

# Roots and Fruits

#0104

Study Given by W. D. Frazee

One morning, a man whom I was acquainted with stopped in to see Sister White during her closing years. She was seated in her chair.

He said to her, "Sister White, you look bright and cheery this morning."

"Yes," she said, "And it's bright inside."

Someone heard that and wrote a song about it. Well, it can be bright inside, yet there is more to it than just being smiling, happy, cheerful.

This is the chapter that Jesus read from in the synagogue at Nazareth, as recorded in Luke's Gospel.

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified" Isaiah 61:3.

God compares His people to trees. He calls them 'the planting of the Lord.' And the result is, He will be glorified. That is, many will see these trees, and they will say, "That Man keeps a good grove. He has a good orchard."

Notice that these trees are called 'trees of righteousness.' Apple trees bear apples. Pecan trees give us pecans. Trees of righteousness mean righteous *people*. They produce the fruits of righteousness. Let's see what this fruit is. See if you would like to have an orchard growing fruit of this kind:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" Galatians 5:22.

This is the fruit of the Spirit. It is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. All this is called fruit. Where does fruit grow? It grows on trees. Does it grow on any particular *part* of the tree? Yes, it grows on the branches. Very seldom do we see fruit growing on the trunk. Does fruit grow on the roots? No. Well, let's get rid of the roots then. What? You mean we need the roots, even though they don't have fruit growing on them?

Another interesting thing about the roots: they are usually where? In the ground. That means they are out of sight.

I brought along a little tree this morning. This is a little orange tree. Dr. Jacobs-Baldwin gave this little tree to my wife a few years ago. Believe it or not, it has actually grown some little oranges. It has fulfilled its purpose. The purpose of a tree of this kind is to produce fruit, so this little tree has been bearing fruit.

Does it have any roots? Can you see them? Why are you so sure it has roots? Because it wouldn't have either leaves or fruit unless it had roots. This is the way the Lord makes trees.

So it is in the Christian life. It's all right to look at the fruit, but it's all right to look *for* the fruit, but let's not forget the roots. Neither do we need to think that we should pull the tree up and show the roots to everyone. They are much better in the ground out of sight. Nevertheless, they are essential.

If you want the fruit of righteousness in your life that people can see—in love and joy and peace and longsuffering—there has got to be a root system in your life that other people don't see.

I will tell you something interesting. People who have studied agriculture tell me that, in general, the root system of the tree is about equal to the trunk and branch and leaf system that you see above. Isn't that something? The other day, I saw some great big pecan trees. They were beautiful. The spreading branches of one of those big trees would almost cover this chapel. And could it be that there is a root system down in the ground equal to all those spreading branches and twigs and leaves? Apparently, that's the program. It takes a big root system to support a big branch structure.

What is that root system doing? It's sucking up water, minerals, and plant food. It's through the roots that that plant is eating and drinking. The leaf system is how it breathes.

So the tree is like you and me in our physical structure—we have to eat and drink and breathe—and the root system is what makes it possible for the tree to take its nourishment and its moisture.

The root system also *supports* the tree. It is interesting, as we see, these winds and storms come to watch as the trees sway back and forth. But they don't move because they are anchored by the root system. So the root system not only provides nourishment, it provides support and stability. I'm glad for the root system, but remember: it's out of sight.

What appears is the leaf and the fruit. The leaf is our profession. The fruit is the real result in the life. The fruit of the Spirit is what? Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and so forth.

Our text doesn't say "the fruits of the Spirit are..." It says, "the fruit of the Spirit is..." God only has one kind of fruit growing on His trees of righteousness. The Devil has all kinds of counterfeits. But God's way is one way—the way of Jesus Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is love. All these other words are simply various expressions and manifestations of love. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. All of these are manifestations of love. And as the varied hues of the rainbow belong in one beam of light and come from it, so all these precious traits of character are manifestations of love.

We are trees in the garden of God. Who planted us? God did. Oh, He must have wanted us, and He wanted fruit. And He has provided a root system.

You say, "Brother Frazee, what's that root system?"

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" 2 Corinthians 4:10.

When does a tree need roots? Always. Summer and winter, day and night.

