

PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH

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We are very happy to be here. We have not been to this fellowship before, but we know quite a lot of people here through the *Keeping in Touch*. When I go to read it, it's like we kind of find ourselves in the Mahomet fellowship, and this is a good opportunity to meet some of the brethren whose names we find in the *K.I.T. Bulletin*. Brother Barak Asbill, we have never met before. Brother Femi, we have had opportunities to read a lot of your messages. I've known Brother Peter for quite some time. Sister Nancy, it's a pleasure to meet with you again. We want to use this opportunity to commend the *K.I.T.* team. In fact, the magazine has been a great blessing to us. We have been challenged by the dedication of those who have participated in its publication; we never miss a copy. When I was in Hungary, I first subscribed to it and started receiving the *Keeping In Touch Bulletin*, and it has been the desire of our hearts to contribute somehow in the production of this magazine, but we have not been able to do so. We never miss a single issue, and it always gets to us on time. I also would like to say that the brethren in Nigeria enjoy it very much. We commend you for the magazine, and ask that the Lord will bless you and strengthen you. You are doing a good job, and it is blessing God's people. Praise the name of the Lord.

I want to use this opportunity to introduce my wife, Oju. She's a nurse, and also, my sister-in-law, Ibi, who invited us to come to the States. She has been living in the United States with her husband, in Birmingham, Alabama. I think they have been here for more than 10 years. I tried once, I think about 6 or 7 years ago, to come to a conference in the United States, but I wasn't given a visa. So, this time around, she invited us to come. I said,

“Well, let me just try.” We prayed about it, then I went to the embassy with my wife; those of us from Nigeria know what it takes to go through the American embassy in Nigeria to get a visa for the United States. Well, we picked up all the documents, we had everything; in fact, you have to show proof that you will return to Nigeria. When we got there, the guy said, “I don’t need all those papers, put them aside. Put them aside.” He just took our thumbprints, and within 3 or 4 minutes we were gone. So, we really believe that God was giving us an opportunity to come.

We didn’t know we were going to be here in Illinois, but as we got to Birmingham, we called Brother Asbill and we told him we wanted to come around. We called Brother Cecil. We didn’t know that there’s a way that the brethren here have of working together. Brother duCille told us, “We are going to work it out,” but we never waited. So, we tried to work it out our own way. We started trying to make a booking and all that. We said, “We’ll come to Champaign first,” so we made a booking on the internet. Immediately after we paid for it and made the booking, Brother David called and said, “You aren’t going to Champaign any longer.” Fortunately for us, it was one of these tickets that you can get a refund on. So, we got a refund, and Brother David said that he was going to make arrangements for us to visit Champaign and all that. We are very happy and we thank God for the brethren. I mean, I believe that within this short time that we’ve been here, we have learned so much from the brethren. So much.

You know, when you talk of love, you don’t really understand what it means until you see love in action, and then you are able to appreciate it. We see the love of God in the midst of the brethren, and we see it working. At times, one impression we have is that it is difficult to love because of the hard times that we are in. The scripture says,

Mt 24:12 *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”*

So, you find the pressures and the tribulation coming upon you, and you find out that you don’t have much, even to take care of yourself, yet God expects you to love. At times you look at your situation, and you think it is really difficult, but here we see love working, we see it working, we see the life of it. We thank God for we have been very much blessed by the brethren. We pray that God will give us the grace to be able to pass this across to the brethren, not only just in words, but also in practice. Praise the name of the Lord. Amen.

So we are really very, very happy to be here, and, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with you this morning. I have a word that I want to

share with the brethren. I pray that God will grant you the grace to be able to understand me with my accent. Let's just begin with a prayer together.

Father, we thank You for every opportunity You give to us to fellowship with You and one another, and every opportunity You give us to look at Your Word, to hear You speak to us. We pray this morning that You will grant us ears to hear, and hearts to understand, that we not be just hearers only, but we'll also be doers of Your Word. We pray, Lord, that You will anoint our spiritual ears, Lord, that the trumpets will make a certain sound. We ask for bread for the eater, seed for the sower. This is our prayer this morning. I ask for utterance and ability to express that which You have made in my heart this morning. Blessed be Your name. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Well, I have a lot of scriptures that I would like to use and I will try, as much as possible, to let my interpretation be very minimal, so that God can minister to each and every one of us as we share the scriptures. We are going to be reading a lot of scriptures and I don't know whether you are used to that, so it will be kind of like a Bible study. What is in my heart to give is a prophetic word; it's not new, but it's just to remind us that there is a rain that is coming, there is a time of refreshing that is coming for God's people. The scripture says that it is:

Joel 2:23 "...the former rain, and the latter rain..."

