

# BETHEL MATTERS

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## *Jesus' Teaching on the Issue of Fruit and No Fruit*

One of Jesus' most difficult sayings to interpret is John 15:2a, 6 where He says "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he [my Father] takes away...If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned." There are three views of this important passage and the relationship of fruit to salvation for believers.

The view of those in the Arminian wing of the church is that this refers to genuine Christians who bear no Christian fruit and lose their salvation. They were in the vine and vitally connected to Jesus but stopped following Him and had their salvation taken away. The problem with this is that it clearly conflicts with other passages in John where Jesus says true Christians can never perish. John 6:39 says, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day." On the principle that God's Word is consistent and non-contradictory we must reject this view of the non-fruit-bearing branches.

Another view, popular with some Evangelicals, but more recent in the history of the church, is that the non-fruit-bearing branches are true Christians who have their works burned up and receive little or no rewards. These are Christians who live like the world but have no fruit to offer to God at the judgment seat of Christ. These fulfill 1 Corinthians 3:15 which says, "If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." The problem with this is that it is the branch itself that Jesus says is burned, not the unfruitful works of the branch. Also, when Jesus spoke about fruit elsewhere he made it clear that the tree is known by its fruit and that bad fruit is characteristic of an evil heart, Luke 6:43-45. Clearly Jesus taught that Christian fruit is the mark of a relationship with Him, Matthew 7:16-23. View two is inconsistent with Jesus' teaching elsewhere.

The final view, and one widely held in Christian history, is that the no-fruit-branches represent false believers who appear to be believers but only have an outward attachment to Jesus and have never really been born again. Since Judas had just recently departed the upper room before Jesus spoke the words about no fruit in John 2, many Bible students believe he illustrates the kind of person Jesus was talking about. He looked so much like the other eleven that they thought he was one of them. But he bore no lasting fruit and Jesus said it was better that he had never been born, Mark 14:21. He was never vitally connected with Jesus and showed no fruit of a changed life. He was not the good soil that Jesus said represents true believers who all bear fruit but just not in the same amounts, Luke 8:15. If this is the correct view, what do we learn from Jesus?

One thing we learn is that a relationship with Jesus is clearly life-transforming. Not all mature to the extent they should and every believer has remaining vestiges of sin, but new life will manifest itself in new fruit. Another thing we learn is that it is possible to attach oneself to the Christian church and even think one belongs to Jesus, and yet be self-deceived because of the absence of new life. Such people hear in the end the Master's words "I never knew you," Matthew 7:21-23. Finally, we learn that presumption is not the same as eternal security. All true believers can and should be secure in their salvation knowing that they will never perish and their sins are eternally forgiven, John 10:28-29. But such believers are not presumptuous believing that they can live sinfully and carelessly and still claim to be saved. True believers heed Paul's words, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" Happy is the believer who passes the faith and the fruit test.

Your friend, wanting to bear fruit,  
Pastor Brian (-}).

## From the Family Life Pastor:

### Various thoughts:

It is good to be back in the office and not on the couch at home. Most of you know that I had surgery on my Achilles on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and then spent the next two weeks with a “cast” and non weight bearing. With our home set up, I was unable to get out and about so I spent two weeks on the couch and trust me that is not my norm! However, one of the benefits was that for the first time in ages I got to do some reading just for the enjoyment of reading a book. Ann brought me a couple of books that I read and enjoyed very much.

Anyway, on Friday, January 22, I got the cast off and put on a walking boot which is great. I still have to use my crutches, but at least I am out of the house and back to doing what I love – ministry! I got into the office this morning and had a nice visit with one of our people and was encouraged to hear him talking about a vision for some folks in our community who are lost and need the Lord! It was a great way to begin the week and to get back into the swing of things.

As I was writing this, I happened to think of some scripture that I read while laid up. It is from Genesis and is about an encounter that Jacob (Israel) had with God. Genesis 32:22-32 (portions) – Jacob had taken his family and all that he had and put them in different places to protect him from his brother that he had not seen for 21 years. Vs 24 – *Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, ‘Let me go, for it is daybreak.’ But Jacob replied, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ The man asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Jacob’, he answered. Then the man said ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.’”*

I just think this is such a cool encounter. Jacob is in fear of his brother because Jacob had taken Esau’s birthright and blessing. He was afraid that Esau would still hold a grudge and come and destroy him. After moving his family around to protect them and his herds of animals, Jacob is alone and according to verse 28 Jacob struggles with God and overcame. Now we know that a man cannot physically struggle with God and win, but the name “Israel” means “he strives with God” or “God strives”. In the context here, it appears that Jacob was struggling with God to get His blessing.

