

---

# Words of Truth

---

## If It Bear Fruit, Well...

By: Brian A. Yeager

*“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down” (Luke 13:1-9).*

The context above is about the process of repentance. As any Christian knows, repentance includes bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. In the first century, John began teaching this process: *“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 3:1-10).*

So, we can see that both Jesus and John taught that the process of repentance included bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. After the death of Christ, the Apostles continued teaching this process. Notice: *“Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven,*

---

*above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:12-20).*

The above quoted texts make this process unmistakably clear. What is often misunderstood or at least not thought about, is the process. Some think once a person confesses sin and expresses change that repentance has occurred. Some think repentance hasn't occurred until people see enough fruit to be convinced. Some think forgiveness from God and men requires fruit as clear evidence of change. What is the truth?

### **The Process Of Repentance**

One very clear passage states this: *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”* (Proverbs 28:13). Confessing sin is vital in the process of repentance (I John 1:9). Repentance may include righting things as far as is possible (Ezekiel 33:10-20 and Luke 19:1-10). Some things cannot be made right in the flesh. One cannot restore an innocent life taken by murder (i.e. Acts 22:1-4 and I Timothy 1:12-16). The fact is, there cannot be a blanket statement about the process of repentance. It would be a case by case study.

Forgiveness as it ties to repentance is an entirely different study. Brethren are exhorted to be forgiving at the onset of the process of repentance (Matthew 18:15-35 and Luke 17:1-4). For God, that is not for us to say. Whether or not someone's repentance is sufficient for God or not may not be known by us until the Day of Judgment. Take the Apostle Peter as an example of how he did not promise something on God's behalf (Acts 8:12-24).

### **Conclusion**

If you have sin in your life, allow godly sorrow to begin the process of repentance now (II Corinthians 7:9-10). Repentance takes work. God gives us the time for that work (II Peter 3:9). He expects fruit to come from that time (Romans 2:4).