What does "manifest" mean? "Apparent." "Evident." It's "what shows." What is it that is to be manifest in our body? The life of Jesus. Would that be good fruit? Would that be the fruit of love? Would that be the fruit of righteousness? Oh, yes. The life of Jesus. He is love. He is righteousness. If the life of Jesus is manifested in you and me, we are indeed trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified. Is that clear?

What's underneath that makes possible what is above? We will look at the root system which makes possible the fruit-bearing. What is it that we bear about in our bodies that the life of Jesus may be manifest in us? The dying of the Lord Jesus.

So the root system, which we don't see, is this bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Which do you like better, life or death? Life. Which do you think *God* likes better, life or death? Life. There is nothing wrong with that. Wouldn't it be a strange thing to love death? God wants you and me to live. But watch. Here in this world of sin, because of the nature that you and I have inherited since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, if we are to produce the fruit of righteousness, if we are to be trees that bear the precious fruit of love, we must have deep in our hearts a sense of the death of Jesus.

We must share that death. The fruit that Paul is talking about here is not just a remembrance of the historical fact that Jesus died. Christ is the One who was crucified, but someone else was crucified.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” Galatians 2:20.

That is the root system, down underneath where people can't see, you are crucified with Christ. Let me be very practical about this.

Here is a man who has the temptation to drink whiskey. He has drunk it for 30 years, and that habit is ingrained in him. He comes to Jesus and gives his heart to God. He sees the Savior hanging on the cross for him. He says, “Oh, I can't go on defiling, destroying, this body that Jesus paid such a price for! I must give up that whiskey. I must say ‘no’ to the craving.”

Day by day, he comes to the cross and sees Jesus dying for him. Day by day, he goes out and mingles with the world in his work. From time to time, old friends see him and say, “Come in, Tom, and have a drink.”

What does he say? “No, thank you.”

“You don't drink? Why, Tom, you used to always be the life of the party. What has happened?”

“I've given my heart to Jesus. I belong to Him now.”

So weeks and months go by, and he never touches a drink. Does that mean that he never has a craving for it? Oh, no. If he has a craving for it, why doesn't he do it? He has a root system. He is bearing about in his body the dying Lord Jesus. And this means two things. It means that he is thinking about the fact that Jesus died for him, and he is thinking about the fact that he has chosen to die with Jesus. He remembers that Jesus gave everything for him, and he remembers that he has given, and is giving, everything for Jesus.

People looking on may say Tom is having an easy time. They may think Tom never has a struggle. He never drinks, even though people around him drink. What are they seeing? The fruits. Do they see the roots? Do they hear Tom pleading with God in the secret place of prayer saying, “Lord, help me to walk sober today.” No, they don't hear that. They don't see him as he wrestles with God for victory over that thing. But as long as he keeps his root system healthy—keeps taking in that nourishment and moisture—will the fruit appear in his life?

George's problem is not whiskey; his problem is an evil temper. George might have some brothers here this morning that have inherited that same problem. He could have some sisters or cousins or aunts or uncles. A number of people have the problem of an evil temper.

But suppose here is this man and the people who know him and see him coming get out of his way. Why? They don't want to *tangle* with him. They don't want to get him mad. Believe me, when George gets mad, he's liable to hit you or throw something at you. You'd better be careful how you irritate him.

But George has given his heart to God. People who know him watch as time goes on day by day. They see things happen that used to irritate him. But now he seems to control his temper. They think, "I wonder what happened to George?" What are they seeing? The fruit.

Does that mean that George has passed into a heavenly experience where he is never tempted or tried or bothered anymore? Not necessarily. But he is bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus in order that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in his body.

The secret of that life of victory is found in that death to sin that comes from looking at Christ on the cross and sharing with Him the sorrow for sin. This is the Christian life. This is God's grove of trees. They are called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

Here's Harry, who all his life has indulged appetite. He eats what he pleases, when he pleases, and as much as he pleases. People offer him food, and they know he will take it. He likes to; He enjoys it.

But the Gospel gets hold of Harry. He comes to Christ at Calvary. He sees Jesus dying to give men victory over sin. He looks at Christ in the wilderness of temptation, fasting for 40 days to break the power of appetite in the human family. As he beholds Jesus, he says, "Oh, Lord, if you suffered like that in resisting temptation, God help me; I won't let that kind of fruit in my life. Lord, plant this tree. Not only give me a fruit system so other people can see Your life of victory in me but help me to know that I've got to have a root system down inside, that in prayer and in sorrow for sin, I will get the strength to bear that fruit of victory over appetite.

And people who don't know what's going on may watch Harry as he is asked to eat between meals from day to day. He smiles and says, "No, thank you." When he sits at the table and is asked to take more than he knows would be good for him, he says, "No, thank you." He puts his hands on the table and pushes away. He is demonstrating in his life the victory over temptation. And people who don't know anything about it may say, "My, I wonder what happened to Harry. He doesn't seem to enjoy eating like he used to."

Some people have more of a problem with controlling their appetite for food than they would with drinking whiskey or losing their temper. What is the secret? Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus in order that the life of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal body.

Suppose I'm a man whose problem is getting discouraged. I'm not that way all the time. There are very few of us who are doing the same sin every minute of our lives. Even people who have a problem with whiskey, very few of them drink every day, all the time. And so, this matter of discouragement. Quite often, it's a matter of mood. I got up on the right side of the bed this morning, the birds were singing, the sun was shining. And of course, I can sing. I got a nice check in the mail yesterday. My wife gave me a nice smile this morning. The children are behaving. I am singing. Praise the Lord. A few days go by, and for some reason, I get up and, if the birds are singing, I can't hear them. It's raining. The children are making problems, and it's hard on my wife and hard on me. I have some problems that people don't know about. I am just discouraged. Everyone in the house knows about it. If my friends come along, they soon find out about it.

Is this good fruit? Does it make people want to plant that kind of tree? Do people say, if I'm like that, "Oh, I wish I could get hold of that religion he has, so I'd be as miserable as he is"? Do they?

What's the remedy? The remedy is that my wife should be nice to me every day, no matter how *she* feels. The children should never make any problems. I should never run into any financial problems because they bother me. The sun should always shine, and the birds should always sing.

That is the remedy, isn't it? No. What *is* the remedy?

We need a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. But if there is any fruit that will bring glory to God, it's the fruit of being above discouragement and depression. This thing of being up today and down tomorrow, singing like an angel one day, and having low faith the next, is no way to bring glory to God. But notice: does that mean that the true Christian doesn't *have* these feelings of depression and discouragement? No. But it means he has that kind of problem down in the *root* system, not up in the fruit where everyone can see it.

The man who keeps those discouragements and depressions down under the ground won't get very much sympathy from his friends. This is one reason why people involve these fits of moodiness: they want sympathy. They want people to say, "Poor Brother Frazee. Look what an awful time he's having. People treat him so bad that he's so burdened down that he can hardly get around." But if Brother Frazee has his problems in the root system and nobody knows anything about them, who is going to come around and say, "Poor Brother Frazee"? Who is going to send a sympathy card and say, "Brother, be of good cheer. The cloud has passed away"?

Oh friends, let's learn to get our sympathy from God and come forth from the secret place of prayer to find someone *else* to cheer rather than going about with gloom on our countenance looking for sympathy.

If there is anyone here who is never tempted to drink whiskey, lose your temper, indulge your appetite, utter doubt, be moody, or be discouraged, don't tell it publicly. Write me a little note; I'd like to meet you. For every man, every woman, every boy, every girl has temptations, tests. Thank God, there is a way through. What is it? For Jesus to plant in our hearts the trees of righteousness. The fruit shows where people can see it—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, self-control. But down underneath, there is a root system that people don't see or know anything about. “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

Think of the saintliest saint you have ever heard about. Think of Enoch and Joseph and Daniel. They were men of like passions as we are. They fought the good fight of faith. And while they had a massive trunk and a wide-spreading branch system, and luscious fruit hanging from the branches, don't forget that they had a root system. They had the experience, day by day, of looking at the sacrifice of Jesus, sorrowing for sin in general and sin in their own natural dispositions. They got sorrow before they broke the heart of God instead of afterward. They got sorry for sin before they committed it, instead of waiting till they fell and then getting sorry.

This is the root.

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