

FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY

BIBLE TEXT : James 2:1-26

LESSON 449 **Junior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace (II Timothy 2:22).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

James 2:1-26

¹ My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

² For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

³ And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

⁴ Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

⁵ Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

⁶ But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

⁷ Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

⁸ If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

⁹ But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

¹¹ For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

God's Love

God loves every one on the earth: not because he may be rich or poor, young or old, ill or in good health, but because he has a living, never dying soul, and God is not willing that any should perish. "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). He does not love those who have fine homes, expensive cars, and much money, any more than those who have only a little in this world. He understands the sufferings of the poor. He said when on earth: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). People owe God thanks for the things they have, and should never forget to give Him the praise for all He provides.

No Favourites

James teaches us that God is not pleased with us if we favour the well-dressed more than those who do not have such fine clothing. God's Word says, "The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). Perhaps under the fine clothing is a very wicked heart; or, under the poorer clothing, a righteous heart. Jesus told of the beggar laid at the rich man's gate, who loved God. He was poorly dressed, probably in rags, and full of sores. He did not have the good things of this life as the rich man had, but he had the greatest treasure of all, God's love in his heart. When he died, he was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, to be comforted by the one who is called "the father of the faithful." His joy was not for a short time, but was to last through all eternity. He was never to suffer pain, sorrow or hunger again.

No matter what we wear, what we say, or how we act, God knows our heart. We are like an open book with large print. God can read it easily. The Lord has no favourites and shows no partiality.

Talents

Some think that God loves those best who have the most talent, or those who do the things that appear the most important. Even though we have only one talent, if we use it faithfully and prayerfully, great will be our reward. God does not require something of us that we cannot do.

Jesus told a parable of those who received talents. Some received several, but one man received only one. The man must have felt that he could do little good with just one talent. He wrapped it up and buried it that he might have it to give back to the master when he returned to see what had been done with the given talents.

When the master returned he found that some of those who had received talents had put them to work and had gained other talents. He was pleased with them and rewarded their labour. When he found that the man with one talent had been too lazy to put it to work, he was angry, took the talent from him and gave it to one who was willing to work.

Faith and Works

Others believe that to have faith is sufficient. It is true that the

¹² So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

¹³ For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

¹⁴ What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

²³ And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

²⁴ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

²⁵ Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another

Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). We cannot come to him and be saved, or receive other blessings, without faith. When we come in faith, repenting of our sin, God gives forgiveness. He also gives us the deeper experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and of healing. He supplies our needs, whatever they may be. James said, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). God is looking for both faith and works in the life of a Christian.

Do your parents ever promise you a reward for doing something special for them? You may be excited about the reward and may plan what you will do after receiving it. And if you do what has been asked of you, the reward will be given. But if you only dream about the pleasure of the reward, and have not "works," you will only be disappointed and empty-handed. Let us be sure that we do not try to have either faith or works without the other. Faith grows stronger with works; and only works that are mixed with faith are acceptable with God.

Tree-Like Lives

Jesus often used trees, gardens, vines, branches and fruit to teach lessons of truth. A Christian life is like a tree -- not just a tree with leaves but a tree that bears good fruit. Trees whose roots go deep into the ground may sway and bend when the strong winds blow, but are still standing when the sun shines again. A Christian has trials which bring him closer to God and which cause his "roots" to go down deep into the Lord. Isn't it wonderful to see one go through a hard trial and come out with a smile and a praise to God?

Trees with roots that are not deep will often fall in the storm, causing damage as they fall. Just so, the Christian who has not gone deep in Jesus may go down in the testing time, sometimes harming others in his fall.

Will you give yourself "unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24)

Fruit-Bearers

The people of this world are like a great orchard. God, as a good gardener would do, is caring for each tree in the orchard. Each tree has the same care and the same chance to bear good fruit. Each receives the "sunshine and rain" of God's love. God's Word digs about to cause the tree to grow. No orchard has ever had the love and cultivation that the "orchard" of the Lord receives.

Not every tree in an orchard yields alike in the harvest -- some bear beautifully coloured, tasty fruit that will bring the highest price on the market. On some trees the fruit is small, pale and tasteless, poor fruit bringing a small price. In time, the tree bearing poor fruit will be cut down, burned, and be replaced by another tree that will bear good fruit.

The kind of fruit that a tree brings forth affects many people. If the fruit is good it brings riches to the grower, wages to those who pick it and to those who pack it. Finally it reaches someone who will be nourished by that tasty fruit. Bad fruit is a loss to the grower and all who were depending upon it.

Christian Fruit

James, in this lesson, told us of Christian love and faith, two fruits of those who are saved and living for Jesus. We are told in Galatians 5:22, 23: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." God puts all these into the life of a Christian as he seeks them with an earnest heart. If you lack in any of these things, go to the Giver of every good and perfect gift and He will

way?

²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

supply your need. With such fruit in your life you can be a blessing wherever you are, at home, at school, or at work.

Bad Fruit

Just as there are trees that have useless fruit, there are people who live ungodly lives, and God's anger will someday be poured out upon them. In Galatians 5:19-21, we are told of "bad fruit," some of which are adultery, uncleanness, idolatry, hatred, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, and such like. Any or all of these things will cause our tree to be cursed and to wither. If we do not repent and have our names written in Heaven, our "bad fruit" will cause us to be lost in eternity. Just one sin will cause us to be lost. Many times neglect is the sin that condemns people forever.

A Choice

You have a choice: to be a tree bearing the fruit of the Spirit, or you can be a tree that yields sin and its fruit.

Remember, the choice you make will determine where you spend eternity. The choice you make may influence someone else who is trying to decide whether or not to follow the Lord.

Do you wish to please the Lord, the Gardener, that at the end He may say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21)? Or do you choose to bring forth the fruit of sin, or neglect, only to hear those final, unchangeable words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matthew 25:41)?

Living Examples

Those who have made a choice to serve the Lord are happy, fruit-bearing "trees," helping others find God. Those who turn God aside, and bear the fruit of the ungodly, may meet a friend in a lost eternity who will say, "Why didn't you tell me about Jesus? You knew, but you failed to tell me, and now we are lost." The Word teaches that the punishment will be greatest for those who had the most light of the Gospel and turned it down for the world and sin.

The Right Choice

That courageous man of God, Joshua, once cried out: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). He spoke those words when he was old and about to leave this world. He had served God from his youth, and had found Him to be a wonderful Master, a Deliverer in time of need. He was not sorry for all of his years in service to God, but encouraged all who would come after him to make the right choice.

It was the best choice then, and it is the only choice today that will bring us happiness and Heaven.

QUESTIONS

1. What does God wish to find in our lives?
2. What does it mean to show partiality? What does God think of it?
3. How many talents do you need before you can begin to work for God?
4. Who shall receive the greatest reward for his talents?
5. Of what two things did James teach us in this lesson?
6. Name several of the fruits of the Spirit.
7. What are several of the works of the flesh?
8. How can you tell if a fruit tree is good?
9. What is the best choice before us today? What is your choice?