Israel’s hip was thrown out of socket and he now has to go forward with a “disjointed” hip. As I think of the convenience that I have of crutches and people helping me, at that moment, Israel had nothing – except God – and that was all he needed. Our God is greater and bigger and more awesome than anything we can imagine!

When I read something like that, my Achilles tendon issue seems pretty small and unimportant.

### Another thought:

I am so thankful for the many well wishes, the offers of help and the acts of kindness as I was laid up. We are so blessed to be part of a church body that says “I want to help”. Thank you all! Also, I am so thankful for my wife – Ann has had to take on extra duties to help me as I’ve been laid up. Thank you Ann!

Josh Vissering stepped in and took over teaching our ABF while I was laid up and I’m thankful for his willingness to teach!

### Another thought:

At the beginning of Pastor Brian’s message yesterday he said something that has really stuck and has been bouncing around in my head. It is a statement that most of us know, but to hear it laid out so well was great – he said “*We are saved to produce fruit*”. We all produce some sort of fruit, the question that we must ask is what kind of fruit. We produce either good fruit or bad fruit, what kind of fruit are you producing. That was the central theme of his message. Good job Pastor Brian!

I pray that we will all have a good fruit producing year! God Bless you!

In Christ – Pastor Hank

## Youth Events & Activities

### Junior High Youth Group

6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Graders

Sundays 5:30 - 7:00 PM

### Senior High Youth Group

9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Graders

Sundays 5:30 - 7:00 PM

If you have questions, contact the church office at 228-7589 or by email at [bethel.admin@bbcmqt.org](mailto:bethel.admin@bbcmqt.org)

## High School Graduation Open House for Sam & Ryan Salo

Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at church

12 Noon - 3 PM

They both graduated 6 months early from Northstar Academy, let’s encourage and congratulate them on their accomplishments.

## Prayer Chain & Official Notices

[bethelemail@gmail.com](mailto:bethelemail@gmail.com)

If you have a prayer request or information that you want shared, please send that to the email address above. If you are not receiving email prayer requests or notices, please contact Ann in the church office.

**Items for the March Issue  
of Bethel Matters  
are due in the office  
by Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**Items for the Happenings  
are due in the office  
by Wednesday noon.**

Have you visited our Bethel Website?

Check it Out at:

[www.bethelmarquette.com](http://www.bethelmarquette.com)

Audio Sermons are posted weekly  
along with items of interest,  
Bethel Matters, Calendar,  
and Happenings.

### Happy February Birthday/Anniversary to:

2. Effie Smaby
3. Sandy Petrovich
4. Bill Kosa
5. Stan & Judy Taylor (A), Chris Stewart
8. Michelle Baumgartner
9. Marilyn Morrison
10. Ryan Salo
12. John Janofski
14. Nick & Effie Smaby (A)
15. Ed Deyo, Hilda Johnson (80 yrs)
18. Cindy DeGarmo, Miles Jentoft
20. Dave Petrovich
21. Miranda Millin, Emily Nelson
23. Mark Shevy
24. Joe & Leanne Mackey (A), Carla Trembl
25. Karen Helmila, Dan Freeborn, Pete & Julie Glover (A)
27. Montie Motta, Gwen White
28. Dave Michels



## Bible Studies

### For Men

Tuesdays, 6:30 AM, Perkins Restaurant  
Questions: contact Pastor Hank 228-7589

### For Women

Tuesdays, 6:15 PM at church  
*"Discerning the Voice of God"*  
by Priscilla Schierer  
Questions: contact Sarah Goupil 250-6130

Thursdays, 9:30 AM at church  
*"Twelve Ordinary Men"*  
by John MacArthur  
Childcare is provided.  
Questions: contact Bethany Jentoft 459-9310

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## Congratulations to:

**Brianna Steede** and teammates on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Negaunee Nets Girls Basketball Team on their 1<sup>st</sup> place win in the Negaunee Irontown Invitational Tournament.

**Rob & Meagan Hanson** on the January 13<sup>th</sup> birth of their son, Declan August. He weighed in at 7 lbs. 9.6 oz., 20 inches long.