Another scripture says that:

Hos 6:2 "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

We are coming into the third day, and it is a day of raising up, not just a day of revival. Do you know what revival means? It is like when somebody has fainted or has lost consciousness and you have to give him mouth to mouth resuscitation. You revive him and he starts breathing again. Life comes into him. He's still lying down there, but we are rejoicing that he's up. The third day, brethren, is a raising up time. The rain that is going to come, the former and the latter rain, is going to come at the same season, and it's not only going to revive us, but we are going to be raised up!

I am sure if we look into our lives we would see a lot of limitation. We are not what we want to be for God. That is why we keep on crying and crying and crying to God. But brethren, times of revival, many of us have not really seen corporate revival. We have read of it, we have read of the Azusa Street revival, and almost all of us here who are born again have experienced a measure of revival, but we have not experienced the mighty moving of God's corporate revival. You know, Brother David was telling me about his testimony, how God met him, how he got born again. There was an instant

change. He couldn't do the things that he did before; there was grace. The things that we are addicted to go in just one second. That is the power of revival, that is the spirit of resurrection life, of the power of the Blood that Jesus brings into our life.

THE RAIN THAT IS GOING TO COME, THE FORMER AND THE LATTER RAIN, IS GOING TO COME AT THE SAME SEASON, AND IT'S NOT ONLY GOING TO REVIVE US, BUT WE ARE GOING TO BE RAISED UP!

We know that, as Christians, there are still a lot of things that we struggle with. It is like what our Brother Barak was praying, there are things that come through our ancestry that have to be dealt with, for we know that the scripture talks about besetting sins:

He 12:1 "*Wherfore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...*"

At times we try, we work hard, we struggle, we cry to God and all that and God helps us in a measure. But we still know that we are not really where we ought to be. Even Paul expresses that place. He says:

Ro 7:15 "*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*"

"The things I want to do, I cannot do, but those things I can't do, those are the things that I find myself doing" But brethren, there's coming a revival from God. There's coming help from God in the time in which we are in, a special grace from God that will lift us up and bring us into the place that God wants us to be. It says:

Mt 24:22 "*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*"

For the elect's sake there will be a cutting short, there will be an enabling. It will be something:

1Co 2:9 "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

That is what is coming. That is why we should be encouraged to press on, to follow on to know the Lord. To hold on, like our sister was sharing with us about tribulation.

Ro 5:3 "...*knowing that tribulation worketh patience;*"

We need to be patient. We need to hold on. We need to look up to the Lord. We need to believe Him. We need to have faith. It says:

He 4:6 “*...they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:*”

He 4:11 “*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*”

When we read through Hebrews 11, we see these great men. Some of them never saw the hope of their salvation, but they saw a city that had foundations. They never entered into that city, but they held on because they knew that even beyond this life here, there's a city. They were persuaded. We need to be persuaded, brethren. Beyond a reasonable doubt, beyond the thing that we see, beyond the circumstances of life, beyond the pressures, we need to be persuaded.

God is going to be sending us out. He says:

Zec 10:1 “*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*”

Brethren, you see, when I think of it, I'm excited. I'm excited. There is a revival that is coming. There's help that God is about to send to His people. You know, the scoffer spirit comes around and says:

2Pe 3:4 “*...Where is the promise of his coming?...*”

Many have backslidden because they have tried and waited, waited on the Lord, waited for His coming, waited for grace, waited for help and they didn't find it, and have said, “There's no hope, I can't make it.” And they backed out. But brethren, there is a time of revival, there is a time of refreshing that is ahead of us. That is why, brethren, we should hold on. Now, this time, this rain, this time of deliverance is coming.

PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH
THE SCOFFER SPIRIT COMES
AROUND AND SAYS,
“WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF
HIS COMING?”

