

according to Jesus' will. Jesus saves individuals that they can live together. Jesus goal is unity, lives shared together with him. How do we share life together with Jesus?

In Jesus' High Priestly prayer I notice on other essential fruit; "As you (Father) sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." (John 17:18) Jesus has commissioned you to 'GO' in his name and introduce him, that he might pick the most precious fruit of all, new life. Each time a person comes to faith we have new life. A person moves from being dead to God to being alive, and celebrated by their Heavenly Father.

One essential reason trees have fruit is to multiply more trees. When God created he commanded everything to multiply. If they hadn't we'd all be very hungry about now.

So we are to go and multiply, not club members who faithfully attend the meeting, but living breathing children of God. As we proclaim the Good News about Jesus, the seed is sown in people's lives that they too can burst forth to new life. Jesus what's to pick the fruit of many new relationships with people based on his sacrificial death for them.

Yes Jesus does what his church to grow. Yes he is vitally interested in seeing people birthed

into his kingdom. He gave his life for that very reason. Not to institutionalise and baby sit but to have a living, vibrant loving relationship which encompasses all of life. So don't invite people to a meeting, introduce them to the person, Jesus.

Let's pray. Jesus thankyou that we have new life in you, show us how to live it to the full with you this week. Open our eyes to the people you'll bring across our paths that so that we can introduce you to them, and then share life together with them and you. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

7 March 2010

## EXAMINE

Luke 13:1-9



Who likes exams? Who likes going for a regular doctor's check up? I'm not looking forward to the time I'll need a regular prostate examination!

Are examinations good or bad? Ask the person next to you what they think.

I'd say examinations are a healthy thing to do. If you discover something unhealthy you have the opportunity to act. If what you're doing is producing health you're encouraged to continue with those good habits.

Part of healthy listening is examining ourselves. How well am I listening? Have I missed heard what Jesus is saying, or maybe I've missed part of it. Have I forgotten something, or maybe

slightly exaggerated a particular point. Part of healthy listening is taking the time to examine ourselves.

Jesus' parable about the fig tree is about examination. Now I'd say you weren't being totally unreasonable, or legalistic, if you had the expectation of picking figs from a fig tree. Do you think I'd be unreasonable hoping to pick figs from a mature fig tree? Seems fair and reasonable to me.

In other words I'm not wanting to be legalistic. I'm not wanting to replace the Gospel with Law. The Gospel in this parable is that you are a fig tree. You are a child of God. Figs don't make a fig tree, a fig tree produces figs, because that's its nature. Good deeds don't create a child of

God. Jesus does that through his death and resurrection, and that's what you are. But a Child of God lives the image of God, which is Jesus, because that's our nature.

In Jesus parable there is disappointment; no figs! Not just for one year, or two years, but three years. Now that's disappointing. It would be more than disappointing if you needed the figs to live off of, then it becomes crucial. If this tree won't produce, let's put in one that will.

Some of Jesus hearers wouldn't have liked this parable because they felt he was talking about them. They took offence at being called unproductive. And they weren't impressed at all about Jesus suggesting they get replaced.

Actually they thought they were doing the right thing. So what was this Jesus bloke on about. They had the temple and were performing the prescribed sacrifices. They celebrated the main festivals of the year. They endeavoured to adhere strictly to the laws of their ancestors. How dare Jesus insinuate that they were fruitless.

Actually I can see myself responding that way. We're having a fair go, we're giving it our best, how deflating to be labelled fruitless.

But do you know the really scary thing about this parable, the people who heard it refused to listen and shortly after Jesus ascension what happened to the temple? What happened to the regular sacrifices? What happened to the Children of Israel gathering in the temple four times a year to

celebrate God's goodness to them? They didn't like the exam, so they killed the messenger, and went on doing things the way they had always known it. In 70AD the Temple was finally destroyed and has never been rebuilt!

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### How are you going to bear the fruit of faith?

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So what's the fruit Jesus is looking for from his fig tree; from those who are created in his image? Ask the person next to you what fruit they think Jesus is after.

One fruit Jesus is after is faith in him. A life of faith, so that all decisions are made in consultation with Jesus, following his lead. Faith isn't simply knowing the story of Jesus life, memorising the ten commandments,

the creed and the Lord's prayer. Faith is letting Jesus shape your decisions, letting Jesus shape you, as you walk together through every aspect of life.

What is the fifth commandment? 'Don't kill' and how does Jesus explain this; "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca' (that's a

swear word) is answerable to the Sanhedrin. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell." (Matt. 5:22) In short the fruit Jesus is after is life. The only answer to death is life, so let your words, your actions be those that produce life.

So this next election how are you going to bear the fruit of faith. One question you could ask is which party is on

about preserving and enhancing life?

What's the sixth commandment? 'Don't have sex outside of marriage'. How does Jesus explain this; "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman (or man) lustfully has already committed adultery..." (Matt. 5:28) How does what Jesus says affect the shows you watch or don't watch on TV? How does what Jesus says affect your fashion sense? If Jesus isn't shaping us there is no fruit. If I'm just doing what everyone else does, there is no fruit.

We live in an age which holds sexual permissiveness as a virtue, and the need to experiment sexually to have a successful marriage as a truth. Both go directly against Jesus. They not only go against what he says, they exclude him, because he's not going

to be a part of something that offends and totally disregards his Father's will.

What part of my life do I want to exclude Jesus from? I'm sure we'd all answer in a flash; 'None of it'.

Remember that being good doesn't make you

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### Yes Jesus does want his kingdom to multiply.

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a Child of God, in Jesus that is what you are. His death and resurrection is how God chose to birth you. He now dearly wants his children to grow to greater maturity in Christ. He wants us to enjoy life to the full, and that is found through walking closely with Jesus through life. That is found sharing life with Jesus, knowing that you are loved, precious and the Father is over the moon about you. He's got

your picture in his wallet and is keen to tell everyone about his loved child.

We examine ourselves to help us grow healthy and strong. We invite the Holy Spirit to examine us so that we grow close to Jesus, living and enjoying a loving, vibrant relationship with him.

One last fruit I'd like to mention this morning. This quote comes from Jesus' prayer just before his arrest as recorded in the Gospel of John; "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity." (John 17:22,23) Jesus is after the fruit of unity. Notice that is unity not uniformity. Jesus has created us to be part of his body, with all the different parts working together