

SICK OF EVIL • Week 2: It Came From Within

Daily Briefing • Day 4 of 5 • Look at the Fruit

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.

Jeremiah 17:7

Sunday's message said you cannot get bad fruit from a genuinely good tree. Today we ask the question that naturally follows: **how do you actually know if your heart has been made new?** You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I want to believe what You say in Your Word, not what I've heard from Christians or pastors or podcasters or YouTubers or anything like that. I want to believe what You say about examining myself to see that I'm in the faith and looking to the outward fruit. I want to believe what You say about thoughts, speech, and actions as the litmus test that You give me. God, keep me from works-based righteousness, but also help me see that saving faith produces a new creation that produces new fruit. If this is something I need to test and see, please give me the humility and courage to do so. I ask these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Believing something is true and having it change your life are not the same thing. You can believe with complete confidence that the capital of Norway is Oslo. That belief is accurate. It has also never once affected a single decision you have made, because it has no actual bearing on your life. Scripture warns that this same gap can exist with the biggest claim a person can make, believing that Jesus is Lord.

Sunday's message made the point directly. You cannot get bad fruit from a genuinely good tree. If God has actually given you a new heart, that heart produces something. So how do you actually know? The answer is not a feeling. Scripture points you to your fruit.

This is not meant to terrify you into perfectionism. The Bible talks about being a new creation, which produces a new nature. So by the way of analogy, picture a fish that gets converted into a bird. New creation, new nature, new behaviors. Can that bird still dive under the water sometimes? Sure. But something in its nature will not let it stay there. It comes back up, back into the sky, back to the nest. Sticking with Jesus' metaphor of turning bad trees into good trees, a genuinely good tree can drop the occasional piece of rotten fruit too. So can a genuinely reborn new creation sin? Sure, but then the new nature is going to get back to producing something at the lifestyle level. The test was never whether you sin sometimes. The test is which way your life is actually trending, and what happens the moment you notice you have drifted.

The apostle John gives the direct test. "Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:6). Jesus said something nearly identical. "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46). And Paul names what has actually happened to someone who belongs to Christ. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Not improved. Not slightly better behaved. A new creation. And new creations do different things than old traitors.

READ & MEDITATE

1 John 2:3-6

"And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

Read 1 John 2:3-6 and notice John is not asking whether you can say the right words. He is asking whether your actual walk, your ordinary daily direction, matches what you claim.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment is far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

“Nobody’s perfect” is true. It can also become a permanent excuse people repeat again and again as a way of never actually dealing with their sin that is hurting them and those around them and normalizing evil in our society.

Do you find yourself reaching for “nobody’s perfect” to comfort yourself and dismiss ongoing sin rather than to describe an occasional lapse?

Name one specific area where you have been using that phrase as a permanent excuse instead of an honest acknowledgment.

Paul describes real transformation as an ongoing process, being changed “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18), not a finish line you cross once.

Do you actually expect your life to look more like Christ a year from now than it does today? Or has your walk with God quietly stopped moving? Are you more patient, more generous, more self-controlled than you were six, twelve, or eighteen months ago?

This series has spent two weeks tracing how evil normalizes itself across a whole society, one person at a time. We find that this evil comes from the heart. This makes something as small as the desires and values inside a single person have ramifications across larger groups and society as a whole. So let’s talk about your tolerance for a bad heart and evil fruit.

Are you currently tolerating sin, standardizing hypocrisy, and normalizing evil by saying things to yourself that convey the idea of “I’m a good tree but I just constantly bear bad fruit”?

Fill in the blank from 1 John 2:6:

“Whoever says he abides in him ought to _____ in the same way in which he walked.” (1 John 2:6)

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

Why do you think John ties abiding in Christ directly to how you actually walk, rather than to what you say you believe?

A new creation can still have flashes of acting like their old self for a moment. The difference is what happens next. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

When you notice you have drifted back into tolerating old sin, is your instinct to run to God and receive the forgiveness He promises, or to hide from Him and keep hurting yourself and others?

What would it look like this week to actually confess a specific, current pattern instead of carrying it quietly? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

For further study: if you want to look directly at what Scripture says about faith, works, and salvation, you will find that works were never the cause of salvation, but they are proof of it. You can check the consistent and abundant messaging on this for yourself here: Ephesians 2:8-10; Matthew 7:21-23; Matthew 3:8-10; Luke 6:43-46; John 15:1-8; James 2:14-26; James 1:22-25; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 1:6; 1 John 3:3-4; 1 John 3:6-10; 1 John 3:14-18; 1 John 4:20; 1 John 5:18; Titus 1:16; Titus 2:11-14; Titus 3:8; Galatians 5:19-24; Galatians 6:7-9; Romans 2:6-8; Romans 2:13; Romans 6:1-2; Romans 6:15-18; Romans 8:13; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Ephesians 5:3-6; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Hebrews 12:14; Ezekiel 36:26-27

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Jeremiah 17:7 from memory:
