

Christ's Last Words to His Church Series:

Jesus is ALWAYS Encouraging The Fruitfulness of His Church:

Is my life Fruitful & Pleasing to God?
Revelation 2-3

Have you ever noticed that when ever Jesus described us as His children in the Gospels, somewhere nearby He spoke of fruitfulness?

As we open to the Matthew 13 Parable of the Soils He said His born-again believers bear three levels of fruit: some 30, some 60, and others 100-fold. Look at v.8 and then at v. 23.

In the John 15 Vine and the Branches discourse He said that He is vitally interested in us bearing "more" fruit. In fact John 15 states more clearly than anywhere else in the Gospels what Christ's constant desire is for us as His children: glorifying God equals fruitful lives.

In a little bit we will be returning to Christ's Last Words to His Church in Revelation 1-3, and we'll see also that our fruitfulness is what dominates all the three chapters He wrote to us.

This morning, Jesus is here with His Church seeking that we offer more and more of the soil of our lives to come under His cultivation. He desires even more than we ever could, that our lives bear the crop of fruit that pleases God.

To be fruitfully bringing glory to God from our lives we need to be healthy.

How Healthy Do YOU want to Be?

The question that should consume our attention is: am I allowing the Lord access to prepare every part of my life to be productive for His purposes? Here are some foundational truths about our fruitfulness.

1. **God is vitally concerned about your diet.** Jesus said don't just eat good food "bread alone" but He said be sure that you get fed by "every Word of God" as we see in Matthew 4:4.

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**'"

Be sure that verse marked some way in your Bible, it is a key to being fruitful for the Lord. The Bible keeps us from sin, and sin keeps us from the Bible. God wants our souls fed regularly on the healthy nourishment of His Word.

One of the clearest indicators of our health is found in where prayer and the Word show up in our daily schedule. Are they guarded, longed for, much needed and anticipated? Or are they neglected, forgotten, overlooked, and dreaded? You can tell how much you glorify God, and how spiritually healthy you are by the daily feeding your soul gets from Scriptures read, studied, and meditated upon; and from the prayers that flow from those truths.

Today as we head to the communion Table, are you going there with a heart saying to God: I will meet with you, and eat with you, and let you strengthen me on the inside. Why not renew that desire to stay faithful in His Word, before the Lord right now?

2. **God is also so very concerned about your exercise.** He wants us to not merely listen to His Word proclaimed, but to become "doers" of what He says (James 1:21-27).

James 1:21-27 (NKJV) Therefore **lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. 22 **But be doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. 27 **Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.**

We aren't to live in a simulator, seeing imaginary images of what it may look like to do something. We are to be actually "exercising ourselves" in godly behavior (I Timothy 4:7). That is why nurturing discipleship is so vital (Titus 2).

The Great Commission states that each believer needs to be taught to "observe all things" commanded by Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). We all need a trainer who comes alongside and shows us how to work out in spiritual exercise in better and better ways.

3. **God also is critically concerned about your weight.** Then we are to also regularly examining our lifestyles and see if there are any sins that keep tripping us up (easily beset us) and when we identify those, we are to “lay” them aside (or literally) “strip” them off (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Just like a coat that catch fire can't be left on, or a blanket we pick up and wrap around us that is infested with spiders, ants, or wasps would be ditched as fast as we possibly could—so sin that separates us from being pleasing to God MUST be ditched, stripped off, and abandoned. We are to be constantly abstaining from any type of evil (I Th. 5:22).

So why not:

Start a Regular Three Part Workout

In summary, there are three areas of our spiritual lives we are to watch, so that we stay healthy, and thus fruitful, and thus pleasing to God:

- **God is vitally concerned about your diet.** Get in the Word daily.
- **God is also so very concerned about your exercise.** Obey what God says.
- **God also is critically concerned about your weight.** Strip off anything that hinders.

