

## 04.06.22 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

**Title:** “Fancy, Fig or Fruit”

**Scripture Reading:** [Luke 13:1-9](#)

**Reflection:** Rev. George Vink

Imagine singing, *“I Surrender All.”* They’re words indicating a needed commitment. *“All to Jesus, I surrender!”* Not, *“Most of my life,”* but *“All!”* Now, again imagine.... We’re singing it, our voices are into it. It sounds great! And then, as if calming a storm, there’s Jesus, real as life, waving His arms. The piano stops playing and our voices freeze. We’re stunned and wait for Him to speak, which He does. Not a thundering voice of accusation, but a still, calm voice asking simply, *“Do you mean it?”* His eyes penetrate your soul, and you can’t answer as quickly as you’d like. You remember what we just sang, *“All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.”*

We live in His presence having sung those or similar words. Reading them today, hear His asking you again, *“\_\_\_\_\_ do you mean them?”* You sang, *“Let your blessing fall on me,”* and Jesus asks, *“And, what will you do with my blessing?”* He has expectations of sanctification. We’re blessed for a reason. We’re called to be vigilant. Like Abraham, we’re chosen with tasks to accomplish, jobs to do.

Jesus had a great following at one time. But, when He began spelling out explicitly the expectations, the crowd dwindled dramatically. They were not willing to *“surrender all.”* They wanted to be comfortable.

Many in Jesus’ day had the notion that when experiencing something tragic, it was related to their righteousness. A mistaken notion we’re still struggling to remove from our thinking! We also talk about deserving good things, and often we express it, *“He didn’t deserve to have that happen to him.”* Thinking about it, who does...whatever the tragedy? Jesus made it clear such notions are mistaken! A lesson on repentance, vigilance and fruit bearing followed. All three requirements needed as long as we still sin.

Our repentance requires a change in thinking as well as behavior. If we’re sorry for cheating on our taxes, we repent by not doing it again and Zacchaeus-like, returning what we stole. Jesus illustrated with a parable! Repentance is not an emotional high or a tear-stained face, but a doing the right thing. It’s a being convicted of what is the right thing to do and doing it!

John the Baptizer preached about the tree that doesn’t bear fruit needing to be cut down. Jesus has an identical message. In the language of scripture, the fig tree often referred to chosen Israel. Similarly, it’s about us, chosen in Christ to be followers. He expects obedience leading to fruit bearing. It’s not being fancy, but vigilantly doing what we’re supposed to be doing. The fig tree wasn’t asked to produce oranges. It was a fig tree and had to produce figs to warrant its use of space and water.

God is patient. Even though the fig tree should’ve produced, the caretaker requests another year. Not told how it’s answered, we’re left wondering and hopeful it was granted. God is still patient. But how long will He tolerate our failure to produce, a failure to do and be what we’re supposed to do and be.

We believe and accept Christ’s promises. We’re called to live lives of obedient response. Not just fancy leaves, but fruit! We do not want to risk being cut down. Neither do we don’t know our time left. We’re not to worry

about who's the greater sinner and who deserves to experience a terrible tragedy. It's our calling to "*surrender all*," doing what Jesus expects from us, His followers. With that in mind, "Have we any sense of urgency or are we sadly complacent?" It's a matter of being obedient, producing needed fruit, or display fancy leaves. Do we hear Jesus saying it again, "*Do you mean it?...Really mean it?*"

**Prayer:**

Lord, help me look at my life and see what, if any, fruit I'm producing. I surrender my life and abilities to growing your kingdom, sharing the good news of a life with meaning and purpose. Amen.

**Action Item for the Day/Week:**

Do some real "R & R" by seeing where there's a need for Repentance and Remembering what you promised to do the last time you reflected on the extent of your commitment to following Jesus.

**Songs for today:**

[I Surrender All](#)

[Have Thine Own Way, Lord](#)