

“Evidence of Salvation”

9/15/19

John 15:5-8 NKJV “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

Jesus here is comparing himself to a vine or tree, and Christians to the branches.

A tree has only two types of branches—Branches that bear fruit, and branches that don’t.

In Jesus’s illustration, the branches that bear fruit are genuine believers.

The branches that do not bear fruit are those who profess to believe, but their lack of fruit indicates genuine salvation has never taken place.

Jesus says that a person is either attached to Him—the True Vine...

Or they are attached to some other kind of worldly, fleshly, non-Christian tree.

The fruit, He says, always tells the story.

As a branch you may be attached to the tree of Buddhism, or Hinduism, or secularism, or New Age, or some cult...

Whatever it is, you *WILL* produce the fruit of it...

And it won't be the fruit that Jesus produces, which is listed in Galatians 5:22—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control;" (NASB)

Jesus says emphatically, You will know what tree they're attached to by the fruit it produces in their life.

The Lord's point here is that if you are truly saved, you will show the evidence of it....your life will steadily produce the fruit of the True Vine—Jesus Christ.

This is very important because there are many people who believe they're saved because they're religious—they attend

church services, do good things for the needy and poor, and so on.

In their own eyes they are fundamentally good people and believe that, because they are good citizens, good moms and dads, good friends or caring people who do good things for others and don't break the law, they are genuine Christians.

They profess to being saved, but there is a disconnect between their profession of faith and how they live,

What they allow,

What they embrace as acceptable morals and ethics,

And in what they accept as spiritual truth.

Things that the Scriptures condemn or at least advise against doing they practice with no conviction of sin, no sense of the need to repent.

This is why the Bible advises, "Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test? Do you feel Christ's presence and power more and more within you? Or are you just pretending to be Christians when actually you aren't at all?" (2 Cor. 13:5 LB)

So we need some clarity on this!

I'm going to just let the Bible speak for itself as to what it identifies as genuine evidences of salvation, of what fruit should be on the branches of a person truly born again.

The first evidence is:

I. A changed life

Paul the Apostle wrote, "When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!" (2 Cor. 5:17 LB).

He or she are not perfect, but they are *changed*....

There is a recognizable difference, a distinct *BEFORE and AFTER*.

Their speech, morals, character, and lifestyle are all immediately affected.

Of course, there's still much room for spiritual growth that will come with time...

But there is an immediate, recognizable, observable change in behavior and demeanor when a person is truly saved.

Now, you might ask, What kind of changes?

That question leads me to the second evidence of genuine salvation after a changed life, that being:

II. Changed affections and desires

Genuine salvation produces in the believer a whole new set of desires and affections.

Remember, Paul said the Christian is “a brand new person inside.”

So FIRST, a truly born again person will evidence a genuine love for Jesus Christ.

“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,” (1 Pet. 1:8 NIV).

This means you care about what pleases Him, or what grieves Him...what He wants for you or not.

As with anyone you truly love, you want to spend time with Him, to come to know Him better.

You want to hear about Him, worship Him, be in His presence, talk to Him.

Jesus becomes the central figure of your life.

As Paul said, “To me, living means having Christ. To die means that I would have more of Him” (Phil 1:21 NIV).

For the unsaved person, there is no such desire—Jesus is just an inspirational historical figure who said some good things worth emulating, along with other religious leaders.

SECONDLY, a true born again Christian will experience a brand new desire for the things of God—His word, His Spirit, His presence.

For instance, Peter wrote: “As newborn babes, desire (crave) the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,” (1 Pet. 2:2 NKJV).

The word *desire* here means to “long for, strain after, hunger for, desire greatly, have strong affection for.”

The genuinely saved person will experience a longing for God's Word, a strong desire to be fed it's truth.

He will hunger to learn more of Him, to soak in the Scriptures, to grow in grace, to advance spiritually, to become like Jesus.

Conversely, the person that hasn't been genuinely saved has no such passion....they are more about *appearing* to be religious.

Paul pointed out people like this, saying: "They will do things to make it look as if they are Christians. But they will not receive the power that is for a Christian" (2 Tim. 3:5 NIV).

Unsaved religious people are all about what people think, about appearing pious and spiritual.

But they will have nothing to do with genuine repentance of sin and turning to Christ.

So genuine salvation brings 1.) a distinctly changed life 2.) and changed desires and affections.

The last evidence I want to point out is that the truly born again person will:

III. Obey God's word

An anonymous quote I saw this week said, "We're at a point in Christianity where people don't care if you can back it up with the Bible. Their feelings, desires, and emotions override what Scripture says. They don't follow Christ, they follow self."

This is true, and I wonder about the salvation of these folks!

Here's what John the Apostle wrote: "And we can be sure that we know him *if we obey his commandments*" (1 John 2:3 NLT).

"Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3 NLT).

When you are truly saved, a new lifestyle comes with it...a lifestyle of *obedience*, not perfect obedience, but a sincere desire and effort to obey the Bible, our instruction manual for living!

ILLUS: If a person tells you they went through Drivers Ed in school and passed the drivers test, yet they CONTINUALLY drive like a maniac, you might doubt their testimony!

Their driving gives no evidence of it!

Likewise, the person who tells us they're a Christian but continue to live sinful lives of disobedience, we doubt their testimony!

Many people assume that because they walked down an aisle, repeated a prayer, got water baptized, or joined a church, that they are saved.

But none of these things save you if you haven't genuinely repented and turned to Christ.

The real evidence of genuine salvation is *present obedience* to the Word of God, because a genuinely saved person wants to obey it!

And when a true Christian doesn't obey it, they come under strong conviction leading to repentance.

So genuine salvation brings the evidence of...

- 1.) a changed life**
- 2.) changed affections and desires**
- 3.) Obedience to God's word**

