

Matthew 7:20

Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Here's a happy thought to start your day. Let's say you were to die (ok, maybe not such a happy thought), and people are there at your funeral looking at you lying in your coffin. As they look at you lying in the coffin, will they know where you went? Will they know if you went to heaven or hell? If you said yes, then how would they know?

Maybe some are not sure and they really wouldn't know if you are in heaven or hell. Once again, if that were the answer, then why wouldn't they know? Or let me ask you this question, if you saw someone who said that he or she were a Christian, but they lived like you do, would you believe that they were a Christian?

I suppose the answer to all these questions we find in today's devotional verse where Jesus says that *Therefore by their fruits you will know them.* And to be a little more specific, let's look at a few verses before this one as Jesus gives us examples of what that looks like.

† **Matthew 7:16-20** *You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

What does that look like for us?

Would a Christian take communion, then look forward to getting drunk?

Would a Christian sing praises to the Lord, and want to go out clubbing afterwards?

Would a Christian read the bible in the morning, and then watch R rated movies or even porno at night?

Would a Christian tithe on Sunday, yet steal from their employer during the week by lying about their time on their timecard?

Would a Christian pour out his or her heart in prayer to God, then yell at their spouse or kids, or friends or even a stranger, belittling them?

If we want to be a tree bearing good fruit, maybe we should ask the Lord to show us any bad fruit that we are bearing.

But once He does show us any bad fruit that we are bearing, what do we do with it? The same thing you would do with bad, spoiled fruit, you would throw it away...get rid of it. But not only that, you would replace that old spoiled, rotten fruit with good fruit.

So, what does that look like?

Simply look at Jesus' life and the fruit that He bore. And how did He do it? By ministering to the needs of others and not His own needs or desires.

† **Matthew 12:33** *Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.*

Lying in the coffin, think of it as a basket of fruit. So what kind of fruit will people see that your life was as you lay there in the basket?

† **Luke 8:15** *But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.*