

PRAYER LIST

COVID-19 VICTIMS WORLDWIDE

LILLIE ALFORD, Ethel Clark's sis-in-law

LINDA BULLOCK, medical issues/tests

CHERYL BARRON, Stan Raley's sister

WILLIAM CAREY's MOM

ALAN DES ORMEAUX, Vinson friend; cancer

CHRIS EMOND, Madison family friend; cancer

ALANA FAIR

JAMES GORDON, Bridget Smith's dad

JAMAL GROVES, Ethel Clark's grandson; ICU at Merit Wesley Hospital in Hattiesburg; 10/17.

BUD HARPER, Cindy's bro-in-law, health issues

TERRY HARPER, Cindy's husband health issues

THERMAN HODGE, 9/30 surgery recovery

VERNITA HUBBARD

JACK HUNTLEY, Callens friend

BILLY JOHN, recent health issues

JORDAN KEMBLE, Warren friend; brain tumor

WALTER KING, Lamar's dad; surgery rehab

LEANNE MANNESS, Linda Bullock's niece

JACK MEARS

JAKE NESTER, Fair friend – esophageal cancer; chemo treatment in Jackson

CHARLENE RALEY, Stan's mom – health issues

GENE RALEY Family, Stan's dad, passed 9/30

STAN RALEY

GRADY RICHARDSON, Angela Duncan's dad

AL ST. CLAIR

MATTHEW STOKLEY, Duncan friend - cancer

THELMA TALBERT, Shirley Raley's mom

RUTH TAYLOR, Brookdale/Meridian

BARBARA TERRAL, Jennifer Guy's mom

ANNIE THOMS, Edna Toole's mother

BEVERLY THOMAS & daughter, KEARRA

PERRY TUBBY, Brandie Madison's dad

ANNIE WEBB, Cindy Harper's g-grand-daughter

MEMBERS of our ARMED SERVICES

CHURCH MISSION WORK WORLDWIDE

ANNIVERSARY & BIRTHDAY

October 22 : Rob & Doris Warren

October 24 : Harley Madison



How to Avoid a Judgement Surprise

~continued from cover~

...confident in their external performance that they didn't consider they might be missing the point.

The second step is to understand the kind of person Jesus has in mind. In the broader context, we find ourselves at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Starting in 7:13, Jesus began His conclusion by painting the picture of two paths; the broad, and the narrow. He then went on to talk about those who bear bad fruits, then gave the "Lord, Lord," section, before finishing on the wise man and foolish man and their foundations based on how they responded to His words. To sum up, those on the narrow path will be those who bear good fruits, those who do the Father's will, and those who hear Jesus' words and obey.

Of these points, I want to focus most on the bad and good fruits, as that's a concept that shows up repeatedly in the Gospels. Before Jesus began His ministry, John was preaching a message of repentance and told people to bear fruits in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3, Luke 3). He told the tax collectors to be honest in their collection, the soldiers to avoid using their power corruptly, and the general populace to give of what they had to those in need. In other words, don't just say you've repented. Let your life show it. In John 15, Jesus told the disciples that if they abided in Him, they would bear much fruit, but if they didn't bear fruit they would be cut away and thrown into the fire. This fiery judgment for non-fruit bearing branches is a theme that pops up in each of these passages. Jesus expects to see tangible results, and if they aren't there, the branch goes into the incinerator.

So, who will be the kind of person who gets turned away by Jesus? The kind of person who says they know Him but shows little evidence that they do.

The third, and final step, is to stop relying on our own works at all. That's the thing about fruit – it's not an action. It's a result. Fruit appears on a tree as an outward result of all the good things happening inside the tree. With the proper sunlight and feeding, a fruit tree will naturally produce fruit. So, when Jesus puts such a high premium on bearing fruits, He's not telling you to try really hard and maybe it'll be good enough. He's saying that if you walk with Him and abide in Him, your life will naturally show it. Notice those whom He will turn away will be told "I never knew you." Who is the kind of person who produces fruit? The kind of person who knows Jesus, and He knows them.

That's the beauty of a Gospel that is not based on salvation by works. Even though passages like Matthew 7:21-23 should make us sit up straight and pay attention, they don't mean we have to walk around in constant fear of what He's going to say to us at the Judgment. We can know we are saved (1 John 5:13), and it's not because of ourselves. It's because of Him, and the proof we have is the fruit He is producing in our lives.

That leaves the question to you: does your life show the kind of fruit that proves you know Jesus? What will you point to when you stand before Him on that day? Will you point to your own goodness, your own doctrinal correctness, your own works? Or will you point to the cross, and to the fruit that Jesus brought about in your life? Will He say "I never knew you?" Or will it be like meeting a faithful long distance friend after years of waiting to see each other?

In either case, you can know. Don't get surprised at the Judgment.