

# I Want MORE (Part 4)

Sunday, April 2, 2023  
10:30 am

## Matthew 5:6

**6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

In this series I have I challenged you truly consider what you want more of; to search the scriptures and be encouraged by what they promise is available to us; to make room in your lives so that God can pour out what we ask of Him; to count the cost and be willing to pay the price; to petition God - asking, seeking and knocking - until we cultivate a hunger, thirst and desire that can only be filled by God.

Let me take a minute to remind you where we have been so far in this series...

We began with 4 foundational questions about wanting more that we must continue to keep in mind...

1. Do I **BELIEVE MORE** is **AVAILABLE**?
2. Do I **DESIRE MORE** in **MY LIFE**?
3. Am I **WILLING** to **MAKE ROOM** for **MORE**?
4. **WHAT** will I **ASK** God for **MORE OF**?

Our first answer to that final question was...

## **I WANT MORE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

We concluded that in order to receive More of the Presence of God...

1. We must be **WILLING** for God to do a work of **CLEANSING** in us
2. We will probably **WRESTLE** with the **CHANGES** He wants to make in us.
3. God will **CHALLENGE** us to **WALK** out those **CHANGES** in our everyday lives

Our next desire for more was...

**I want more trust and peace** (In my own life and in the lives of those in the body of Christ)

## Proverbs 3:1-6

**5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.**

We looked at several scenarios we face in life in which we need MORE TRUST AND PEACE...

- When circumstances look like they will never change
- When the enemy pursues
- When there is no place to go
- When the battle means facing a giant
- When our need of provision seems impossible
- When there is a mountain in our way
- When the waves of the storm threaten to drown us
- When our fear causes us to sink
- When what we love has died

Are you finding more TRUST and PEACE?

On this Palm Sunday my desire for more is this...

**I Want More FRUIT in my life.**

**Matthew 7:16-21**

16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Jesus says that every good tree bears good fruit. At the end of this passage he clarifies that the good fruit he wants in our lives is doing what God wants us to do

If we have truly repented of our sins and asked Jesus to come into our lives. If we are truly in relationship with Him, then the fruit of that relationship will be evident. And it is; but the question of more asks how much fruit is there? The desire of my heart is that there would be even more.

So, as I have said many times, we must interpret scripture with scripture. And the scripture teaches tells us exactly what this fruit looks like

### **Galatians 5:22-23**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

So, the question is how much love, Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is in my life and is there room for more? Or better yet; do I desire more, and will I make room for more in my life?

I want us to turn to the events surrounding Palm Sunday to give us even more perspective on the need for more fruit in our lives.

What we now celebrate as Palm Sunday... (even though, as you know, I have taught that a thorough study of the timeline of the passion week supports a more accurate placement of it being on a Saturday with the crucifixion taking place on Wednesday evening as the Jewish day becomes Thursday - the high holy day of Passover - and the resurrection on Saturday evening as the Jewish day becomes Sunday {3 - 24 hour days just as prophesied he would be in the tomb}). The women went to the tomb once the sun came up on the first day of the week - Sunday morning)

...Involved Jesus entering in Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey and being welcomed with shouts of Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord as they laid their cloaks and palm branches in the road before him. It was symbolic of their acknowledgment of his kingship. And yet, in just a few short days, they would reject him and call for his crucifixion.

There is another symbolism though that we often miss in that this event. I believe, again with careful study of the timeline, that this was the day that the people would have gone out to select their Passover lamb - The 10th of Nisan - as they were instructed to do in the law of Moses. The lamb would live with them for 4 days before being sacrificed on Passover. Most of those there that day didn't even realize they were symbolically choosing Jesus as the Passover lamb. Remember, as his cousin John the Baptist declared three years earlier, "behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world."

Anyway, there is something else that took place on that day that I want to draw your attention too. Let's look at the account as given to us in the book of Mark.

### **Mark 11:1-21**

**11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever**

ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

10 "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

19 When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

## Why do you think Jesus cursed the Fig Tree?

### What connection is there between Jesus cursing the Fig Tree and Cleansing the Temple?

Mark tells us that Jesus saw a fig tree in the distance that was "in leaf" that is a significant detail to the story because in that region the fruit of the fig tree typically proceeds the full leafing of the tree. The leaves were a sign that there should indeed be fruit on the tree. But there was not. Sometimes the lives of Christians can be full of leaves but no fruit. The appearances are there but the substance is not.

*"Where's the fruit?" Can people watch you and see some evidence of your relationship with Christ? "I'm a church member." Nothing but leaves. "I carry my Bible around." Nothing but leaves. "When I get in a jam, I pray." Nothing but leaves. "I've got a sign on my car that says to honk if you love Jesus." Nothing but leaves. Nothing is wrong with leaves; they are attractive and essential. But those things are not substitutes for the real thing.*

*Where's your fruit?*

- From Vines Expository Bible Notes

Jesus point is made even clearer with what happens next. He goes into the temple, the place that proclaimed to house the very presence of God, yet it did not. The leaves were in full display but there was no fruit. As He cursed the fig tree for having no fruit, so He cursed the temple for bearing no fruit of the true presence of God.

We must soberly consider what Jesus sees in our lives when it comes to the fruit of a relationship with Him.

### What does the Parable of The Fig Tree (Luke 13) teach?

*Again, let us turn to scripture for further teaching in this area. In Luke 13 Jesus told a parable about a fig tree. To place it in context, Jesus had just answered the disciples question about some Galileans that Pilate had killed. Jesus assured them that what happened to these people didn't prove that they were any worse sinners than anyone else but instead told them that unless they repented they too would perish.*

Luke 13:6-9

6 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?’

8 “‘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.’”

What I learn from this parable is that God is interested in seeing fruit in my life. I know that the fruit is the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in my life, but I also know that I am called upon to cooperate with that work. To respond to His teaching and direction which brings for good things in my life.

John the Baptist said it this way in Matthew 3:8

**Matthew 3:8**

**8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.**

Don't just say you are changing, but follow through... Plant the seeds of repentance and then keep at it watering it with the Word of God , cultivating it in prayer and a daily relationship with God, taking care to pull out the weeds of sin with contriteness and confession as soon as you see them appear, until a harvest of the fruit of God's presence begins to come forth in your life. And as with any good tree, we don't just settle for one season of fruitfulness. We continue to plant, water, cultivate and care for our relationship with God so that we can see harvest after harvest of fruitfulness for God.

**Which Fruit or Fruits are most prominent on your tree?**

**Which Fruit or Fruits do you find in scarce supply on your tree?**

When people look at your life do they see...

**Love** or anger, hostility, and hatred

**Joy** or heaviness, depression, misery, and despair

**Peace** or conflict, anxiety, and fear.

**Patience** or intolerance, irritation, and frustration

**Kindness** or insensitivity, unfriendliness, and meanness

(Be kind - Rewind; be kind because you can't rewind)

**Goodness** or immorality, iniquity, and sin

**Faithfulness** or fickleness, inconsistency, and unreliability

**Gentleness** or callousness, abruptness, harshness and hardness

**Self-control** or disobedience, and being controlled by your own selfish desires.

Are you willing to ask God for more fruit and are you willing to cooperate with the work of The Gardener as He cultivates that fruit in your life?