The scripture says that He is going to give the former and the latter rain at the same time. Well, I'm an agriculturist, as is Brother Barak. There is a lot of farm work going on here. But the Bible says that there are two rains, the former rain and the latter rain. In Nigeria we have two rains. Whenever the

former rain comes, it softens the earth, the field, and then the crops can be planted. That is the seedtime rain, the rain that prepares the earth and the soil for planting.

You folks that are in agriculture know that when there is a drought, like you have now, here in Illinois, when it comes at the time when the corn is about to put on seeds and come to a place of maturity, there needs to be another rain. That is why, if you look at the big fields, when the weather is so dry and the corn is up, they will now start a massive irrigation process. That second water that comes is to mature the seed that is in the cob. I mean, it helps the cobs to fill up. That is what I call the ripening rain, or the maturing rain. Its purpose is to mature that which has already been formed, that which has been sown, to bring those seeds to maturity. That is what that second rain is all about. The seed of the Word, which God has been sowing in our lives, the character that you find within us, is what God is going to bring to maturity.

We all know about the virgins.

Mt 25:3 "*They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*"

4 "*But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*"

When it was time, those who had oil in their vessels were able to enter. So, brethren, if we are not prepared at this time, if we don't have the seed of the Word in our lives, if character is not coming forth in us, when the rain comes on every grass in the field, it will be the seed that has been sown in our hearts, in our lives, that is going to get matured. If one has let the seed of anger and envy and all that in, that is what is going to come forth. In fact, in Nigeria we had a problem that brought a division in the church. There was a brother who preached a message about the beast in us, about the beast nature that is in man.

IF WE ARE NOT PREPARED AT THIS TIME,
IF WE DON'T HAVE THE SEED OF THE WORD IN OUR LIVES,
IF CHARACTER IS NOT COMING FORTH IN US,
WHEN THE RAIN COMES ON EVERY GRASS IN THE FIELD,
IT WILL BE THE SEED
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THAT IS GOING TO GET MATURED.

Well, some brethren felt, "How can you say a born again child of God has a beast?" The brother didn't actually say that, you know, that we are beasts. But he said there is a nature in man which, if not dealt with by the Word of God, if left and fed with the things that we see in the world, can regenerate and get the man into a place of submitting to that nature of the beast. This,

in turn, can cause that person to become an anti-christ, when they submit to that spirit. It was this word that brought a division, but some brethren felt, "Oh, you are born again and that's it; you don't need to do anything, God has done it all for us." We grappled with that and some brethren left the fellowship, there were some other carnal fightings and all that which was out of context with Christian behavior. But thank God, God sent us Brother Cecil. We didn't tell him about this doctrine and this word. We all know he likes question time, so the questions came here and there, and he dealt with every one of them. He said, "What is wrong with a beast?" He gave scriptural backing for that. That answer kept that issue on the side. They brought out all their questions and everything was sorted out.

So, we are finding that God expects us to keep our eyes on the mark. God expects us to remain focused upon Him. It says:

Mt 11:12 "...the Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

We have to press on. If not, we will actually find ourselves outside of the closed door. This rain, when it comes, will be upon every grass of the field. Every grass. The wheat will grow and the tares will also grow with it together. (Mt 13:30) Hallelujah. Brethren, that is why we need to hold on, we need to press on.

This morning, I want us to look at the Word on the harvest of the Lord and THE PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH. The scripture says:

Jam 5:7 "...Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it..."

Let us, first of all, turn to Isaiah 61:1, He says:

Is 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"

2 "To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;"

3 "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

4 “And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.”

Now let's turn to Isaiah 5:1:

Is 5:1 “Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:”

2 “And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.”

3 “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.”

4 “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?”

5 “And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.”

6 “And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”

7 “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”

Let's also read from John 15. That is the passage on the vine. Verse 1:

Jn 15:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”

2 “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

3 “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

4 “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

5 “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

6 *"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."*

7 *"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."*

8 *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."*

Right from creation, when God created man, God's purpose for man was that he would bring forth fruit. Well, when we talk of fruit, what we're talking about is the spiritual fruits that God expects. This, our earth, is to bring forth fruit unto Him. He said to man when He created man:

Ge 1:28 *"...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:..."*

RIGHT FROM CREATION,
WHEN GOD CREATED MAN,
GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MAN WAS THAT
HE WOULD BRING FORTH FRUIT.
IF THERE IS NO FRUITFULNESS, THERE
WILL BE NO DOMINION.
NO FRUITFULNESS, NO OVERCOMING.

