

July 10, 2011

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Monday

Matt. 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit."

God expects more than mere leaves on your tree. Trees are called 'apple trees,' 'orange trees,' and 'pear trees.' They are not called leaf trees. Leaves are there to help in the production of fruit. The fruit is expected, if there are leaves. So how about you? Is there any real fruit under your leaves of religion? Are you expecting that God is admiring the leaves of your church attendance or religious expressions or daily devotions? These are not unimportant, but they are there to support the fruit of inward growth and outward mission. God isn't looking at the leaves.

Tuesday

Mark 13:2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

Judgment is not a pleasant subject, so we avoid the thought, the sermon, the implications. But God does not avoid it; He readily speaks of judgment that is present and future. What we do (or don't do) has repercussions. Israel continually disregarded God's overtures for repentance and mission. Finally, God's patience came to an end. Jerusalem was destroyed. Israel was scattered. The promises, the hopes, the potential of a nation sold out to God were lost. We need to fear God. We need to take stock of our opportunities. There does come a time when it is simply 'too late' to embrace the wonder of God's work.

Wednesday

Mark 11:14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

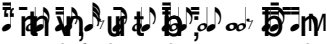
Wow! A cursed fig tree and its resultant death got the attention of the disciples. What does it take for God to get your attention? For those who walk closely with the Savior, it is as simple as a 'still small voice.' For those who play at religion, the loudest thunder will not awaken them. God *is speaking* to you. Through His word He speaks. Through your circumstances, He speaks. He is calling you to be engaged in ministry. He is calling you to encounter His presence. Don't make Him do something dramatic to get your attention. Plan to listen. Pray to listen. Listen!

Thursday

Mark 12:7-9 "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers."

How stupid can you get? Who in their right mind would think that you could kill the landowner's son and then keep the property for yourself? But remember, whether we are talking of you or of me, "sin makes you stupid." It's universally true. When you head down the road of sin stupid stuff looks wise and wise counsel sounds stupid. "Oh God, please protect us from our stupid selves. Bring us to repentance. Cause us to see truth even if the truth is painful. Give us people who love us enough to point out our foolishness." Amen.

Friday

John 15:5-8  Me and I in him, he bears much fruit... My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

When you walk with Jesus -- listening, watching, seeking, and obeying Him -- you really do not have to worry about your life making a difference. It will! When you determine to follow Jesus, you don't have to worry about bearing fruit. You will. If you will simply make it your aim to follow Jesus in every day that is called 'today', you will not need to worry about tomorrow. God will certainly direct you and sustain you. The secret to abundant life is no secret at all. Make it your aim to follow Jesus today, every day. God will supply the fruit as you connect to the root.