

A Tree and Its Fruit

If you grow a healthy tree, you'll pick healthy fruit. If you grow a diseased tree, you'll pick worm-eaten fruit. The fruit tells you about the tree. You have minds like a snake pit! How do you suppose what you say is worth anything when you are so foul-minded? It's your heart, not the dictionary that gives meaning to your words. A good person produces good deeds and words season after season.

Matthew 12:33-37, *The Message*

To comprehend Jesus' meaning in these verses from Matthew, one must understand the context in which they were set (see Matthew 12: 22-32). The Pharisees were attempting to discredit Jesus by stating that he was in league with Satan rather than the Spirit of God when he cast out demons that made a man blind and mute. Jesus made the point that evil persons often speak good things for evil purpose. The Pharisees claimed to be holy and doing good works, yet, they said evil things by charging that Jesus was aided by Satan when He performed miracles. Jesus' response: A good person is one who is a believer who has the grace of God in him. Like the fruit of the good tree, good persons are known by their good works. By their words they speak of God's glory and grace.

This message is equally relevant today. Persons with evil intent often use the good words of the Bible to validate their actions. Ultimately, we are judged more by what we do as common practice. And, what we say is directly the result of what we practice. Indeed, we are known by the fruit of our tree.

Prayer: Dear Lord, provide me with guidance to discern right from evil that my service to Your kingdom may produce good fruit. Make my ear attentive to the wisdom which produces a loving heart for You and my neighbor. In the name of Christ, I am your humble servant.

Sam Rogers

Additional Scripture Readings:

Psalms 21

Genesis 15:1-18

Matthew 12:33-37