I look through the Bible and find that all the men that God selected, men like Adam and Noah, when God was blessing them, He also commanded them:

Ge 9:1 *"...Be fruitful, and multiply..."*

He commanded Abraham too:

Ge 35:11 *"...be fruitful, and multiply;..."*

In the case of Abraham, there was also established the principle of circumcision and we know circumcision has to do with reproduction and fruitfulness. I mean, our hearts need to be circumcised so that we can bring forth fruit. Jacob also had that same command from God to be fruitful and multiply. So, brethren, it is God's purpose that we be fruitful and multiply. If we look at John 15:5, we read that God wants us to bring forth much fruit.

God expects us, as His planting, to bring forth much fruit. He said we are the planting of the Lord. That is why Jesus Christ came, because we are the trees of righteousness and the planting of the Lord

Is 61:3 "...that they (we) might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

We must bring forth fruit, because the husbandman is coming. All that is happening in Louisiana with Hurricane Katrina, and all the things we see, famine in Africa, troubles, war, we all know this is the indication of the return of the Lord. He's very close. Brethren, we talk about the feasts and the ingathering. We know that that is the final feast and if the husbandman is going to come for the fruits, then that means that the rain will come before then, to ripen or mature the fruits, for the husbandman is waiting patiently, He's just by the corner. Well, it's good to say patiently, but I think that He is waiting impatiently. He wants to come into us. He wants to be revealed in us. He wants to have a people.

So then if we know that, brethren, we need to look at ourselves. It says:

2Co 13:5 "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..."

We need to look at our earth, look at the plants. Yesterday, we went around looking at the plants here on the farm. The peppers are doing very well; we see God is blessing this land. If you look at the land itself, the original soil, you find out that it's very, very deficient and dry. Then you see the way the crops are growing, and it shows that the Lord is there. Moreover, you have irrigation; a lot of water is going in there, which matures the fruit. So, brethren, we need to look at our lives.

Hallelujah. It's only me that can know what is going on in my earth, and what amount of fruit or crop that I will bring forth. God's purpose is that we will bring forth fruit, not just bringing forth any fruit, but much fruit. Why is this essential? Why is this very, very essential? It's because if there is no fruitfulness, there will be no dominion. No fruitfulness, no overcoming. An impatient man bears no fruit except that of thorns and thistles.

WHEN TWO PEOPLE COME TOGETHER,
THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO OVERCOME
THE THINGS THAT THEY HAVE NOT
BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME UP TO THAT
POINT OF GETTING MARRIED.

If you are not patient, if you are always murmuring, if you're complaining, if you're not steadfast, if you don't have this fruit of the Spirit, patience, coming up, then there is no way that you can overcome. I had the opportunity of reading through our Brother Femi's series on fruitfulness. You dealt with each and every one of them - joy, peace, longsuffering, etc. and it blessed us. I think that that is the Word of the Lord for us. We need

this thing, because if we're not fruitful, we cannot overcome. The man who does not have self-control cannot overcome the pleasures, the lust of the flesh. I think that's the problem that young people have. So, without fruitfulness, there is no way man can exercise dominion over this earth. So He says:

Ge 1:28 "...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:..."

By the way, I believe that marriage is overcoming. God brings two people together; two shall chase ten thousand. (De 32:30) It's overcoming. But we find, in our own environment and all over, people who get married have a lot of things to take care of. There is no time together for fellowship, there is no time to do the will of God because of your marriage. That marriage is under attack, marriage that is under God. When two people come together, they have the ability to overcome the things that they have not been able to overcome up to that point of getting married. They have the ability to overcome the ancestral spirits on both sides and all the things that they carry. The two come together and are able to overcome for those who are coming after them. They will even be able to overcome for the families from where they came. I think there's a purpose. So, fruitfulness brings that. We also remember Genesis 3:15 where it says the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent. The seed of the woman, the man-child that comes from the church, is going to bruise the enemy. The seed is the fruit of the church. That is what is going to be with the man-child.

We also know that in Matthew it talks about the Kingdom of God. Let's read that.

Mt 21:33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:"

34 "And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it."

35 "And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another."

36 "Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise."

37 "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son."

