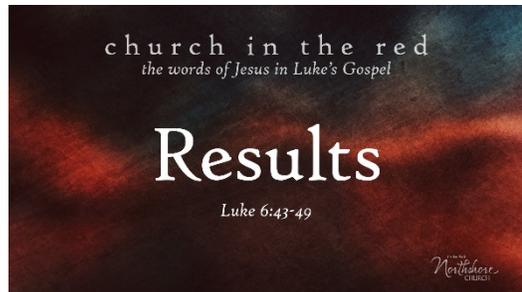


In an effort to keep something at least *sort of* normal, we are going to continue with our series *Church in the Red*, Words of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke.



Today we have the last few verses of chapter 6. We have used clips from the LUMO project in the past. Here are those 7 verses.

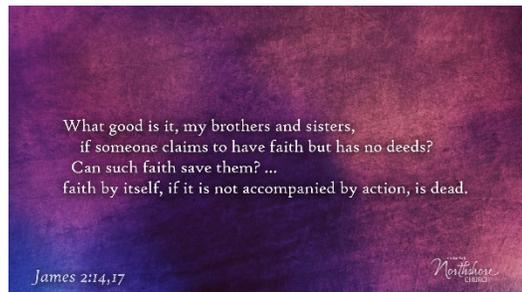
As depicted in the video, Jesus is concluding a sermon. A sermon that appears to make demands on His followers... expectations of **character** and **action**.

It seems that Jesus and His half-brother James were in alignment.

We worked through the Book of James last summer. You can check it out online; it was a pretty good series.

While Jesus didn't use these words, Jesus was pretty much saying:

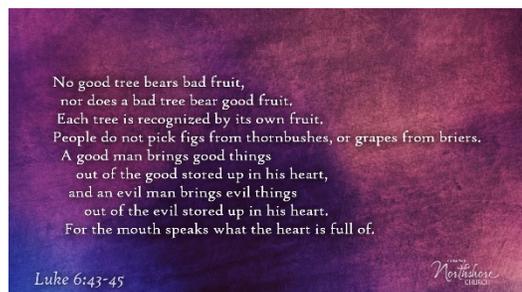
<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. <sup>1</sup>



I wonder if James actually heard Jesus say **those** words; James certainly heard Jesus teach this **meaning**.

Jesus said:

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup> Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. <sup>45</sup> A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. <sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Jas 2:14–17). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 6:43–45). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

In other words, our outsides match our insides. It isn't that complicated. We tend to complicate things. We want to psychoanalyze. We want to delve into motives and such.

It seems like we often start with **our** preconceptions. If we want to believe someone is good, then we psychoanalyze and interpret bad behavior as some sort of anomaly, a malfunction that can be explained away and blamed on some environmental factor or someone else.

Likewise, if we want to believe someone is bad, we discount good behavior as not being aligned with their evil intent and motivations. We disconnect outsides from insides, actions from hearts.

It is easy to do since it isn't so binary. These matters of heart and action are not so *either or*. It isn't even as binary as Jesus puts it in our text. People have a mix of good and evil in our hearts, which results in good and bad action... good and bad fruit.

I love it that Jesus said **fruit**. Do you know what makes fruit **fruit**? It isn't the sweet, juicy flesh that we enjoy. What makes fruit **fruit** are the **seeds**. The whole point of fruit is seeds. Fruit is meant to be reproductive.



And so it is with our actions, the products of our lives. All of it is reproductive.

So, what are we reproducing with our fruit? What are we reproducing with the results of our lives? Are we reproducing

- Love or hate
- Faith or fear
- Generosity or selfishness
- Help or harm

What are the ongoing results? What is the fruit?

And, of course, it is not just actions; it is words too.

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.<sup>3</sup>

We produce from what is in us. The seeds we sow match the seed that is in our hearts. What comes out of us starts from what is in us.

So, the point is, we should desire **good seed**.

**That** is the **Gospel**. We don't start from the outside, our words and actions and sacrifices and such, hoping that it will *work in* from the outside. No, the Gospel says we start with a new **inside**, new seed. When we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit does the work of changing our *hearts of stone* into *hearts of flesh*, transforming bad seed into good seed.

We want good seed, that produces good fruit.

