

NEWS AND VIEWS  
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full  
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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*Planting time...* as I write this, spring is in the air...I think! I'm waiting on winter to break so I can break ground and plant a backyard garden. I hope that it bears so much fresh *veggie* fruit that I need to give some away! Warmer temperatures and the budding of the trees promise new growth. Just as sure as the seasons change, growth will come. It is in the nature of creation for new life to come. Trees blossom with good reason. All of creation points to the Creator. As His creatures we serve His purpose. Life begets life. But some people contend, or *complain* I should say, about the life they're living and it really doesn't resemble life. Some folks I talk to seem to think that their lives have been wasted. They cannot point to anything of value that has come forth from them. It is the saddest of all things to live as though we don't matter. It is really painful to think we don't matter to God. That thought will manifest itself in our lives in all kinds of ways...none of them good.

Believing that we matter to God is a liberating thing. Though we may not see our true value in the big picture, we matter to God in that He became a man and came to die so we could blossom. That glorifies God. He took the steps to bring righteousness into our lives and into the lives of others. Let's share some thoughts on this proverbial passage before us.

*There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want. The generous man will be prosperous, and he who waters will himself be watered. He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, but blessing is on the head of him who sells it. He who diligently seeks good seeks favor, but he who seeks evil, evil will come to him. He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like the green leaf. (Proverbs 11:24-28)*

- I. THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BLOSSOM.** Fruitfulness comes only after we have sown. We must give away hope we have received. We must be willing to serve and not exist to be served. We must be willing to share to receive a share. We must be willing to plant to harvest. We must be willing to do good to receive goodness. Godliness blooms where it is planted. Godliness blooms where it is cultivated. Righteousness always blossoms. Righteousness leads to life.
- II. A BRANCH IS THE NATURAL PART OF GROWTH.** When something grows, it is said that it "branches out". The growth of a branch often takes off in a new direction. A branch can even be the start of a new plant. It can be grafted into a different plant and flourish. Righteousness is a branch from the tree of Christlikeness. When we are righteous, we look like God. We are the branches, Jesus is the vine. Sometimes our righteousness must be pruned to bear more fruit. Pruning is never painless. Our righteousness will be tested. The test comes in opportunities to blossom or wither.
- III. TRUE GIVING IS A RESULT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Not everyone who gives will be righteous. That's not how we become righteous. But once God changes us by giving us righteousness, we become like Him. We will be changed in our thinking pattern and want to give because God is a righteous giver. It is the righteous thing to do. It is the godly thing to do. Part of being fruitful is learning to be fruitful in our giving.

What is branching out of your life? Ask those around you who know you...then ask the Lord who knows you better than you know yourself. Here is the declaration for this day these days...*Jesus Is Lord!* Trust God...Believe Him...*Life* with the Lord is never wasted.

Have a Blessed Resurrection Season...all year long!

Pastor Sam