



## A Tree Is Know by Its Fruit

*By Derek Kiser on December 9, 2021*

**READING:** Matthew 12

This chapter is a collection of stories. Jesus heals a man with a withered hand and a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. Jesus is sought by the religious leaders of the day for healing, specifically on the Sabbath. They wanted to trap Jesus so they could accuse him of doing wrong. Jesus talks about the sign of Jonah and the three days Jonah was in the stomach of the whale. In a veiled way, Jesus refers to himself being in the grave three days. In the middle of all these stories, Jesus takes a shot back at the religious leaders with another agricultural metaphor--a tree.

What kind of tree is your favorite, and why? My dad is a Horticulturist who taught Horticulture for 40 years. This means he taught people about plants and trees. I do not have his knowledge because I always had an expert available. I only have a basic knowledge of these sorts of things. I know a few things about trees. Did you know that apples come from apple trees, oranges from orange trees and acorns from oak trees? Did you know that fruits of the spirit only grow on Christian trees? You get the point hopefully. If I walk up to a tree and there is an apple hanging on it I know it is an apple tree. What Jesus is saying was a dig at the religious leaders--there was no fruit in their lives as they were not believers. This is difficult for a lot of us to swallow when it comes to our families. The truth clearly is if there is no fruit in a person's life that they are a believer they are not. We know that to be true but we do not want to admit it if it is our son, daughter, sister, mom or dad.

Some disclaimers here--I am a student pastor and I work with immature believers. It is difficult to see the fruit sometimes for what it is. It takes time to know what the fruit is or is not in their lives. Secondly, in winter, trees are hard to identify without their fruit or leaves. There was a six-month time in my own life where I was not walking with the Lord and the fruit would not have been evident. Disclaimers aside, we cannot deny what Jesus is telling the religious leader--no fruit, no relationship with Jesus. Over time, if a tree does not produce fruit it is either dead or not the kind of tree it was thought to be. I can tape an apple to a peach tree, but it will not produce apples next season. Around here, we know what peach trees look like. They have pink blossoms and the photographers come out--then the peaches come and end up at the Peach Stand. If I see apples on the trees along 160 I will know something is terribly wrong. What do we do with this? Do we have fruit in our lives, do others in our family?

**PRAYER:** God, help me see the fruit in my life and trust in You to provide the fruit. God, help me have discernment around others concerning the fruit in their lives.

**TOMORROW'S READING:** Matthew 13

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