

What kind of crop are you expecting to harvest?

October 30, 2016

This is the time of year where people, young and old, dress up and wear masks to pretend to be someone or something that they are not. They spend an evening having fun and enjoying the idea that people can't recognize them and they can be a hero or a scary creature. However, there are people who wear many faces. They show a public face where they smile to appear happy, their appearance speaks of success and they act like they have it all together. However in the privacy of their homes, their true character shows clearly. With their closest family members, their actions are quite different from that which they do around people who they try to make a good impression on. Chuck Swindall wrote a book called "Who are you when no one is looking?" Your true character is revealed when you feel safe that there is no one around to either confront you or praise you for your actions.

On the internet a couple weeks ago, a person who aspires to become a leader in our government was unaware that a camera and microphone were focused on him because he was to be interviewed. He was intent on reaching his daughter by phone so he made a long distance phone call to his 11 year old daughter and she didn't answer. He left her an emotionally charged message on her phone. As I listened to the words of this father using vulgar language and threatening his child with punishment when he returned home that weekend, my heart went out to the little girl. He ridiculed her mother and made sure she understood that she was going to pay for her actions just as soon as he got home. His face was flushed with anger and he used words that were inexcusable for a father to use on a young child, saying nothing of showing his inability to control his temper with his tirade. He was sick and tired of her not answering the phone when he called. His outward appearance of an expensive suit and tie spoke of wealth and success, but his behavior brought him down to a low level. That child was sure dread seeing his face when he walked through the door.

What kind of skeletons are in our closets? The truth is that God searches our hearts and he knows the intent, motive and purpose that are the driving forces of the actions and duties that we perform daily.

In Matthew 7:15, Jesus addresses those who are not honest with the face that they present to others. He warned concerning false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. He asked if people pick grapes from thorn bushes or pluck figs from thistles. As nature is true to its kind, so are people. Every good tree bears good fruit and it cannot bear bad fruit. Likewise a bad tree will produce bad fruit for it cannot do otherwise. Jesus called us to be fruit inspectors for we have his permission to judge a person by his character, or the fruit

of his endeavors. You will recognize what kind of person one is by the life that he lives. Jesus said that you would recognize his disciples by the love they have for one another. He said those who do the will of his Father will enter the kingdom of God. All others will be shut outside. Jesus declared that many will say on judgement day that they prophesied in his name, they cast out devils in his name, and performed many miracles in his name. But Jesus will say to them "I never knew you. Get away from me, you evildoers."

In Galatians 6:7, you will find these words: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap everlasting life." Paul then went on to exhort us not to get weary in doing good deeds for in due season, we shall reap if we don't faint or stop trying. As we have opportunity, Paul said, we should do good to all men especially those who are of the household of faith.

Relationships are under the inspection of God. In Proverbs chapter 5, there are instructions concerning the relationship between men and women. Men are told to be careful concerning their relationship with women. The ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD and he ponders his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself and he shall be held with the cords of his sin. He shall die without instruction and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

In Proverbs 21 1-2, it reads like this: The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases. All a man's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart. To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin. The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty. A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.

According to Proverbs 6:16, there are six things the LORD hates; yea seven are an abomination to him. "A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies and he that sows discord among brother. In verse 21, it tells us that God's commandments are vital for life. We are told to bind them on our hearts and tie them about our necks. Where we go, they will lead us; when we sleep they shall keep us, when we wake, they shall talk to us. The commandment is a lamp and the law is light. Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

In Ecclesiastes 3:17, Solomon wrote these words "I said in my heart that God shall judge the righteous and the wicked for there is a time for every purpose and for every work."

1Peter 2:21 tells us that Christ suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow in his footsteps. He didn't sin and neither was there guile found in his mouth. When people reviled him, he didn't retaliate and he suffered yet refrained from making threats. He asked his Father to forgive his tormenters for they didn't know what they were doing.

He committed himself to the Father's will and took our sins that we might live unto righteousness by whose stripes we are healed. He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

The name "Judas" means praise to God. I searched the Scriptures to find any words of praise to God from Judas Iscariot. I could not find any. In John 12, I found an event that took place six days before the Passover. Jesus and his disciples arrived in Bethany where Lazarus lived whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Martha served while Lazarus reclined at the table with Jesus. Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus's feet and wiped them with her hair and the house was filled with the fragrance. Judas, who was to betray Jesus, objected and asked why the perfume was not sold and the money given to the poor for it was worth a year's wages. The words that he spoke were not due to the fact that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief. He was the keeper of the money given to Jesus' ministry and he had helped himself to whatever was put in it. However, the only person who knew the "real" Judas was Jesus; the disciples didn't know he would be the one to betray their Lord.

Jesus rebuked Judas and told him to leave Mary alone for it was intended that she should save the perfume for the day of his burial. "The poor will always be with you, but you will not always have me," Jesus said.

Though Jesus knew that Judas was a thief, he gave him access to the treasury. The love of money consumed Judas and when the time came for Jesus to fulfill the plan of God, Judas went to the chief priests and offered to lead them to Jesus for the price of 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave.

God knows the motive of our hearts and we will be judged for the deeds that we have done whether good or for evil. There is no neutral ground with the Lord; we either are sincere in our faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior, or we deny him. There are many false teachers, preachers and those who look for approval from people rather than from God, but one day everything will be brought to light. When we stand before the Creator of the universe, our deeds will be revealed and judged.

Satan uses the treasures of this world to entice and ensnare those who seek wealth, power, and fame. The Bible tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto us. Matthew 6:33.

When Jesus called his disciples to follow him, he promised that he would make them fishers of men. He didn't promise them the riches of this world. However, in Matthew 9:29 he promises that everyone who has left houses, brother or sister, father or mother or children or fields for his sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last and many who are last will be first.

My desire is to be found faithful when I am called to stand before the Judge of the ages and that my testimony will influence others to follow Christ. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who is wise wins souls. Proverbs 11:30.