

Courageous, Careful Reaching June 21+22, 2008

One thing Whatcom County is known for is its abundant **fruit** production. Strawberries, raspberries, blueberries all are grown here in huge quantities and countless people are involved in their growth and harvesting.

When this fruit finally ripens, everything and everyone focuses on it's **picking**. Growers do whatever it takes to bring in the precious ripe fruit. We enjoy the delicious "fruit" of their hard work as we devour fresh ripe fruit in every way imaginable.

God also has a "fruit filled" life for everyone who believes in Him. He wants to deeply satisfy us with the fruit He alone can give and produce in our lives. His plan has always been to lead us to and have us live a fruit filled life - a life filled with His best. Genesis 2:9-9, Numbers 13:27, 23- 27

John 15:1, 4, 8, 11, Revelations 22:1-2 -1

What fruit is ripe for the picking? What is God's best that you can get?

- 1) **Eternal life through complete forgiveness of your sins**
- 2) **Ever deepening, life giving relationship with Christ**
- 3) **Christ like character and wholeness**
- 4) **Mutually satisfying, Christ honoring relationships**
- 5) **Meaningful life purpose and ministry**
- 6) **Abundant grace and power for all of life's challenges**
- 7) **Overflowing financial provision**

John 10:10 - *The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.* Ephesians 1:11

How do we pick or produce this fruit? How do we get God's best?

A) Faith: Resolute belief it is available and that God wants you to pick it or produce it. Faith secures what God promises and delights to give but unbelief leaves us unfulfilled and fruitless. Numbers 13: 27-31, Numbers 14:6-10, Numbers 14:26-32, Hebrews 3:19, Hebrews 11:1-2 -1- *Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.*

B) Courageous, Careful Reaching:

Joshua 1:1-9 - *After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. "Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

God's Part:

- 1) He has given it to you but you must go get it
- 2) He has promised to give it to you and no man can prevent you from getting it
- 3) He will be with you--He will not fail you or forsake you

My Part:

- 1) I must be strong and courageous to get what He has promised for me and others. Says it 3x's
- 2) I must be careful to do what is written and not deviate from it if I want to enjoy success.
- 3) I must act like I am under His command
- 4) I must act like He is with me because He is--wherever I go.

Action Step: **Pick** the fruit you want the most and ask God to show you how to get it. He will show you! **Matthew 7:7-11**

God's will for you is to both enjoy and produce the fruit of abundant life in Christ. He has a promised life for you. Will you reach courageously and carefully for His best? It's ripe for the picking!

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What is your favorite summer fruit and favorite way to eat eat?
- 2) Which of the 7 fruits that Jesus gives are you reaching for more of? Why?
- 3) What can we learn from Joshua about courageous, careful reaching for God's best? Do you believe God wants you to pick it?