

**“Flourish with Fruit!”      Psalm 1**  
**Pentecost 8                      7/25/2004      Pastor Jon Bergemann**

Come, Holy Spirit, renew our hearts and kindle in us the fire of your love! Amen. The word of God for our consideration this morning is found in the first Psalm (read text). In the name of Jesus, our spiritual gardener, dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

These are some of my favorite plants. They were given to me by TCA students. I keep them on my desk in my office (showing jars full of sand).

You might be a little bit puzzled as to where the plants exactly are. Well, to be technically accurate, they aren't actually in here anymore. Why? Well, not two days after I was presented with these plants, I happened to accidentally bump the jars while moving some things on my desk. The contents didn't spill out, but the jars did tip on their sides – enough to loosen the very delicate roots of the small plants inside the sand.

I felt really bad. For a while, I tried to pretend that everything was OK. I kind of tried to stuff the little roots back into the sand. Unfortunately, they wouldn't hold. The plants, with their tender little roots half exposed, looked sadder than before. Finally, I had to acknowledge the unavoidable: these roots, and hence these little plants, weren't good for anything. They needed to be thrown out.

I am certainly no plant doctor, but I could easily make that diagnosis. Exposed roots without water and good soil had no chance of surviving. They would wither and die.

That's an earthly gardening truth. But as we see in our text this morning, it's also a spiritual gardening truth. The Psalm writer describes those without good spiritual roots in verse 4. He says that the wicked **“are like chaff that the wind blows away.”** They have no root system, they have no nutrition. Their only function is to be blown away and thrown away.

“Indeed”, we might say, “I agree!” Just look at the deeds of the wicked in our society! Look at the guilt and depression experienced by those caught in addictive behaviors! They are like chaff with no roots. Look at the repulsive morals of our society! Look at much of our culture which liberates lust and chastises chastity, which defends the right to homosexual marriages and destroys the right of an unborn baby to live! How much are these wicked morals like rootless chaff, suitable only to be thrown away?!

We find many poor moral “root systems” in our society. We might often wish these wicked people would be blown away by the anger of God's wrath. But before we do an expert root analysis on the evils of our society, maybe we should look at our own garden. Maybe we should look at our own roots. What do we see?

We have a big problem. Our roots are infected with an eternal life threatening disease. They are blighted with bacteria. They are rotting away.

This root disease entered the world when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. And it has been passed down to every root of their offspring. All the way down to your parents, and to you, and to me.

You see, we entered the world with a spiritual root system infected with the poisonous bacteria called sin. And sadly, our sinful nature, our sinful root system, doesn't stay “under the ground” so to speak. Instead, it produces many disgusting weeds in our lives.

It's that same root system that gets enraged at the evil morals of society, and then fails to keep its own actions and attitudes pure. It's the one that fails to put our spouses and other's needs above our own. It's the one that complains and gripes about the difficulties we have to endure in our ministry while failing to focus on the ever-present love of our God. It's the one that is lazy and selfish. It's the sinful nature, the poisoned spiritual root system, that produces such weeds of sin in thought, attitude, and action that if every one of our weeds, our sins, would be exposed to everyone else in this room – we would drop to the floor in shame. That's the sinful nature, the sinful root system, the sinful weeds we produce.

So what would God, our perfect gardener, have every right to do? Well, what does any gardener do with an infected tree? With a bad root? Get out the ax. Chop it down. He would have every right to turn us sinners into chaff and to let us blow away into the fires of hell.

But he is a gardener unlike any other. What did he do? He examined our roots. He saw how sinful and rotten they were. And he decided to give us a new root system. How did he do it?

Jesus came to this world and lived a perfect life, unaffected by the bacteria and disease of sin. He produced perfect fruits of faith instead of sinful weeds. Then, instead of throwing our sinful roots into the fires of hell, he suffered hell in our place. He died on the cross to pay for the weeds of our sin and experienced the torment of hell for us.

Then he rose from the dead. He proved that all our sinful weeds are paid for and forgiven. Jesus proved that God now sees his perfect life in place of our sinful roots! We have a whole new root system! We have Jesus' perfect life in our place!

But he didn't stop there. He kept on gardening. He planted the blessings and benefits of that new root system in our hearts. He sent out his own gardener, the Holy Spirit, to plant the seed and the root of faith in our hearts. This is the seed of faith which grasps on to His perfect life, His perfect fruit in place of our sinful weeds.

And this is the seed of faith which He continues to water and grow. He comes to us in the Lord's Supper and showers us with His love and forgiveness. He comes to us in His Word and showers us with His love and forgiveness. And then neat things begin to happen. That seed of faith continues to grow, continues to become a strong root, and begins to produce fruits of faith to the glory of God!

Our text tells us the same truth in a beautiful picture. It describes the forgiven child of God who meditates on the Miracle-Grow of God's Word. What does it say? This person is **"like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."**

Wow! Do you see the picture? God pictures us a strong tree with our roots sunk deep into His Word, producing beautiful fruit to His glory!

It's true! One of our branches produces joy. Why? Because the Holy Spirit waters us in the Word with the truth that Jesus announced on the cross: "It is finished", we are completely forgiven.

Another branch produces love. Why? Because we see in the Word what real love is. WE see our Savior stretch out his arms to die for us on a cross.

Another branch produces peace. Why? Because we see in the Word that same Savior rise from the dead and lift up those same arms in blessing, the nail marks in the hands still evident, and say, "Peace be with you."

Another branch produces patience. Why? Because we see in the Word a Savior who continues to love us, forgive us, wipe our tears, and strengthen us no matter how many times we fall in life.

Another branch produces kindness. Why? Because we see in the Word a Savior who calls us his precious children and wraps his arms around us with a Father's love.

As we see our precious Savior, as we dig our roots into His life giving Word, He makes us flourish! As He comforts us with His love and forgiveness, as He assures our parched and painstricken hearts that He is our peace and power, He makes us grow. Those from TCA have seen me use this illustration before, but I think it helps make the point just a little. He changes us from this (showing dead plant), to this (showing live, green, and flourishing plant).

We flourish in His faithfulness! We grow in His grace! We blossom in His beautiful love for us! We keep growing and producing fruit, because He gives us new roots. Because He continues to water us in His Word. And because He continues to be our loving gardener.

Jesus died, Jesus rose, and Jesus is coming back again. He is your water. He is your life. Sink your roots in His Word. Drink up! And have fun producing flourishing fruits forever. Amen.