

Luke 6:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Analysis

For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit—the principle is inexorable: kalon dendron (καλὸν δένδρον, good/beautiful tree) produces good fruit; sapron dendron (σαπρὸν δένδρον, rotten/corrupt tree) produces bad fruit. The adjective sapos (σαπρός) means rotten, putrid, worthless. This agricultural axiom establishes the principle: nature produces according to kind.

Jesus applies this to spiritual fruit—teachers and disciples are known by what they produce (v. 44). External appearance means nothing; fruit reveals reality. False teachers may appear impressive (whitewashed tombs, Matthew 23:27) but produce corrupt doctrine and corrupt disciples. True teachers, rooted in Christ, produce righteousness, love, and truth. The tree metaphor runs throughout Scripture (Psalm 1:3, Jeremiah 17:7-8, John 15:1-8), always emphasizing the inseparable link between root and fruit, being and doing.

Historical Context

Palestinian agriculture was familiar with olive trees, fig trees, and grapevines—everyone understood that trees produce fruit according to their nature. Jesus used this common knowledge to teach spiritual truth. First-century Judaism emphasized external conformity to law, but Jesus exposed the heart—good trees (regenerate hearts) produce good fruit (righteous living); corrupt trees (unregenerate hearts) produce corrupt fruit (sin). This teaching would resonate in Paul's contrast

between flesh and Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25) and John's emphasis that children of God don't continue in sin (1 John 3:9).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What fruit is your life producing, and what does that reveal about the condition of your heart (the tree)?
2. How does Jesus' teaching about trees and fruit challenge external religiosity that focuses on appearance rather than heart transformation?

Interlinear Text

Οὐ	γάρ	ἐστιν	δένδρον	καλόν	ποιοῦν	καρπὸν	σαπρὸν
not	For	bringeth	tree	a good	bring forth	fruit	a corrupt
G3756	G1063	G2076	G1186	G2570	G4160	G2590	G4550

οὐδὲ	δένδρον	σαπρὸν	ποιοῦν	καρπὸν	καλόν
neither	tree	a corrupt	bring forth	fruit	a good
G3761	G1186	G4550	G4160	G2590	G2570

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 2:21 (Parallel theme): Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?

Matthew 12:33 (Good): Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

Matthew 3:10 (Good): And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Isaiah 61:3 (Parallel theme): To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Isaiah 5:4 (Parallel theme): What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

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