

Root and Fruit

James 2:14-26

*Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied
by action, is dead.*

—James 2:17

Friday July 16, 2021

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Now I had a problem. I could not remember which one was the orange tree and which one was the lemon tree.

Years ago, I planted a lemon tree and an orange tree in our back yard. I did very little to care for either of them. They did not grow well. They never got much beyond about two feet in height, and both lost most if not all of their leaves. Strangely, one year they each produced one fruit. Even more strange, both the lemon and the orange that grew that year were well-formed and large.

A friend who has a background in cultivating various citrus trees stopped by our house one day. I showed him the trees. He noted that one was diseased and needed to be destroyed. He also pointed out that the other had great potential. The same day I picked both the lemon and the orange.

A week later, I decided to dig up the diseased tree. I could not remember which tree my friend thought should be destroyed. We texted, and I learned that it was the orange tree. As I stood before both of these little struggling trees, I could not remember which was which.

As I tried to sort out which one was which, I thought of the last half of James chapter two. In no uncertain terms, James points out that faith that does not produce the fruit of good works is dead (James 2:17). He emphasizes that real, genuine, regenerated life that God brings into the human heart as we express our faith in Christ will produce some fruit. That is the result of saving faith and the new life it brings.

The root of salvation is the saving grace God gives us as we express our faith in His Son. That grace brings the new life. The fruit of good works and a changed life will come as a result of the saving grace God gives us through Jesus. Being saved by grace is the root of salvation. Good works and a transformed life are the fruit of salvation.

As I pondered my dilemma of which tree was the lemon tree and which was the orange tree, I realized that eventually, the fruit each tree produced would tell me which was which. The fruit would reveal what the root already was. Of course, I could not wait that long, so I got rid of both and replaced them with new ones.

How about you? Can you see any fruit in your life of the root of salvation? If you can't, examine your own heart as to whether you have accepted Christ as your Savior. Put your faith in the one who died, was buried, and was raised from the dead to save you!

If you can see the fruit of a transformed life marked by good deeds, then thank God for the root of your salvation in Christ! The fruit that comes from new life in Christ gives us confidence as we live our lives for Jesus!

The fruit of good works points to the root of salvation. The fruit cannot save you. But, it shows you are saved!

Today's Prayer

Thank you Lord for saving me and giving me new life in Jesus. Thank you for the fruit that has come as a result of the root of salvation you planted in my heart as I trusted you for my salvation. Give me confidence as I walk fruitfully in your good grace! —Amen