

# Are you a good tree?

Bible Reading: Luke 6:27-42

Message: Luke 6:43-45 "Are you a good tree?"

Each tree is recognized by its fruit. A good tree bears good fruit. A bad tree would be a thorn bush – its fruit are not suitable for human consumption, hence it bears bad fruit. A good tree would-be a grape vine. It yields delicious, sweet grapes.

The application is obvious: your quality is revealed by the fruit you bear. The question then is this: are you a good tree or a bad tree? That is the issue. You cannot bear good fruit if you're a bad tree. The critical issue is: What kind of person are you? A good person or a bad one?

Well, I can only say that like me, you are a bad tree. If you think that you are a good tree, the game is over and you are lost already. Jesus the saviour will do you no good because you don't really need him. If you think that you are good without him, then you are gravely mistaken.

By nature, we are all bad trees and we can only bear bad fruit. That is clearly what Jesus believes about me and you. That is clear from the verses before our text:

- Verse 37a: if you judge someone, if you say that a person will not be saved, because of a certain pattern of behaviour that you observe, then what will happen to you? You will be judged. Who will judge you? God will. Do you think that he will declare that you are innocent? No! For we all sin. We have all broken the law. We have all failed to love as we should. What happened to Jesus in the end (rejected by everyone, abandoned by heaven, executed on a cross) should have happened to us all! If you judge, you will be judged.
- Verse 37b: *Do not condemn and you shall not be condemned.* It is the same idea here.
- Verse 37 c: *Forgive and you shall be forgiven.* Why should we forgive people who ask us to forgive them? Because if we don't God will not forgive us. Do you see what Jesus is presuming here? He presumes that each of us are sinful people and that we all need to get down on our knees and ask God for forgiveness.

So, what kind of tree are you? Outside of Jesus Christ, we are judged and condemned, because without him, there is no way to have our sins forgiven. We are bad trees and we produce bad fruit. By bad fruit, I mean that we have done evil things in God's eyes.

Now, if I'm a bad tree bearing bad fruit, then I'm in bad shape. I'm lost. For you see, the bad tree will be cut down and thrown into the eternal fire. That is what Jesus says in Matthew 7:19.

Jesus point here is that you don't have to be a bad tree. You can be a good tree. Just because you are a bad tree by nature does not mean you have to stay that way. Jesus came in order to make the bad tree good. When the church celebrates the Lord's Supper, Jesus said, "This is my body which is for you" and then each member of the congregation received Jesus. His power in us heals us, restores us, and recreates us, makes that which in us is bad, good. He transforms us to be good trees so that we can produced good fruit.

But he is saviour only to those who humbly confess that they are evil, a bad tree, and ask him for healing, for grace to be made better. That happens not just in the Lord's Supper of course. We receive this transforming power also through the preaching of the gospel. The Holy Spirit works in us through the preaching. Jesus Christ is the answer to all our problems: He who has an ear to hear, let him hear!

When we become good trees, we can produce good fruit. Jesus talks about the good fruit which we must produce too - a little earlier:

- Verse 27: love your enemies and do well to those who hate you. Jesus enables you to do that.
- Verse 28: if someone curses you then Jesus gives you the power to bless them. Pray for them to change their ways and tell them that you are doing so.
- Verse 29: if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other
- Verse 29: if someone takes your tunic etc... .

You see, Jesus calls us to be different people, new people, good trees that bear good fruit. He wants us to be what he is: to love people even if they don't deserve our love.

But that's hard isn't it? Therefore, in our text, Jesus says: Living a transformed life is hard, I know. But this is what I absolutely demand of you. Without this, there is no salvation for you. So you must at least bear this fruit: speak good words. What is in our heart will always come out. We bring up either hatred or love out of our hearts, depending on which it is that we've got stored up there.

What God wants from you is something that I challenge you all to do this very day. Let your mouth speak from the overflow of your heart. When you contemplate the saviour Jesus, may your heart overflow with wonder at what he has done for you. When you hear preaching about God in the Bible, be amazed at his faithfulness toward us, his love that never fails. May your heart overflow with this.

Then tell him that you love him. Pray to him and praise him. This is the good fruit that God sent his son Jesus into the world for. God wants to hear your praises, to experience your love. Love God. Tell him. And then, go and tell others. Do not be afraid to speak about your love for God to others. Do so in love for your fellow man, because your heart overflows with love for the God revealed to you by Jesus Christ.