38 *“But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.”*

39 *“And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”*

40 *“When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”*

41 *“They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”*

42 *“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?”*

43 *“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”*

I am sure we also know the parable of the fig tree. When Jesus came, He saw the fig tree. It was actually not the time of ripe figs, right? But the fig tree had leaves, it had everything to show that at some point, there would be fruit on it. And when Jesus came, and saw no fruit on it, he cursed that tree and it withered. (Mt 21:19) There are times when you find Christians who have everything, who have leaves. In Nigeria there are people who are unbelievers, but when they come they have the language, you know. When they talk it is, “Praise the Lord.” “Brother, how are you doing?” “Oh, the Lord is good!” They just come into your midst and they have the leaves, showing everything that they have to show you. That gives you the impression that they are Christians. All right? But they have no fruit. No fruit. The scripture says that there will be great deception in the times in which we are in. (Lu 21:8) That’s why we need discernment. It’s by their fruits we shall know them (Mt 7:16,20) I think that that is very, very, very important for this time - we need the help of the Spirit of God together to be able to discern. First of all, we talked about the fruit. The scripture talks about the fruit of righteousness. Then there is the fruit of the lips. You know, there are different fruits that the scripture talks about. Let’s just look quickly at Galatians. I’m not going to go through that, because I think that you have heard an elaborate teaching on that. But let’s just go through that to remind ourselves. Praise the Lord. Galatians Chapter 5. It’s good to read the scriptures so at times it reminds us. It’s like it refreshes us. Okay, let’s read from verse 16,

Gal 5:16 *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”*

17 *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

18 *“But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”*

19 *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,”*

20 *“Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,”*

21 *“Envynings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

22 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”*

23 *“Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*

24 *“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”*

25 *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

You have had so much teaching about it, but I think that God expects us to let this become flesh in us like today, when the sister was speaking to us about tribulation. There was a brother somewhere who lost his mother-in-law in a very bad boat mishap in the river. During the burial, there was a message that all things worketh together for good. It was difficult for the brethren to accept that, because that was a very hard, trying time. But brethren, God needs to bring us to the point where we know beyond any reasonable doubt, where we are persuaded in every situation, no matter how difficult it is, we are persuaded:

Ro 8:28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love them that love God...”*

God wants to see longsuffering in us. God wants to see patience. In fact, looking at all these things, it speaks of character. I liken it to the oil that we have in our vessels. God doesn’t expect that only when the anointing is there, when the Spirit of God is there, or when we are in a good fellowship and it is easy to love and to be patient with the sister and all that. But when we get out there, when things are hard, when we find stress there, or when we find anger just coming up, God will expect that in every situation, when

we are in the heat, that we manifest this character of God. Hallelujah. That is the fruit of the Spirit.

GOD WILL EXPECT THAT IN EVERY SITUATION,
WHEN WE ARE IN THE HEAT,
THAT WE MANIFEST THIS
CHARACTER OF GOD.

REPENTANCE IS AN IMPORTANT VIRTUE.

REPENTANCE IS THE ONLY THING
THING THAT CAN KEEP US IN LINE,
KEEP US MOVING. WE NEED IT.
BECAUSE WE'RE NOT PERFECT
YET, BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT
ARRIVED, WE NEED IT.

The scripture talks about the fruit of righteousness. Then there is also the fruit of the lips. It says:

1Thes 5:18 *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

Give praises to God. At times when things are difficult, when we're not able to react, we just murmur, we complain, we grumble. God expects us to not grumble, but to give Him thanks in every situation in which we find ourselves.

The scripture also talks about the fruit of repentance. In fact, I think that that is one thing that is lacking, that I find lacking in the Body - we don't have that repentance. In fact, repentance is an important virtue. Repentance is the only thing that can keep us in line, keep us moving. We need it. Because we're not perfect yet, because we have not arrived, we need it. WE NEED IT. When the Spirit of God nudges us that this thing we've done is wrong, we can fall before the Lord, like David, and say, "God..." - in fact, that was the salvation that David had, and that was the only thing that set him apart for God. He was a humble person, who was ready to fall before God and repent. I think that the church needs it in the times in which we are. So, we need repentance.

