

# The Gospel of Mark – Part 2 – The Brood of Vipers and Bearing Good Fruit Keeping with Repentance | 3/17/19

- Introduction
  - In these passages from Mark, we will be contrasting the hearts of the “brood of vipers” (Pharisees and Sadducees) with one who has true repentance.
  - Many came to be baptized by John the Baptist who's hearts showed true repentance. There were also those who came only to observe and to begin their work of conflict against the Gospel of Christ.
  - John identifies those who are genuinely repentant (and future Christians) as those who will bear good fruit which is in contrast to the heart of the unrepentant who will not.
- **The hearts of the Pharisees and Sadducees in contrast to the heart of repentance and one who produces good fruit.**
  - We have discussed how important it is for one to confess and repent of their sins and then also be baptized.
  - **While many did repent and were baptized there were two different groups of Jews who were in attendance who came to observe but certainly did not come to repent.**
    - These were the two Jewish sects known as the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
  - **Read Matthew 3:7-10**
  - The brood of vipers (Pharisees and Sadducees)
    - It is interesting that you have all of these Jews coming to the river Jordan, most of whom have come with their hearts ready for repentance and to be baptized.
      - But among them, there were those whose hearts were not ready to repent, nor were they there with the desire to be baptized — these were the Pharisees and Sadducees.
      - **John the Baptist (being filled with the Holy Spirit and being guided by God) was able to see the heart issue that was a problem for both the Pharisees and the Sadducees.**
      - He called them a brood of vipers. In other words, they were the equivalent to deadly snakes (not a compliment.)
    - **He did this because they did not come to be baptized with their hearts having true repentance. It was quite the opposite.**
      - They were the Jewish religious leaders of the day, and **they saw themselves as not ones who needed to repent, but those who were the perfect** example of what God wanted in His people.
      - In their minds, they were far above the other people.
        - In their minds since they were Jews, that their father was Abraham and they were God's chosen people, that this meant they were automatically righteous in the eyes of God.
        - Jesus makes this quite evident throughout the Scriptures that while the Israelites were God's chosen people, this did not exclude them from the necessity of faith and showing true repentance.
  - Pharisees
    - The Pharisees were known for their concrete adherence to the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic law.
    - They were extremely legalistic in all aspects of their lives.

- Not only did they adhere to the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Law, but they also created their own laws and traditions (oral tradition) that they held at the same level as Scripture.
  - Jesus rebuked them for putting “man’s laws” above God’s.
    - Matthew 15:3-9
- **They saw themselves as inherently "holy and righteous" because of their external actions of being “religious," not because of the condition of their heart.**
  - Religion instead of a relationship. Works instead of faith.
- They were also extremely hypocritical as they continually disobeyed God’s moral laws by justifying their actions when they glorified themselves.
- They did believe in the supernatural though unlike the Sadducees.
  - Sadducees
    - The Sadducees had a different perspective than the Pharisees.
    - They only accepted the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) as authoritative.
    - They rejected the human tradition and laws of the Pharisees.
    - They denied anything that was supernatural. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels or God ordained "fate."
  - Throughout the Scriptures both of these groups stood in opposition to Jesus Christ and in the end, they were the ones who sent him to the cross.
  - John the Baptist then rightly described them as a “brood of vipers” because deadly snakes are quite fitting as they drove people away from the truth of Christ into death.
  - **From what we know of the Pharisees and Sadducees why do you think their hearts were not in the right place? Why were they not ready for a baptism of repentance?**
  - **Do we see people in the world today who show similar traits that would keep them from having repentant hearts?**
- Bearing fruit in keeping with repentance
  - Matthew and Luke also expand on John's criticism of the Jewish religious leaders and speaks to the importance of bearing good fruit that keeps with repentance.
    - Matthew 3:8
      - “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.”
  - **Bearing fruit is the concept of describing the results of a Christian who is obedient to Christ and does His good works.**
    - Christians who obey the Holy Spirit by performing the works they are called to will produce good fruit.
      - Matthew 13:23
        - “As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”
    - If we understand the word (Gospel/Scriptures/Holy Spirit), then we will produce good fruit because that is the result.
      - Colossians 1:5-6
        - “because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and

increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it an understood the grace of God in truth,”

- **To bear good fruit is a good work that is the result of one’s faith and obedience, not a requirement for salvation.**
  - To be clear, bearing fruit is not a requirement for faith or repentance, but it is the outcome of one who does.
  - **One who repents and has faith in Christ will have their sins forgiven and will become a child of God.**
  - **The Christian will then bear good fruit, and because of this and will desire to obey God and do the good works they are called to.**
    - Ephesians 2:10
      - “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
- **John the Baptist then states (as does Jesus later) that those who only produce bad fruit (unredeemed, lost) will be cut down and thrown in the fire.**
  - Matthew 3:10
    - "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire.
  - **This statement was directed at the Pharisees and the Sadducees (as well as to everyone today).**
    - That if one has not come to repentance and faith in Christ that they will be the tree that does not bear good fruit and will be cast into the fire.
    - The Pharisees and Sadducees didn’t see any need to repent and their works were certainly not bearing good fruit.
    - **They believed that since they were Israelites (children of Abraham) that they were automatically approved of by God.**
    - John the Baptist knew that this was not the case and that they must repent, which is why he stated, “God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham”.
    - **Their lineage would not save them, they must come to repentance.**
  - Jesus spoke of this while giving His Sermon on the Mount.
    - Matthew 7:17-19
      - "So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits.**"
      - **One of the identifying marks of the Christian is one who bears good fruit.**
        - This is **not superficial fruit of “good works”** that are done for the glory of oneself or reasons outside of obedience to God.
        - This the identifying fruit of a true Christian who is doing the work that God has called them to do.
- **John the Baptist gave examples of what it looks like to produce good fruit, and it has been recorded for us in the Gospel of Luke.**

- Questions came from those who heard John speak of this and asked what it might look like for them to bear good fruit.
  - Luke 3:10-14
    - “And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” Soldiers asked him, “And we what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”
- John’s examples echo the teachings of Jesus Christ throughout the Gospel.
  - To do these things (with one's heart in the right condition) is obeying Christ and doing His good works.
  - It is showing love your neighbor.
  - It is to treat others as you would want to be treated.
  - It is to be fair and honest.
  - It is to show kindness and to turn away from evil and selfishness.
  - It is to be content and joyful in what God has given you.
- This is the results of one who has come to Christ and is putting aside their own sinful and selfish flesh and striving to live for Christ.
- **The hearts of the Pharisees and the Sadducees were certainly not in the condition to produce the good fruit.**
- **Why do you think that producing good fruit is the result of one who has shown true repentance, faith and has become a Christian?**
- **Does this mean that if we ever produce “bad fruit” or do something wrong that we will be cut down and thrown into the fire?**