2,4; 16:23-24; 18:21).
 - 1. Don't deceive yourself by wise thoughts: thoughts not expressed are worthless.
 - 2. Don't deceive yourself by wise action: action without words is very inefficient.
- C. **Consider** the situations and needs of others by loving reflection (Heb 10:24; Phil 2:3-4).
- D. **Provoke** – or push – other saints to greater godliness (Heb 10:24; II Cor 8:7-15; 9:1-2).
- E. **Correct** – by warning or rebuke – playing with sin (Lev 19:17; Luke 17:3; I Thes 5:14).
- F. Brotherly kindness and pursuit is essential for success (Proverbs 18:24; I Sam 23:16).

Conclusion:

- 1. The future, the vitality, the success, and the glory of this church depends on saints being trees of life.
- 2. Several sermons were preached on this subject many years ago entitled INVESTMENTS IN SOULS.
- 3. The pastor is not the church, but everything the pastor teaches should be reinforced to one another.
- 4. No need to be discouraged at lack of results, remember that your labor is not in vain (I Cor 15:58).