I would like us to read:

2Chr 7:12 *"And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice."*

13 *"If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;"*

14 *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

I think that God's people in America need to begin to pray like Daniel. We may not have contributed to the things that are happening in the United States, or in the world all over, but because we are citizens here, because it pleased God to cause us to be brought forth here in this city, we, like Daniel, have to be part of what is happening. We need to begin to pray. This scripture makes it clear that we owe a responsibility to this land. We in Nigeria have a responsibility to Nigeria. We as Christians have the responsibility to pray for the whole world. I think that God's people need to pray. We hear in the news of what the United States is going through, but we believe that God's people, if we pray... It's not the kind of prayer that is being organized now. You have it on the television, and you find it all over. Well, I'm not saying it's not good, but it's a kind of organized prayer on the television. You have people in different states, they come online, and they just pray routine prayers, you know? I'm not talking of that, but I am talking of a prayer that comes from a repentant heart, God giving that spirit of repentance. It is a gift that God pours upon His people and we can bow down and pray for our nation and confess the sins of our people and ask God to forgive. God says He will forgive us and He will heal our land.

I think we need to do that so that we'll be able to separate that which is the hand of the Lord upon the nation, and that which the enemy is bringing. You know, at times the enemy cashes in. If there is any open door, he cashes in and he tries to destroy. So, God expects the fruit of repentance.

Now, today the burden I had is not about this or that fruit, but the fruit of the earth. The scripture talks about the fruit of the earth. James talks about the husbandman. Let us look at it.

James 5:7 *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."*

8 *"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*

The fruit mentioned in Galatians is all part of this fruit of the earth. But this fruit of the earth, I believe, is the product that comes out of this other fruit of the Spirit, of which we are talking. So, God wants the end product. Let's just read some other scriptures to support that. Let's look at Matthew 24 and we will see in a short while why this fruit is very, very important.

Mt 24:32 "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:"

33 "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

34 "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

What I want to do is establish this precious fruit of the earth. (Joel 2:23)

Joel 2:23 "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."

24 "And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil."

25 "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you."

26 "And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed."

Now, it says the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. So, we have the wheat, the wine, and the oil. So, the precious fruit of the earth that we are talking about is the product of the fruit of the Spirit, which is the wheat, the wine and the oil.

Let us look at Revelation 6:

Re 6:1 "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."

2 "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

3 "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see."

4 "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

Now, in Matthew chapter 24 the scripture talks about wars and rumors of wars. Then in verse 5 it says:

Re 6:5 *"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand."*

We know that there is famine all over the place. In fact, this passage, you can compare it with Matthew chapter 24, which talks about the signs of the end time.

6 *"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."*

Let us look at Revelation 14:

Re 14:14 *"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."*

15 *"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."*

16 *"And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."*

17 *"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle."*

18 *"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe."*

Now you see the wheat again and you see the wine. God is coming for the wheat, the wine and the oil. They are supposed to be products of the fruit of the Spirit which we have. Now, why is this very important? If we look at the Old Testament, it talks about the offerings, and we find out that there is only bread. We don't have time, but if you look at Leviticus 23:9,13 and also Numbers 15:4-10, it talks about the offerings. If you look at those passages, you find out that what has to be offered is the bread, baked unleavened bread, and they had to bring wine. In baking the bread, it said the bread had to be baked with oil. Now, what is the significance of this? Brethren, the bread speaks of the Body of Christ, and the oil speaks of the anointing.

When the bread was being made, there was some kind of oil that was added, along with many other ingredients. But brethren, it was the oil that held the bread together.

You know Psalm 133:

Ps 133:1 *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

2 *"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."*

So the oil is important. And when we talk about the wine... You know, Jesus said:

Mt 26:28 *"For this is my blood..."*

He took up the cup and said, *"This is My Blood."* In that communion, He said:

Mt 26:29 *"...I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

Hallelujah. I don't know whether you're getting what I'm trying to say, but brethren, this is what God is expecting. Where the Word speaks of the field being harvested, the wheat taken into the barn and the tares bound and thrown in the fire, God's people are being harvested. God has a great harvest coming. But God is not only interested in the harvest, the wheat. Hallelujah.

