



**June
2016**

**Forest Hills EFC Messenger
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If we have missed your birthday or someone else's, please contact the office to inform us.

- June 3 Charlotte Reynolds
- June 5 Jack Bouma
- June 8 Tami Hardin
- June 11 Mallory Leathers
- June 16 Sarah Hood
- June 19 Dor Pagani
- June 20 Thelma Ladenberger
- June 26 Lauren Sayler

Recommended Reading

If you are seeking to understand our culture and times, I would suggest the following books to you. The oldest is the best by G.K. Chesterton.

What's Wrong With the World by G.K. Chesterton

This collection of essays was written in 1910, but you will be surprised by how insightful and relevant these essays are to our times. Chesterton, while some examples are dated or not obviously applicable to our nation, probes the roots of our current culture. Even the dated examples are relevant to today. It is the principles that lie beneath this discussion that have the real insight.

Why Liberals Win The Culture Wars (Even When They Lose Elections) by Stephen Prothero

This insightful look at the progression of American culture will help you better understand our times, and it will help you see where our culture is headed.

Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel by Russel Moore

Russel Moore effectively argues for Christians to stop trying to change our culture through legislation and the political process. He exhorts us to hold onto the Gospel, which gives us our true identity in Jesus Christ.

As a reminder, even the best of books will have statements, arguments or examples that challenge our thinking. Each of these books is very good, but do not forget to weigh everything against the Scriptures. The goal is to think more biblically.

Weekly Schedule

Sunday Morning

- 9 a.m. Sunday School
- 10 a.m. Fellowship Time
- 10:25 a.m. Worship Service

Mondays

9:30 a.m. Ladies Bible Study

Wednesdays

6:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Saturday

8 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

Professions of Faith

In Concert
at Forest Hills EFC
Saturday August 20th
2 p.m.



Refreshments & Love
Offering

Annual Church Picnic

Saturday July 23rd

at

Olson Farm Park
Swedish Heritage Shelter



What is the Gospel? (Part 4): You Will Know Them by Their Fruit

Over the past few months we have been considering the Gospel, what it is and how it spreads. This month we are going to look at the results of the Gospel. Can we know if we are truly in Christ?

Jesus said that we will know people by their fruits:

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. 15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" (Matthew 7:13-23)

Jesus is very clear on the issue of discerning whether people, especially teachers, are true or false by looking at the fruit of their lives. False teachers will produce bad fruit, and good teachers will produce good fruit. It is quite safe to apply this measure to our own lives in asking what kind of fruit am I producing.

Paul echo's Jesus in the book of Galatians where he writes about the fruits of the flesh verses the fruits of the Holy Spirit:

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatries, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." (Galatians 5:19-25)

Using the two contrasting lists here, we ought to be able to discern whose we are by looking at the fruit of our lives. Are our lives consistent with the deeds of the flesh or the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

You may respond and say that this is not for us to judge. I will respond with Paul's words that say certainly we are to judge ourselves, and we are called to judge within the Body of Christ for the sake of accountability.

"I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES." (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

The person who claims to be Born Again should also exhibit the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Obviously we are all progressing in our maturity and obedience to Christ, but the Body of Christ is appointed to help each believer grow in Christ. This makes Jesus' words, "You will know them by their fruit," all the more important and applicable. Thus we can know if the Gospel has truly penetrated our own hearts by our fruit.

Be careful! Jesus also said:

"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. (Matthew 10:22)

"But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (Matthew 24:13)

The test of one's fruit is not just the immediate circumstances, but the fruit must be lasting. It is very easy to put on a show or fool people for a time, but only those who endure to the very end will be saved. Jesus says these words in the context of facing difficult times of persecution and false teaching.

Thus we see two principles at work in determining if the Gospel has truly brought the new birth and salvation to an individual: 1) Is the fruit the Fruit of the Holy Spirit?; 2) Is the fruit enduring, especially in difficult times? Do not forget that this is intended to be applied to ourselves first, then to those who claim to be believers for the sake of encouraging and building one another up in Christ; never for tearing down or dividing the Body of Christ.

In His Grip & Grace
Pastor Mitch

Contacting Pastor Mitch

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