



Spiritual Renewal: Inside Out

**Neh 8:1-3, 5-12, 17-18;
Luke 6:43-49**

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**How will
you judge
which
Christmas
Tree is
nicer?**





But how
can you
tell which
one is
plastic,
and which
one is **real**
pine?



Luke 6:43-45 The **Inside** produces the **Outside**

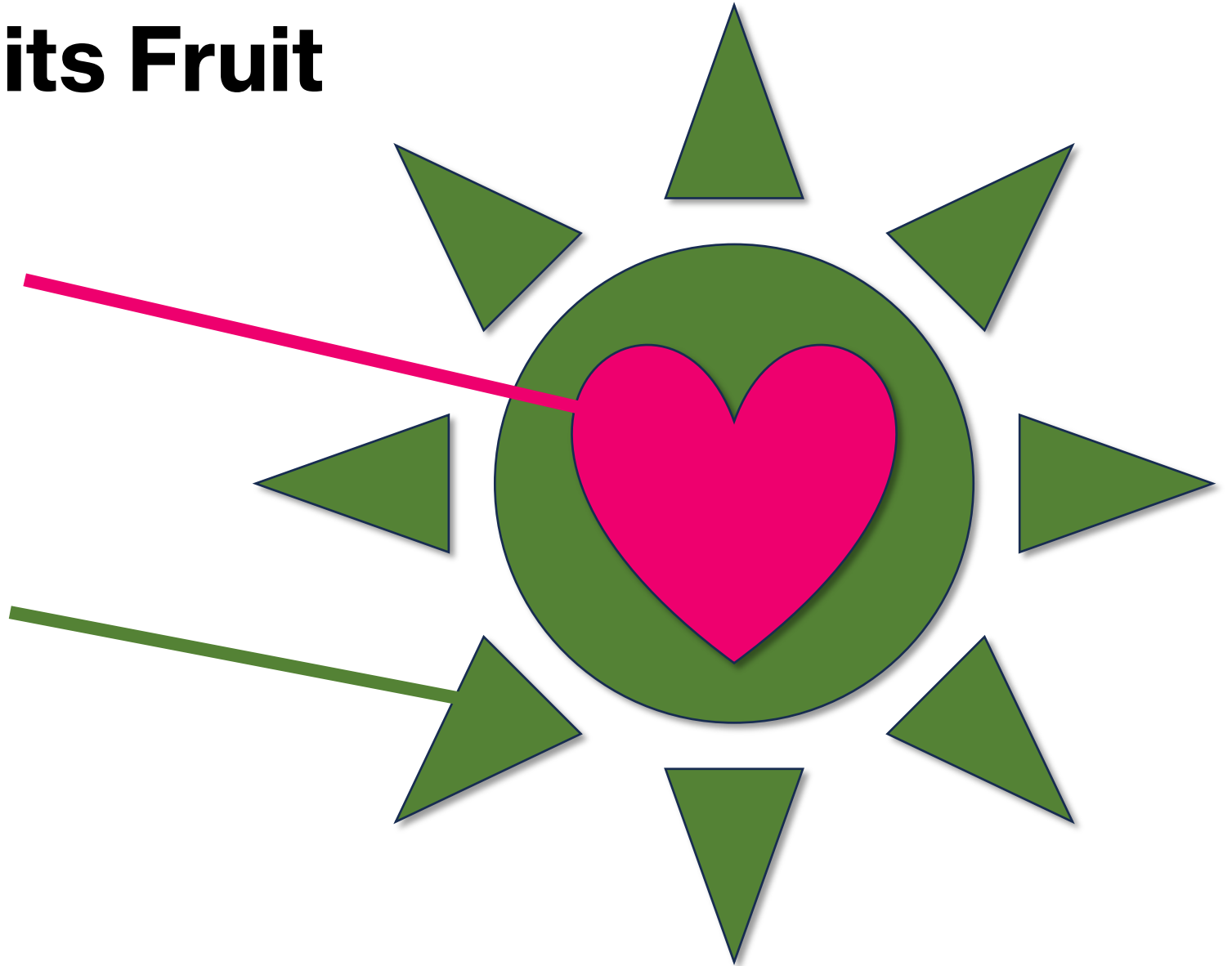
Luke 6:43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, **44** for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. **45** The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Luke 6:43-45

The Tree and its Fruit

It's the **INSIDE**

...that produces
the **OUTSIDE**



Neh 1-7: Miraculous Achievement

NEH 1

Wall is broken
Prayer for mercy

Neh 2

Approval and
resources
gathered
“Let us arise and
build.”

NEH 3

Organizing the
Builders

Neh 4

Resisting
opposition

Neh 5

Correcting social
ills

Neh 6

Steadfast amidst
conspiracies

“So the wall was
finished on the
twenty-fifth day
of the month
Elul, in fifty-two
days.” (6:15)

Neh 7

Walls built,
doors set up,
gatekeepers,
singers and
Levites
appointed...
...nobles,
officials and
people enrolled.

The real work begins (Neh 8-13)...

- It is about their **Relationship with God**.
- They need **Spiritual Renewal** from **inside out**.
- What does **Spiritual Renewal** look like?
 - **Hunger** for the **Heart of God** (8:1-8)
 - **Humbled** by the **Grace of God** (8:9-12)
 - **Honoured** to be the **People of God** (8:13-18)

1. **Hunger** for the **Heart of God** (Neh 8:1-8)

- **A collective hunger for God:** “all the people”; “as one man”
- **The Scriptures:** Not just rules and regulations, but the story of how God has chosen them (since Abraham), delivered them (Moses) and taught them to live as His covenant people – God opening His heart.
- **Posture of reverence:** Ezra on a platform, the people standing; Ezra blessing the Lord, the people shouting “Amen, Amen”, lifting their hands, bowing their heads and worshipping face down (vv.4-6).
- **Desire to know God deeply:** Levites **explaining** (“making plain”).

2. **Humbled** by the **Grace of God** (Neh 8:9-12)

- **Scriptures bring about spiritual awakening** – “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16)
- **Collective lament over their unfaithfulness** – “all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law.” (8:9)
- **God’s joy over their repentance gave them strength to rejoice** – “this day is holy to our Lord... do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength” (8:10)

3. Honoured to be the People of God

(Neh 8:13-18)

- **The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) restored**
 - Living 7 days a year in temporary shelters, gathering for daily Scripture readings. **To remember** what it was like to live as **homeless pilgrims** as their forefathers were.
- **Why was Sukkot neglected since entering the Promised Land:** Productivity lost? Ridicule by others? Ashamed or bored with the past? Too troublesome? Or simply forgot?



3. Honoured to be the People of God

(Neh 8:13-18)

- Hearing, weeping and rejoicing in God's grace is good...
- But **obedience and practice** is needed for the **transformation of our spiritual identity**.
- **Deepening the foundations:** how God remembered His promises, and with a mighty hand brought them from slavery into the Promised Land to **become the People of God**.



Luke 6:47-49 Hearing and obeying

Jesus said:

47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.



Spiritual Renewal: Inside Out

- How much do we long to be **spiritually renewed**?
 - **Hunger** for His Word, to know His heart
 - **Humble** ourselves to find strength in His grace
 - Be **honoured** to live counter-culturally as His child and His people