Well, how does bread come about? Let's just go through that. First of all, you get the wheat. Well, these days you have brown bread, where you see that part of the chaff is included. When the flour is being prepared, the wheat is sent to the threshing floor. It is threshed and the chaff of the wheat is released and blown off. Hallelujah. Every one of us, as Christians, go through tribulation. Every one of us needs to be threshed. If not, we cannot be part of the Body. What God is doing at this time is preparing Himself a Body. All that God is doing, all His interest - He's not interested in a one-man ministry, a one-man show, a one-man preacher. God is interested in the Body. That is why God has to pass every one of us through fire. The passage says:

Mal 3:2 *"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like a fullers' soap."*

CHRISTIANS NEED A
GOOD MEASURE OF

TRIBULATION.

Every one of us needs a good measure. Let me not just say a measure, Christians need a good measure of tribulation. That is what threshes us because if we are not threshed, if God does not put us on the threshing floor, we cannot be fruit for the Body. And you see, there are many who just come into fellowship, they stay for a while and then walk away.

It is like Esau and Jacob. You know, Esau was interested in the goodies of the house. He came in and said, "I need food, I need food, I need food." I think we're like that, like Esau when we come into the church. But Jacob was the son of the house. He stayed in there, he took responsibility for the thing that happened in the house. He was always there. He didn't look out, because he knew that his source of life was from that place. Esau sold his birthright (Ge 25:29-34). "Food, food." He sold his birthright and when the time came, when he needed it, it was no longer available to him. You see, timing is very, very important. I want you to look at that passage in the Bible where it tells us about the power of choice. He chose food and gave up his birthright.

Ge 25:31 "*And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.*"

32 "*And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?*"

33 "*And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.*"

34 "*Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.*"

You know, there are many who just come into church, and they sit at the back, and get the goodness of the house, get the good message, and when there is prayer, they receive the prayer and off they go. They are not interested in the house, what is happening in the house. Praise the name of the Lord.

We all as Christians need a measure of threshing, and God has put every one of us on the threshing floor to take away the chaff so that we can be fitted for the Body. When God has done that, when all the people are threshed, God will bring us together. And what does He want to make out of us? He wants to make flour out of the grains of wheat. When the bread has been made, we cannot see Brother Peter as a separate grain. He loses his identity and Brother Femi will lose his identity.

In other words, we lose our identity because God is going to put us in the milling. So, that is the milling process. Every one of us are crushed and milled together into flour. When we have finished that, there is the dough making. Sister Stephanie has a machine where you put in the flour, and you add some water, oil, and other ingredients to it and the machine will mix it. That is a corporate time of tribulation. That's corporate. Every fellowship, every local body, has to go through this corporate dough making. Every fellowship has to go through a time of tribulation. That is what brings us together. In the making of that dough, there is oil in it. There's oil. God passes the fellowship, all together, into this process.

And then, that is not the end of it. There is the oven experience. There is the oven experience for the fellowship. A fellowship cannot stand and fulfill God's purpose for that locale without it. In Nigeria, Brother Cecil brought us a word about contending with the spirit of the land. You know, in Nigeria - well, our brother Femi is from Nigeria - we have different areas, different tribes. Brother Charles, you are also from Nigeria. Different communities have their gods. They have ruling spirits. They rule in their different areas. I've also been in Hungary, and I know that there is a spirit that is ruling in Hungary. I believe that every community, every environment, has a spirit that rules. You know, I was telling the Hungarian brethren, I said, "I can't overcome for you. You have to rise up and overcome this spirit." God sets the local body, the local church, in a particular area so they can contend and overcome the spirits that are ruling in that environment. That is why God will pass us through this oven experience, hallelujah, so that together we will be strong. No man will say, "What I have belongs to me." There are many brethren going through difficult times.

A lot of brethren are suffering because they have not discerned the Body of Christ. In fact, when I read that scripture and it says:

1Co 11:29 *"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

30 *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

I say, "Well, maybe that is being spiritually sick and maybe dying spiritually." Yes, it means that. But brethren, I believe that it is also physical. There are many brethren who are going through difficult times because they have not been able to discern the Body. When we leave the Body, we leave the covering and the enemy can come in at any time and ravage and destroy and bring sickness. I believe that the church of God, the Body of Christ, still has a time of baking, oven experience, fire experience to pass through. The Body is still fragmented. God has to deal with local bodies, and then when the local bodies have been dealt with all over, He will

bring them together. It's a unity of the Spirit, and not a unity... When you have people come together, there are some that say, "Let's get together, let's love, that's the way we experience love here," it is something you just experience, you cannot act it out like the Esther play. You can't act out love. You find out that even if the people are here, maybe a local body is here in Champaign, and you have another one in Illinois, but they are one in the Spirit. But what you find is that even in the local body we are really not one.