By the way, if you want to tune up those skills, we are going to be doing a Word Clinic during the month of May on Wednesday nights. I will be coverin the keys to unlocking life-long devotional truths from the Word by explaining the 12x12 methods each Wednesday night in May.

If you are serious about going to the next level, or jump starting your time with God plan to join us. All you need is your Bible, a pen, a notebook, and a willing heart.

Now to see how Jesus Himself applies these truths to churches just like ours, turn back with me to Revelation 2-3.

In Revelation 2-3, Jesus lists the areas that were keeping those believers and their local churches from being fruitful for Him in their daily lives. Remember that by the time

Jesus was writing to these churches they had already heard the messages of the Apostles, they had Paul's Epistles, they had the Gospels, and of course Christ's Bible, the Old Testament.

The clear message Christ gives is that: each believer is responsible to obey God's Word

In other words, they had just about as much exposure to God's Word as we do, plus the fact that many of them had met and known the Apostles. So Jesus writes these seven letters in Revelation 2-3 holding the churches responsible to live what He had sent them in His Word.

We can say that these two chapters contain Christ's expectations for them, and for us.

So as we open to Rev. 2:1, we see Christ's first expectation of them and us is:

To Please God and be Fruitful Love the Lord Most

The saints in Ephesus were not being obedient to the central truth of the Scriptures Old and New Testament: Love the Lord Your God MOST. That is what had been taught them from God's Word by their faithful pastors over the years—listen to what Christ said:

*Revelation 2:1-7 (NKJV) "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 **"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 **Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*****

Their lives were clogged with so many other things, so Jesus was no longer first in their hearts, in their schedules, or their concentration; and all that signaled that He was no longer the supreme ruler of their lives.

They were not being obedient to the clear commands Christ had already given them, thus they were not pleasing Him. What had Jesus already asked for them to do, and taught them through Paul, Timothy, and John's ministry of the Word to them?

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Matthew 22:37 (NKJV) Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Jesus said: stop everything else from pushing me out, go back to your original settings. Love the Lord Your God with all you are.

We'll skip over persecuted Smyrna in Revelation 2:8-11 because Jesus finds no fault with them: they are fruitful and pleasing Him as they struggle along in their great persecutions.

Starting in Rev. 2:12 we find Christ's second expectation of His Church:

To Please God and be Fruitful Separate From Sin

The saints in Pergamos were not being obedient to what had been taught them from God's Word by their faithful pastors over the years —listen to what Christ said:

*Revelation 2:12-17 (NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 **"I know your works,** and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 **But I have a few things against you,** because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 **Repent, or else** I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."*

They had gotten so comfortable being exposed to the deadly germs of worldliness that they had themselves come down with a bad cold. They seemed to now have the symptoms of friendship with the world, and had blended right into the activities, entertainments, and habits of the lost world around them and were no longer distinctively Christlike.

They were not being obedient to the clear commands Christ had already given them, thus they were not pleasing Him. What had Jesus already asked for them to do, and taught them through their pastor's ministry of the Word to them?

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 (NKJV) Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what

communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: **“I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”** 17 Therefore **“Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”** 18 “ I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.” 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

Jesus reports that what is needed is for them to repent of friendship with the world and draw near to God. The only way to be fruitful in our lives is to please God by separating from personal sins that defile our hearts, minds, and spirits.

Today, Jesus invites us to sit across the Communion Table from Him, and as we do so: to EXAMINE ourselves in these areas.

These are Christ’s expectations of us, if Jesus is looking specifically for my response in these areas, then today at His Table is a perfect time to say: YES.

We Each Need to Start a Regular Workout

- **To Please God and be Fruitful I will watch my diet:** Get in the Word daily.
- **To Please God and be Fruitful I will watch my exercise:** Obey what God says.
- **To Please God and be Fruitful I will watch my weight:** Strip off anything that hinders.
- **To Please God and be Fruitful Christ expects us to Love Him Most:** I will love Him Most.
- **To Please God and be Fruitful Christ expects us to Separate From Sin:** I will separate from all know sin in my life.