

*Nurturing Faith...
Every Day in Every Way*

February 28, 2016

Third Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalms 63:1-8 (1)

I Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9



Bearing Good Fruit. Object: An Apple

How many of you like apples? A nice, juicy apple is one of my favorite snacks. Here are a few facts about apples.

- Apples not only taste good, they are good for you. Apples are fat-free, salt-free, cholesterol-free, and a good source of vitamins to help you grow.
- The apple I have this morning is called a "Red Delicious," but you may be surprised to know that there are over 7500 different types of apples in the world.
- The top five apple-producing countries in the world are China, the United States, Turkey, Italy and France.

There are a lot of different ways to enjoy apples. For example, you might enjoy some apple juice or apple cider. Some children like to take applesauce in their school lunches. Have you ever had some tasty apple butter on your toast in the morning? Apple slices dipped in caramel are a delicious treat. My all-time favorite, of course, is apple pie!

I am sure that all of you know where we get apples. They come from apple trees. Well, what would you do if you planted an apple tree in your garden, watered it, and took care of it and it never produced any apples? It wouldn't be much good as an apple tree, would it?

Jesus told a story about a man who had a fig tree in his vineyard that didn't produce any figs. For three years he waited for the tree to produce fruit -- but still no figs. He went to the man who took care of the tree and told him to cut it down. The caretaker asked the owner to give him one more year to dig around the tree and fertilize it to see if the tree would produce some figs. The owner agreed to give the tree another chance.

In telling this story about the fruit tree, Jesus was really talking about us - and about God. God has "planted" us on this earth and he expects us to produce good fruit in our life. What kind of fruit does God expect? Things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness. When He doesn't see these things in our life, He is very disappointed -- but He is willing to give us another chance.

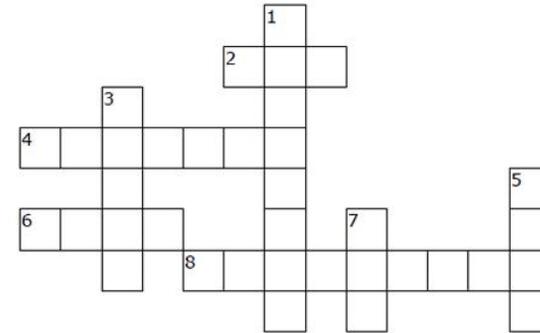
Jesus wants to care for us and help us to be the kind of fruit-bearing children that God wants us to be. If we will trust in him, read his Word, and pray -- he will help us to produce a lot of good fruit.

Dear Jesus, help us to have the kind of fruit in our lives that would be pleasing to our Heavenly Father. Amen.

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Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia. Jesus began to proclaim, repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. Alleluia (Matt. 4:17)

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. The sweet, pear-shaped, fruit of a plant found in Bible lands.
4. A simple story teaching a moral or religious lesson.
6. The top layer of the earth's surface favorable to plant growth.
8. To spread a something on land or plants to help plants grow.

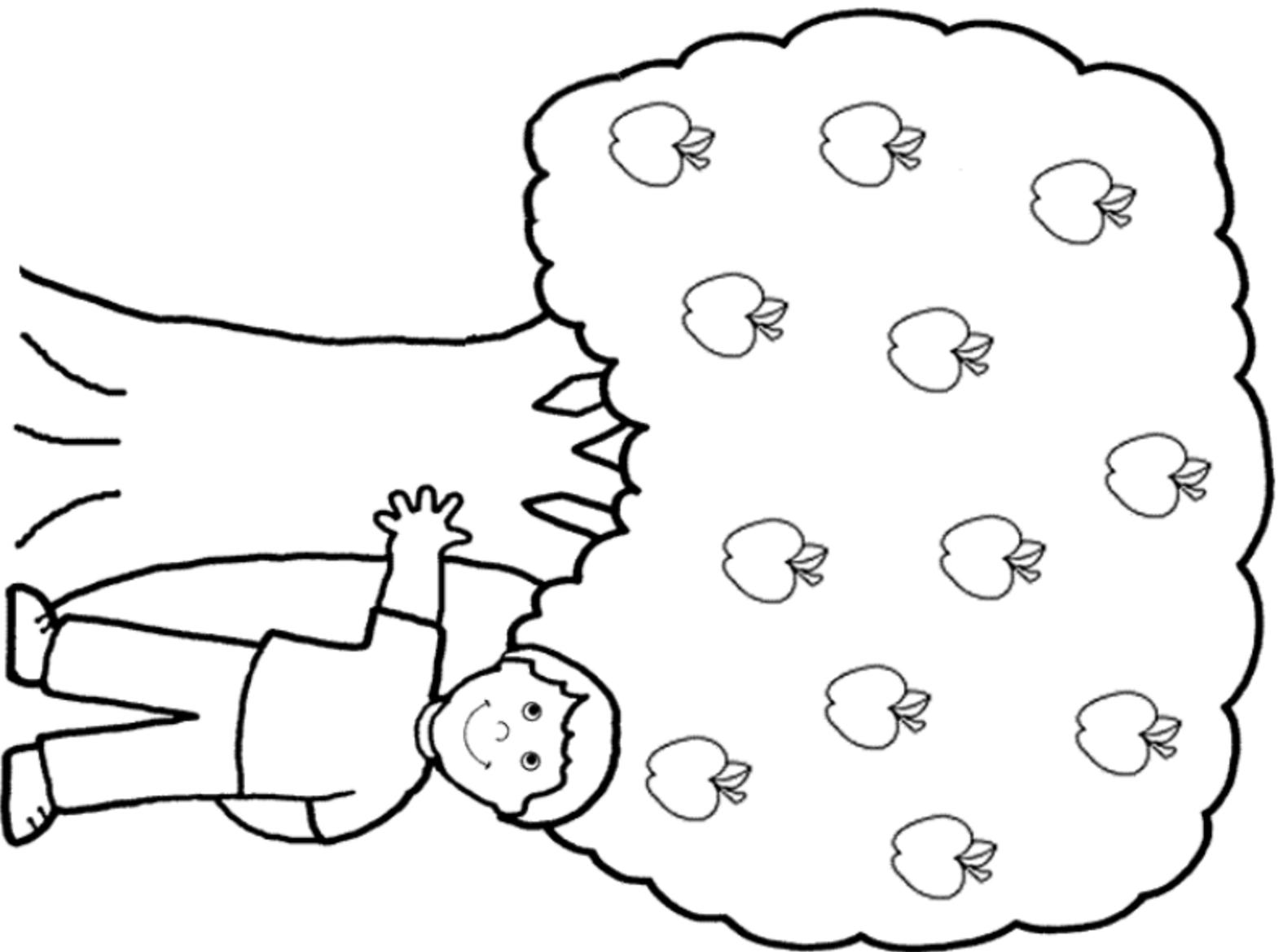
DOWN

1. An area of ground planted with vines and fruit trees.
3. The usually sweet-tasting part of a tree which can be eaten.
5. A large plant with a trunk, limbs, branches, and leaves.
7. To break up and move dirt using a shovel.

DIG	VINEYARD	TREE	PARABLE
FIG	FERTILIZE	SOIL	FRUIT

FIG TREE CRAFT: Gather some twigs for the children to tape to a poster board or to their own sheet of construction paper. Fig cookies could be taped near the twigs as you discuss the story of the fig tree from today's lesson.





"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
John 15:5 (NIV)