**Grace Lingle** on her third place finish in the spelling bee at Northstar Academy.

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### Adult Bible Fellowships Sundays at 10 AM

**Group #1 College - 29 years old**  
Meets in Room #1 in Family Life Center  
Topical Studies

**Group #2 Ages 30-42**  
Meets in Room #2 in Family Life Center  
Studying the book of James

**Group #3 Ages 43-55**  
Meets in Room #6 in Family Life Center  
Studying "The Red Sea Rules"

**Group #4 Ages 56-69**  
Meets in Room #3 in Family Life Center  
Studying the book of Ephesians

**Group #5 Ages 70+**  
Meets in the Wheat Room  
Studying the book of Proverbs

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## AWANA for Grades K-6

Mondays from 6:30 - 8:05 PM

\* February 1<sup>st</sup>, regular club night

\* February 8<sup>th</sup>, regular club night

\* February 15<sup>th</sup>, Theme Night

(wear a unique hat and receive a treat)

\* February 22<sup>nd</sup>, regular club night

\* February 29<sup>th</sup>, Grand Prix (**NOTE TIMES**)

(Check in begins at 5:30 PM

Design Judging at 6:15 PM

Race at 6:30 PM)

Questions: contact Commander Josh at 360-0201

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### From the Mailbox:

*Dear Friends,  
Thank you for such a generous gift at Christmas. I'm so grateful to be a part of worshipping our Lord together.*

*Thank you,  
Diane Case*



*Dear Carolers,  
What a pleasure it was to have the Bethel Carolers visit my apartment again this past Christmas season, singing those beautiful Christmas Carols. It's always a wonderful way to begin the season, celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Also, thank you for the plate of delicious cookies. God bless each and everyone of you.*

*Love In Him,  
Ann Sarkela*

*To Everyone who came to my house during Christmas and also brought me a plate of delicious cookies - a big THANK YOU! The singing was beautiful. Many Thanks.*

*Sincerely,  
Marcy Houlmont*

*Dear Bethel Family,  
Thank you for continuing to be such a giving church. I am blessed to be a recipient of your generosity of finances and time. Thank you for the Christmas gift from the church this year, your greetings and letters of encouragement, and for serving with me and supporting all of us on staff. You faithfully serve the Lord in many capacities and demonstrate His love. I thank God for you and the privilege I have to be part of this special family.*

*Love,  
Julie Motta*

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## Prayer Summit for Our Nation Thursday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM

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### 2016 Phone Directory

The new directory is ready for you to proof your entry. Please take a moment to check your information for your address, phone numbers, and email address. If you have a cell phone and want that number in there as well, please add it by your name.

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**Men's Breakfast  
and Boys 7 and up**  
Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 9 AM  
Watch for a sign up sheet on the bulletin board.



## Free Opportunity

NMU Men's and Women's Basketball Game  
versus Ferris State

Saturday, February 6th.

Games are at 11am and 1pm.

FREE tickets.

Call 228-5564 for more information,

or stop by

Roberts Financial Services, Inc

989 W Washington St, Mqt

to pick up free tickets.

This would be a great activity to grab your  
basketball playing children and go as a family.



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David & Jan's mom, Helen Ray. Helen had  
been an active member at Bethel since 1974  
and had been involved in many ministries  
over the years. A memorial service will be  
held in the Spring.

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## **Dinner & Hymn Sing at Lake Ellen Camp**

**Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Dinner at 5 PM (Central time)**

**Hymns at 6 PM (Central time)**

**Reservations are required by Monday,  
February 8<sup>th</sup> by calling the camp at (906) 542-  
3529 or via email at  
[office@lakeellencamp.org](mailto:office@lakeellencamp.org). A free will  
offering will be taken to help cover the cost  
of the meal.**

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## **Bible Camp Information**

Stop by the bulletin board above the drinking  
fountain for information about summer camp  
and winter retreats. Just a reminder that our  
AWANA Clubbers are earning scholarships  
for summer camp by passing sections in their  
handbook. The more sections passed, the  
larger the scholarship. These scholarships  
are useable at Lake Ellen Camp, UP Bible  
Camp, or Lake Lundgren Bible Camp.

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## **Primetimers ABF Activity Potluck and Movie**

**Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 PM**

**Peter White Public Library Community Room**  
Bring a dish of food to share and enjoy  
fellowship while watching a great film "**Faith  
of Our Fathers**" Drinks, popcorn, and table  
service provided.

## **In Sympathy to:**

**Pete & Julie Glover and family** following  
the December 31<sup>st</sup> death of Pete's dad, Paul  
Glover. The funeral was held in Howell.

**Jerry & Debbie Napier and family**  
following the January 5<sup>th</sup> death of Jerry's dad,  
Joe Napier. The funeral was held in Ohio.

**Brian & Patti Lingle and family** following  
the January 17<sup>th</sup> death of Brian's dad, John  
Lingle. The funeral will be in Niles this  
Saturday.

**Sandra Norton and family** following the  
January 21<sup>st</sup> death of Sandra's dad, Wilbur  
Rose. The funeral will be in Kentucky this  
Friday.

**David Ray, Bill & Jan Brondyke and  
family** following the January 22<sup>nd</sup> death of