

Can You Dig It?
Luke 13:6-9, Isaiah 5:1-7
September 24, 2017

“Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’” (Luke 13:8-9)

1. Woodbury Church has a glorious _____.
Psalm 143:5 ***I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.***

2. Woodbury Church has been shown a fruitful _____.
Jeremiah 29:11 ***For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.***

3. Now the church faces a significant _____.
Luke 13:6-7 ***Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. 7 So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’***

Luke 3:9 ***“The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”***

Isaiah 5:5-6 ***Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. 6 I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”***

Revelation 2:5 ***Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.***

4. Jesus expects us to _____.
John 15:1-2, 5-6, 16 ***“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ... 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches***

are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ... 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

5. The solution involves _____ and _____.
Luke 13:8-9 **“Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”**

Philippians 4:13 **I can do all things through him who gives me strength.**

Matthew 25:21 (=23) **“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’**

5.1 _____

5.2 _____
Malachi 3:10 **Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.**

“Simply put, the tithe is the first 10% of your income that should be given to your local church. It’s strictly measured in money, so you can’t replace it with giving your time or your talents.” – Dave Ramsey

<https://www.daveramsey.com/blog/daves-advice-on-tithing-and-giving>

5.3 _____
John 15:7-8 **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**

5.4 _____
Acts 1:8 **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** (Cf. Matthew 28:18-20)

I Corinthians 3:6-8 **I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.**

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(Luke 13:8-9)

Intro. I love WPC. I love you.

1. Woodbury Church has a glorious history.
Psalm 143:5 ***I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.***

- **Fruitful.**
- **Marriages (Ray and Mindi 21 years.)**
- **Baptisms, Confirmations, funerals.**
- **You’ve helped train about half a dozen ministers in 4 denominations.**
- **Palencia Pulpit – Joe Little**
- **Vida Nueva: You paid Balbino’s salary. (Tithing church) (Oestreich living room)**
- **Maranata**
- **Multi-racial mix, reflecting the Kingdom of God.**
“Every tribe, every tongue, every nation.”
- **Food Pantry**
- **Biblical integrity -- Leave denomination and join a movement**
- **Emmaus, Dunamis ...**
- **Think of how God has touched your life, and the lives of so many people around the world –**
 - from China to Congo,**
 - from witnessing to Muslims in Morocco**
 - to praying for Spiritual victory in Jerusalem.**
 - **through this little church on the edge of town.**

2. Woodbury Church has been shown a fruitful future.
Jeremiah 29:11 ***For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.***

- Epicenter of Revival Slide
- Light poured down from heaven Slide
- Shiny gold people. 4 slides quickly

3. Now the church faces a significant challenge or danger.

- We've experienced decline in ministries, members and money.
- Roof replacement: “It may be ‘do or die.’”

Luke 13:6-7 ***Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. 7 So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’***

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Isaiah 5:5-6 ***Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. 6 I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”***

Revelation 2:5 ***Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.***

→ This does not mean we may lose salvation!

- Gospel.

4. Jesus expects us to bear fruit.

John 15:1-2, 5-6, 16 ***“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ... 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ... 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.***

- 2 meanings of fruit:

- Fruit of the Spirit
- Multiplication. Reproduction. New Believers. Seeds

It isn't enough that you ARE the fruit of the past.
The Lord expects you to BEAR the fruit of the future.

- We've been here before.
- There is a solution.

5. The solution involves hard work and risk.

Luke 13:8-9 ***“Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”***

Philippians 4:13 ***I can do all things through him who gives me strength.***

- Remember “If you want to do impossible things, you have

to do something.”

Matthew 25:21 (=23) ***“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’***

- Remember “I hope you enjoyed your dancing cat videos ...”

- Can You Dig It? = Do you agree?

-- But in the parable, to Dig = Invest. Strenuous, risky investment

- 4 ways we can start digging.

5.1 Serve! Make a difference!

- Teach, music, media, hospitality, clean, yard work.
- Roll up sleeves. Sweat. Invest!
- Let’s bear fruit!
- Churches are full of consumers. Christ calls us to be contributors. Fruit-bearers.

5.2 Give: Tithing church

Malachi 3:10 ***Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.***

“Simply put, the tithe is the first 10% of your income that should be given to your local church. It’s strictly measured in money, so you can’t replace it with giving your time or your talents.” – Dave Ramsey “acclaimed Christian financial guru” <https://www.daveramsey.com/blog/daves-advice-on-tithing-and-giving>

- Stewardship is part of discipleship.
- Tithing is Stewardship 101.

5.3 Abide: Pray

John 15:7-8 ***If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.***

5.4 Share Good News (or Witness)

Acts 1:8 ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** (Cf. Matthew 28:18-20)

- That is, plant seeds that will bear fruit.
- You're not required to make the fruit grow. Just do your part.

I Corinthians 3:6-8 ***I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.***

- Prayer walks.
 - Invite children to Movie Night (etc.)
 - Demand Sunday School classes, and fill them.
 - *Little Book of Love* (Take some home to share.)
 - God Loves You cards (Take some home to share.)
 - Prayer Ministry fliers (Take some home to share.)
 - Videos (Friend “Rod Pinder” on FB. Share.)
 - Website, sermons.
 - Word of mouth. (Raymond)
-
- I wonder what happened to the fig tree in the parable.
 - If you do these courageous, risky things and they fail, the tree will get cut down.
 - If WPC continues this trajectory, the tree will get cut

down.

- We will have a glorious past and be a beautiful memory – and I will always thank God for the wonderful things He did here for about 3 decades.
 - But it will only be a memory.
 - But IF you will take risks, if you will dig in like you've never dug before, maybe, just maybe we will bear, and see and taste the most succulent fruit yet.
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- Marriages will be mended
 - Addictions will be shattered.
 - Relationships will be restored.
 - People will be healed.
 - Lives will change.
 - Our community will be transformed.
 - That's tasty fruit!
 - That's why God planted us here in the first place!

“Lord I pray for Woodbury Church. If we will be an ‘epicenter of revival,’ please save Woodbury. If, as You pour Your love out on this church like light from heaven, we will splash it all around the neighborhood, please save Woodbury. If we will be the shiny gold people, touching the drab gray people and turning them shiny gold, restore Woodbury. If we will do everything You call us to do, provide us with all the resources we need to do that. Lord, we do not ask that Woodbury will survive unless we will thrive.”

I believe we can thrive.

I believe we can bear rich fruit again. Richer than ever before.

Can you dig it? ‘/,

Start digging!