

## What Are You Good For?

Ponder: Being good for something

Scripture: “Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?” (Luke 13:6, NKJV).

I like teasing people. Sometimes I’ll ask someone what they have been doing. If they say, “oh, nothing much,” I’m liable to respond, “Well, what are you good for?” Though I mean that in a good-natured way, it’s a fair question for God to ask me. “Joe, what are you good for?” I could reply that I haven’t robbed any banks or murdered anyone. And of course it’s good that I haven’t done those things. But that really doesn’t answer the question: What are you good for?

Jesus told the parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9. The first and most obvious application is to the nation of Israel. God intended for them to bear fruit for Him by obeying His will, keeping the Law of Moses, and being a beacon of light to their world. A little bit of the time, they did reasonably well; but most of the time they acted like the world around them, and sometimes even worse. Like a barren tree, they just used God’s blessings for themselves, but produced no fruit of good behavior and worship that would glorify Him. He was more than patient with them. In the parable, He would fertilize the tree one more year; if it was still fruitless, it would be cut down. Unfortunately, Israel remained fruitless, and the Lord cut them down in the year AD 70 by sending the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem.

What about us? The question still rings out: “What are you good for?” God has blessed us richly with a free country, abundant material wealth, good education, good medical care, and the list goes on and on. What are we doing with those blessings? Are we really being fruitful, working in His kingdom, influencing those around us, worshiping as His word directs, obeying His commands? Or are we focused inward, consuming His blessings on our own pursuits, and perhaps tossing the Lord a few scraps from the leftovers? Remember that in another parable, the fruitless branch on the vine is pruned off and burned! Don’t let that be you!

What are you good for?

Song: “Bringing In The Sheaves”