

Bearing the Right Kind of Fruit Haggai 2:10-23

Introduction:

1. In the Bible, many times the word "fruit" speaks of the effect or consequence of an action. For example, we see this meaning if we use the phrase "the fruits of our labor."
2. Let's read **Colossians 1:10**. There is a right kind of work that we can do that will please the Lord and make us fruitful.
 - A person can bring forth fruit unto God. **Romans 7:4**
 - A person can bring forth fruit unto death. **Romans 7:5**
3. We make decisions, and from those decisions come fruit (results, consequences).
4. Here in our text, this remnant of Israel had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild God's house. But for 16 years they had neglected God's work and were caught up in their own agenda.
5. What was the result? The fruit they were looking for didn't come. Their actions were wrong so the fruit wasn't good.
6. God sent Haggai the prophet with messages to realign their thinking with God's thinking. As they heeded God's Word, they would begin to experience fruitfulness.
7. As your pastor, my desire is for CrossRoads to bring forth fruit unto God. I want us to live out **Colossians 1:10**. God tells this remnant how they could be fruitful, and there is great application for us today. How can we bring forth fruit unto God?

First, it will take clean hearts. vs. 10-14

1. Haggai addressed the priests of Israel who were responsible to offer up the appropriate sacrifices to God for Israel. There are no priests today, but the illustration is applicable.
 - Verse 12 - If the priest was carrying "*holy flesh*" (meat that had been sanctified unto God for sacrifice), and the meat touched another piece of food, did it transmit holiness to that other piece of meat? Of course not.
 - Verse 13 - Under the law, if you touched a dead body, you were "*unclean*" for seven days. If an unclean person touched meat, did that make that meat unclean? The answer is "yes." If a person with a transmittable disease or virus touches a doorknob, the doorknob is now unclean.
2. What was the point of all this? The people's hearts were not right and clean, therefore every work of their hands was unclean. vs. 14
3. How does this apply to us today? There is no way that we can bring forth good fruit unto the Lord if our hearts are unclean and filthy.
4. Notice **Colossians 1:10** again. The key to fruitfulness is walking "*worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.*" cf. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-3**
5. **1 Thessalonians 4:7** declares that, "*For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*" cf. **Romans 6:21-22**
6. When we make decisions to sin and disobey God, it shouldn't surprise us when we reap rotten fruit in our lives. This is what was happening to this remnant. If we want to bring forth fruit unto God, it will take clean hearts - holy lives.

Second, it will take willing hands. vs. 15-19

1. Haggai says in verse 15, *“Remember back to when you quit building God's house.”*
 - The foundation had been partially laid, but that was it. No stones had been laid upon that foundation for 16 years. God's house laid waste and was a reproach.
 - For 16 years these people were unwilling to work on God's house, while they took God's resources and built themselves beautiful homes.
2. Haggai says, "Think back over the past 16 years. How have things gone?" They didn't get the fruit they expected from their labors (vs. 16). They struggled (1:6, 9).
3. Why was this? God explains in verse 17. Their hearts were unwilling to turn to God, and their hands were unwilling to work for God. Therefore, God said, "Since **my** work is of no concern to you, **your** work will not have my hand of blessing upon it."
4. But now they had heeded Haggai's exhortation (1:14). They were busy in God's work and God's priorities again, so notice verse 19. God said, "...from this day will I bless you."
5. What is the application for today? **1 Corinthians 15:58** gives the church very clear instruction concerning our attitude towards God's work today.
6. If we don't have people here at CrossRoads who are willing to put God's work first, then we can't expect to reap the spiritual fruit of changed lives. It takes willing hands. **Titus 3:14**
7. There will be a lot of Christians who will have no fruit to show for their lives when they stand before God one day, and it's simply because God's work was not a priority to them. They lived unto themselves and for their own agendas.
8. When you live for yourself rather than God, eternity will reveal that you wasted your time and your resources as if putting your money in a bag full of holes. 1:6
9. But to the person with willing hands, who puts God first, God promises...
2 Corinthians 9:8

Third, it will take strength from the Lord. vs. 20-23

1. This book finished with a wonderful promise to the leader of this remnant - Zerubbabel. He was always addressed first in Haggai's messages because he was the leader.
 - If he didn't have a tender heart to obey God, the project to build God's house was doomed.
2. Zerubbabel was asked by God to be strong (2:4) and he had done just that. God's house was completed and the task accomplished in just five years.
3. Just as he had showed himself strong, God said, "One day I will show myself strong to this wicked world and set up my kingdom on this earth." vs. 21-22
4. God then told Zerubbabel that he would have a special place in His kingdom. vs. 23
 - The signet was the king's ring and was a sign of authority and power.
5. Zerubbabel showed himself strong and it brought forth fruit in two ways:
 - First, God's house was completed. This was immediate, **earthly** fruit.
 - Second, there would be **eternal** fruit as he received a place of authority in Christ's future eternal kingdom.

6. Paul told the church, "...*be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*"
Ephesians 6:10
7. Church, as we find our daily strength in the Lord, we bring forth fruit in two ways:
 - God's work on earth is accomplished and moves forward.
 - There will be eternal fruit we will enjoy in the ages to come.**Colossians 3:23-24**

Church, let's bring forth the right kind of fruit - fruit unto God!