GOD SETS THE LOCAL BODY,
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So, the Body of Christ still has the oven and fire baking experience that God is going to pass us through. And that is what is going to bring us into one real bread, where we find that the different grains, the wheat and all that, cannot stand singly. And it is done. Jesus said:

Mt 26:29 *"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

We are now going to become bread for Christ, the Body, true bread without leaven, for Christ to break and be able to give to the world. And then the wine, which is His blood, which is His life. You know, we sing that song, "Let the life Blood of Christ flow into us." It will truly be the lifeblood that will be able to flow through us, we will be able to have the life of God flowing through us.

Now, what do we have to do? We have a part to play. Well, like in the case of the rain, the scripture says:

Zech 10:1 *"Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."*

He said He's coming back in the clouds:

Mt 24:30 *"...they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

The scripture talks about clouds without water, but this time the scripture is talking about bright clouds with water. These bright clouds are going to be men who have the anointing and the Word of the Lord to refresh God's people, every grass of the field. Hallelujah!

Now, for us to be part of this we need to bear fruit. Let's go to that scripture:

Jn 15:2 "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*"

So, if we are bearing fruit, we should be ready for more purging. It's interesting. If we are not bearing fruit, we are chopped off. Like our sister told us, if we are not ready for tribulation, God will say, "Go have your life and take your time, enjoy the world." The picture I always had in my mind is, if we are not in Christ, we just become a feast for the enemy. He comes for the Christian; he comes for life. When he comes and he's hungry, he wants the food ready. You know, he goes back there and then he just takes a little bit to satisfy himself, and then goes to where he can get the life.

So, if we are bearing fruit, brethren, there are times when we get into situations where we begin to wonder and say, "God, why? I'm doing all that I can to give my life to You, and yet there's this pressure." I think it is because we are bearing fruit. So, when we see hard times on us, brethren, we should know that God is purging that branch that is bringing forth fruit that it might bring forth much fruit. That is one thing that we have to be ready for. We have to be ready to submit ourselves to God's purging, as God has told us this morning. Secondly, a fruitful life is a life of continual dying. Paul said:

1Co 15:31 "... *I die daily.*"

We must have that mind of dying daily. We must have a mind that is ready to die, an attitude of somebody who is ready to be put down. You know, it says a dead man does not have any problems. If you kick him around, it doesn't matter. You can pinch him. I mean, we should have that attitude. Remember that scripture that says:

Jn 12:24 "...*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*"

Jesus Christ is a pattern or example for us. We have to have that attitude of being ready to die every day. In fact, there are situations that God brings our way to kill us. There are people who say, "God, kill me." So, we wonder, does God kill people?

God wants our flesh to be put down so that we can live. You know that passage that talks about abiding in Him? If you must live, you must abide in Him.

Jn 15:4-5 "*I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*"

If you want to bring forth fruit, if you want to bring forth wine and grapes, then we must make an effort to abide in Him continually. Trust in Him. It says:

Hos 6:3 "*Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*"

We must follow on to know the Lord. You know, there are some Christians that give up very easily. Brethren, we should not be of those.

He 10:39 "*But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*"

In summary, I want to encourage the brethren. You know, we've said that God is going to pass the church through this fire experience, this baking experience, so that we might become true bread when He comes back, true bread that He can break and that we might become wine. Well, I didn't talk about the wine. You know how they make wine. They bring the grapes and put them in a winepress, and they have to go through a lot of pressure to be able to squeeze the wine out of it. So He says He's not able to have this again until the Kingdom. Our desire should be to be part of this bread. That means that there is no one-man show. That means that a place of safety is in the Body. That means that we have to go with the Body, that we have to submit. We have to be part of the local body, submitting to all the pressures, all the difficulties, because the enemy now is coming against the Body of Christ. That is what is going to make the Body. At the same time, we should not forget that God is about to send us help. There is a revival that is just around the corner, something unprecedented, something we've never seen before. But He's sending us divine help and that help is going to lift us up to the place that God desires us to be. I just pray that this Word will just bless our hearts. Amen.


