

Luke 13:8

But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.'

If you just read today's verse, you may be wondering what it's talking about, so let's read the entire parable to get a better understanding.

† **Luke 13:6-9** *He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "*

I looked online and found that it can take as little as 2 years, and up to 4-10 years before a fig tree will produce fruit. Now that's a huge spread of time and it depends on the type of fig tree it is, as well as how well it's tended.

But any fruit tree will produce fruit when the owner (Master) of the fruit tree plants it, waters it, and tends to it. Soon it will start to produce fruit, and some fruit trees take several years to start producing fruit. Once again, looking online I found that most fruit trees take anywhere for 1 – 7 years, with an average of 2-5 years before it starts producing fruit.

But once it does produce fruit, what does the fruit tree do? Does it go around telling people to buy or eat it's fruit? Now I know that sounds crazy, because a fruit tree just produces fruit, it does not go out and advertise or try to sell it's fruit to others. No calling out to people as they walk by saying to them, "Hey, come and eat my fruit, it's really good and it's free". No, that's the Owner's (Master's) decision what to do with the fruit that the tree produces, because the Master purchased that seed to plant and grow the fruit tree for a specific purpose that He wants it for.

With that in mind, remember that we are compared to fruit trees when Jesus said that, *"For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."* **Luke 6:43-45**

Simply, we all should be producing fruit, whether it's good fruit, which comes from Christians sharing the gospel, helping those in need without wanting anything in return, etc. Or bad fruit which are those of the world who produce fruit, only seeking their own personal gain.

So the question is not are you producing fruit, but what kind of fruit are you producing? You may say that you are not producing fruit. Well, as a Christian, if you are not producing fruit, the Lord will pour into you, because as a Christian you are a good tree that will produce good fruit. ***“For a good tree does not bear bad fruit”*** and the Lord will do all He can to help you produce the type of fruit He created you to produce. ***“Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.”***

But maybe you are producing fruit, but it doesn't seem anything is happening with it. I know this all too well as a musician and a teacher of God's word. You see, there are hundreds of thousands of musicians and bible teachers out there, and only a very, very, very small handful of them are even known by most or even have a following. Where as, most of us have a very, very small following, if any.

You see, it's not that the fruit that you produce is bad, but, you are struggling in your ministry because you don't see flocks of people coming to eat of your fruit, even though you are producing good fruit, but no one is biting (figure of speech). So you try ways to advertise and get things going, but it feels like you are spinning your wheels and no one really responds.

So if you are getting frustrated, let me ask you a question, Who are you doing it for? For the Lord you say. So if it's for the Lord, and you, as His fruit tree, why are you trying to make Him do, what you want Him to do, with the fruit that He labored for, by pruning and watering and fertilizing you so that you could produce fruit? If you are simply His fruit tree, should you be telling your Master, what to do with the fruit?

† ***Isaiah 10:15 Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it? As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up, Or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood!***

We so often refer to ourselves as God's vessels, which we are, but when was the last time a vessel told you what to do with it, or how to use it? And if we are to produce fruit, when was the last time you walked through an apple grove and heard all the apple trees calling out to you to eat apples from their tree? Also, think about this; the apples from an apple tree are used so many different ways, not just for someone to come along and pluck them from the tree and be eaten like that. But how many are sold for apple pie and apple streusel, or apple sauce, or apple butter, or apple pancakes or...

So as you produce fruit, don't look at how many are eating from your ministry, but rather, be satisfied that God has you as a fruit tree and will use your fruit how He wants to. Simply remember that "Ours is not to reason why, but to simply let God guide".

† ***Psalm 32:8 (NLT2) The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.***

† **Psalm 92:13-15** *Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*