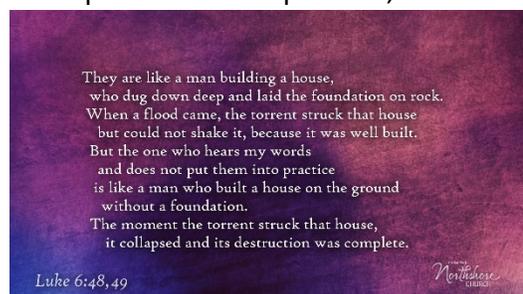
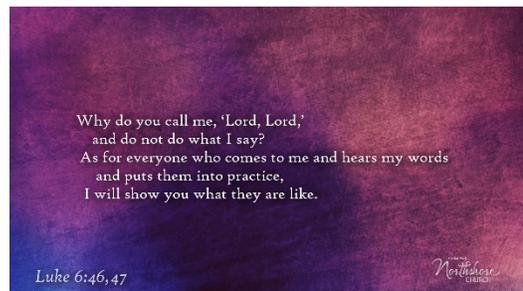
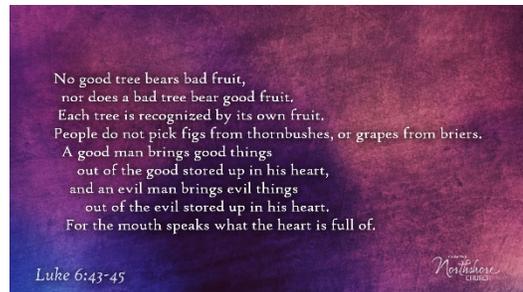
Jesus went on to say:

<sup>46</sup> "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not **do** what I say?<sup>4</sup>

Following Jesus is not just a matter of *labels*... not just a matter of the label we might place on Jesus (like Lord) or the label we place on ourselves (like Christian). No... labels without action are meaningless.

<sup>47</sup> As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. <sup>48</sup> They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus moved from *agriculture* to *architecture*, from *pictures of harvest* to *pictures of structures*. These buildings are our lives.



<sup>3</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 6:45). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>4</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 6:46). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>5</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 6:47-48). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Here the Gospel, previously described as seed, is now described as a foundation.

People who respond to Jesus, who believe and act, who have outsides that are reflecting their new insides... these *Gospel people* have lives built on firm foundations. Not lives just set on the shifting sands. Not lives sliding around in the mud. But lives anchored in the unshakable.

When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.<sup>6</sup>

It seems like a flood came to us recently.

My brother is a pastor and licensed counselor in Michigan. He wisely compared all that is surrounding covid-19 to a **hurricane**. He knows about hurricanes, since before moving to Michigan he and his family lived in Beaumont, Texas. They get hurricanes there. Big ones. Way too often. Randy's family was victimized by Hurricane Rita. They evacuated. Randy, his wife, and two kids, we're kept away from their home for weeks... and it took months and months to put their home, and their lives, back together.



With a hurricane, it isn't just the horrific event itself.

A hurricane takes a toll **leading up to** the event, because you can see it coming... you may not know how bad it is going to be, but you know it is going to be bad. So you wisely hunker down (you quarantine yourself) and wait. Perhaps it will miss you... or perhaps it will land on you. Who knows in the prelude? You just wait.

And then there is the aftermath. The recovery and clean up. The emotional repair. And even, tragically, the mourning of loss. There is returning to *normal*... or at least the *new normal*.

Covid-19 is like a hurricane... a huge hurricane that is rushing over the entire world.



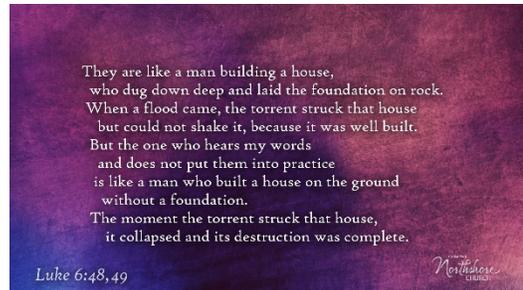
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<sup>6</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 6:48). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

What happens when that torrent strikes? Will it shake us? Will we find (did we find, are we finding) that we are well built, on a solid foundation?

Or, is our foundation shaky like the one Jesus described:

<sup>49</sup> But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.” <sup>7</sup>



It is all a matter of the **foundation**.

What is our foundation? On what are we building our lives?

- Our own strength and works and wits
- Our resources and wealth
- Our government
- Our family and friends

All of that is fine, but all of that is the structure on top. The foundation must be firm, solid rock... the foundation must be Jesus.

So let's dig deep into Jesus. And from that foundation let faith arise.

Here's some good news. When it came to those builders Jesus described, it may seem like they had just *one* chance. They either got started right, with a firm foundation, or they didn't, and their destruction was complete.

Not so with us. Not so with the Gospel.

There is always another chance.

Always another chance to make Jesus the foundation of our lives.

Always another chance to align our actions with His Gospel.

Always another chance to let faith arise to crowd out worry, to let faith arise to overwhelm fear.

Would you like to pray with me?

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<sup>7</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Lk 6:49). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Father, thank you for Your Word, the Good News, the Gospel of Jesus. Forgive us our evil, our fear, our faithlessness. We believe. Help us to trust you more. Give us gifts of courage, comfort, and grace today. Thank you for the good seed of the Gospel, help us to produce good fruit from that seed. Thank you for the firm foundation of the Gospel, help us to dig deep and be anchored to You, building our lives on Jesus. It is in that firm foundation, the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

