

on doing those things that are building a healthy relationship with him, and to acknowledge and change those areas which aren't. Then invite Jesus to show you how to change, and invite a few of his sisters or brothers to help you grow and keep you accountable.

In the end the last think I want to happen is to find that I have drifted and become disconnected to Jesus, that I have become fruitless and my life begins to stink of neglect.

My all consuming passion is to stay strongly connected to Jesus, living intimately with him, sharing his life, that together we bring

praise, glory and honour to our Dad.

Let us pray. Jesus tonight we invite you to show us where are connection with you is strong. Help us this year to keep it that way. We also invite you to show us where we're not bearing fruit, or where our life is beginning to stink because we're leaving you out. Help us to change and grow healthy habits in these areas. Jesus our sole desire is to stay strongly connected with you, so we might enjoy sharing your life with you in a close, intimate, open, trusting relationship, and share that relationship with all your sisters and brothers. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
 Pastor: Tim 0427326553
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

31 December 2009

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Luke 13:6-9, Jeremiah 24:1-7



These familiar readings from Jeremiah and Luke

have a similar thought. There are two options; one is fruitful the other is not fruitful, one is good to eat the other is useless. There are two options, which leads me to ask myself; where am I?

Am I a Figtree in Jesus' vineyard that is bearing fruit or am I just taking up useful ground? Am I one of the good figs, or am I beginning to stink? Where am I?

This reminds me of a mobile internet USB stick that I have just brought. I plugged it in only to find: no signal found. What do you think I should do; keep on paying the monthly

contract, or seek a refund?

If you brought a mobile internet USB stick what might you reasonable expect? To have access to the internet. My goal wasn't to have the joy of paying a monthly bill, so I could admire the USB stick. That's just like a Figtree that bears no figs. I want to return it and find something that will get me internet connection.

I don't think that is me being difficult to get along with, or being mean and nasty to the USB stick. It's a nice white one, and has a pretty green flashing light, but it just doesn't connect to the internet. I wouldn't say I was being mean

and nasty by seeking to cancel the contract.

Jesus has planted a Figtree in his vineyard so he can eat the fruit, is he being unreasonable being disappointed when he finds no figs? Is he being mean and nasty considering cutting out the tree and planting a new one with the prospect of enjoying some delicious figs?

Of course there is a hard edge to both these parables. The unfruitful tree is removed. The bad figs are dumped. I personally don't want to be removed or dumped, but the possibility is there.

Now this isn't to produce a guilt trip, or be pulpit thumping,

but this is a wonderful sign warning of danger. When I see a sign that warns me of danger I'm thankful because it has helped me keep healthy. If I'm not warned of a certain danger, I could quite innocently wander into it and get severely injured. I'm thankful for warning signs, they help me stay healthy.

For me the warning sign is to stay connected. An internet USB stick that doesn't connect is wasting it's true potential. When it comes to Jesus, I certainly don't want to be disconnect, but strongly connected. When I comes to Jesus' family I also want to be strongly connected.

On Christmas Eve I introduced Jesus. Now once you've been introduced to a person, that's not the end but the beginning. Now

there is a possibility to be connected and grow a healthy, loving relationship. That's the fruit Jesus is after; a healthy, growing, close and loving relationship with him, and with his sisters and brothers. Jesus is after the fruit of a life that is lived in love with him, trusting him

Take time to quietly reflect with Jesus.

in all you say and do. Being open and honest, sharing from the heart without fear, enjoying taking on life together, discovering wonderful new adventures together. I'd say this is the fruit Jesus wants to pick and enjoy, and it is also the fruit he wants us to enjoy as well. As we pick and enjoy the fruit of a close connection with Jesus. So this New Year take some time to be

quietly alone with Jesus and together reflect on where you're at. Enhance those areas where you have a strong connection and keep doing it. Acknowledge those areas that need growth. That's the first step of growth, and then put into action ways to develop in those areas of your relationship with Jesus.

The reading from 1 Peter gave me a few areas to reflect on. "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart." (1 Peter 1:22) Am I loving from the heart, or have I slipped into a comfortable routine that benefits me? I'm always mindful of Jesus' warning to the church at Ephesus; "You have forsaken the love you

had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first." (Rev. 2:4,5) It scares me a bit because I know there isn't a church in Ephesus anymore. To me that's one Figtree that got removed so another could be planted that would bear fruit.

I guess any long-term relationship is in danger of taking each other forgranted. I'm in danger of assuming the other person is always there and I can easily neglect talking with them and sharing time with them, and soon the laughter and the joy begins to fad. So daily I seek to make time to have a coffee with Jesus, not taking him forgranted, but being eager to listen and share with him what's been happening, what's on my heart, my joys and my sorrows. I don't

take time to read the bible, but I use the bible as a means to keep connected, strongly connected with Jesus. I don't want to take Jesus forgranted. Which also reminds me not to do it with Jesus' sisters and brothers, who happen to also be mine.

What does Jesus show to keep, or to change?

That's also why I want to stay connected to a small group or three. I know on my own I can become slack, or just lose perspective, or simply get too busy with things and before you know it months have passed and all those important relationships have been neglected. I don't want to be living alone, but I certainly want to be seeking ways to stay and grow connected to Jesus'

family. So I'm in several small groups; so I have people to love and be loved by. So I have people who are concerned about me holding me accountable – they help me stop and reflect and alert me to areas where I have drifted. I have people where together we feast on Jesus as we read and share his word with each other. Not as some intellectual exercise, but as a way of staying connected, enjoying life together with Jesus. So I'd encourage each of you to take some time out these next few days, and quietly spend time with Jesus asking him how he feels. How he feels about you and your connection with him? Is he feeling distant, assumed, or feeling listened to, enjoying life with you? Ask Jesus to help you keep