





Bearing Fruit

What is the purpose of fruit?

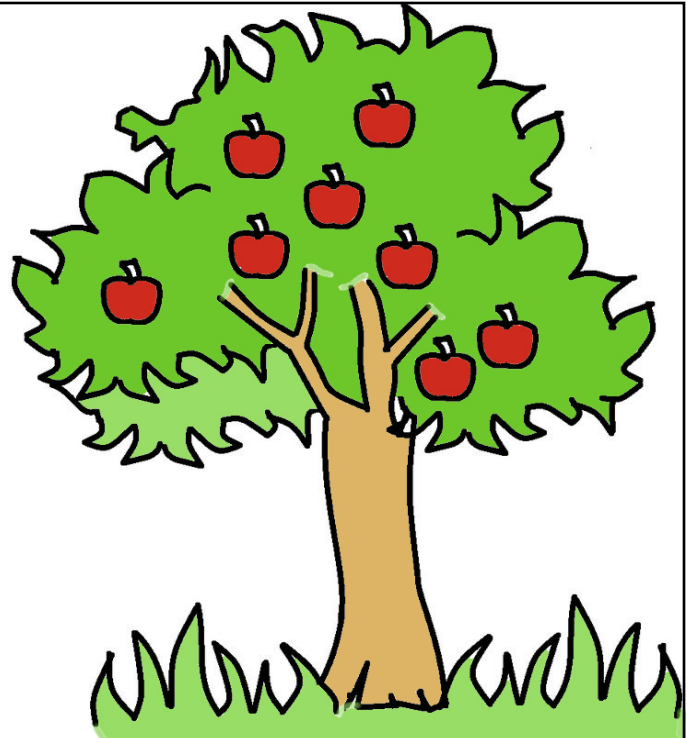
		How many seeds?
• More plants		
 1 apple	→	10 seeds
 1 ear of corn	→	800 seeds
 1 watermelon	→	500 seeds
 1 seedless watermelon	→	0 seeds

What is fruit in a Christian, or in a Christian church?

- Character / Goodness
- Spreading goodness, and more people in Christ

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**Growing
to
Fruitfulness**
Acts 11:19-30



bib.ly/Ac11+NIV

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Context of Acts 11

The first multi-ethnic church

- Jews & Greek converts to Judaism
 - Plus Greeks who never converted to Judaism
- } **Christians**

Before this church:

- Only “Jewish” people (included converts to Judaism)

Big questions in the Jewish church in Jerusalem:

- Is this church really a Christian church?
- Is this church a good thing?

To give an answer to these questions, Luke tells their story

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Acts 11:19-30

19-26:

27-30:

4

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. **20** Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.



5

22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. **23** When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. **24** He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

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25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, **26** and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

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Acts 11:19-30

19-26: Multi-ethnic church started & grew in Antioch

- 27-30:**
- Gospel was told to Gentiles (crossing boundaries)
 - By unnamed, “ordinary” Christians
 - Barnabas “saw *what* the grace of God *had done*”
 - New and growing Christians
 - Diverse unity
 - First ones to be called “Christians”
 - Models of what a Christian church should be
 - Because of diversity, it no longer made sense to consider it a subset of Judaism

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Acts 11:19-30

19-26: Multi-ethnic church started & grew in Antioch

27-30:

9

²⁷ During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) ²⁹ The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. ³⁰ This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

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Acts 11:19-30

19-26: Multi-ethnic church started & grew in Antioch

27-30: Antioch church gave as an act of service

- The prophet Agabus told of coming need in Judea
 - The Roman world (perhaps a bad harvest in Egypt)
 - Jerusalem had no margin, so very vulnerable
 - Like many places in the world today with the coronavirus
- Generosity came from “the disciples”
 - In Acts, “disciples”=all of the Christians
 - By unnamed, “ordinary” Christians
- Generosity was related to ability
- The gift was sent to people they might never meet

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Acts 11:19-30

19-26: Multi-ethnic church started & grew in Antioch

27-30: Antioch church gave as an act of service

Luke’s answer to the questions:

- Is this church really a Christian church?
- Is this church a good thing?

Definitely “Yes!”

- Growth resulting in generosity beyond themselves
- By unnamed, “ordinary” Christians
- By the “Lord’s hand”: God was working in people

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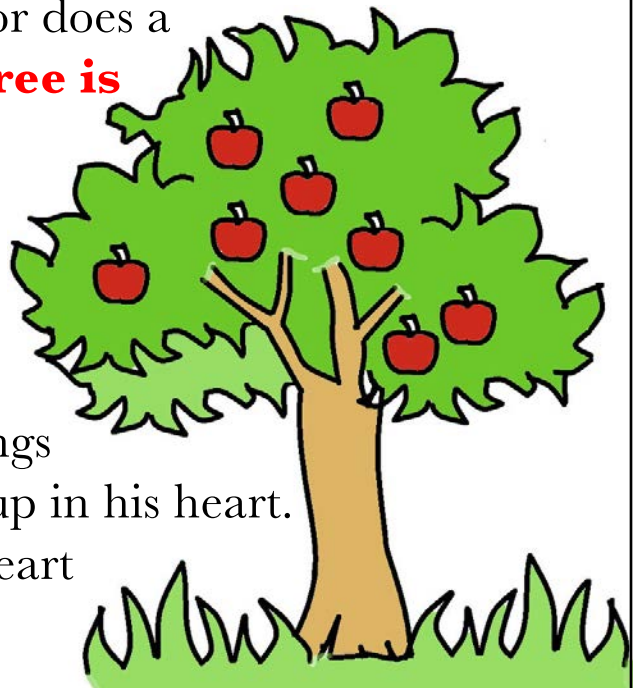
The Big Idea

Serving and giving to others together
is a key sign and means
of growing in the Lord Jesus

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“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. **Each tree is recognized by its own fruit.**

People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” *Luke 6:43-45*



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The Big Idea

Serving and giving to others together
is a key sign and means
of growing in the Lord Jesus

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Application

Remain true to the Lord with all our heart

- Barnabas's message: keep following Jesus!
 - Daily living naturally draws us into ourselves, not into Jesus
 - Following Jesus is a daily choice
 - That brings transformation
 - Fruitfulness & generosity come from the Spirit in us
- ➔ Look at and listen to and follow Jesus

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Application

Remain true to the Lord with all our heart

Gain “compassionate knowledge” of others

- Gift of the Spirit: like prophecy through Agabus
 - Also comes through natural means
(friends, travel, guests by Zoom, Facebook, news, ...)
- From Agabus, new information was a call to potential action
- ➔ Be compassionate when you hear the news

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Application

Remain true to the Lord with all our heart

Gain “compassionate knowledge” of others

Serve others with what we have been given

- What have we received, whether much or little?
- **Give and serve**
 - Proportionately and generously as God has given to us
 - **Character**: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control
 - **Good things**: Money, abilities, time, attention, ...
 - **New life**: sharing the Gospel & God’s story in your life

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Application

**Remain true to the Lord with all our heart
Gain “compassionate knowledge” of others
Serve others with what we have been given**

19

The Big Idea

Serving and giving to others together
is a **key sign** and **means**
of growing in the Lord Jesus

Path to fruitfulness: serving and giving beyond ourselves:

- **Heads** shaped by God’s Word and Jesus’ life and teaching
- **Hearts** meditating on the love and generosity of God to us
- **Hands** taking steps of obedience to serve and give
- **Together** spurring each other on to love and good deeds

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