

The Business of Growing Fruit

My wife & I are reading a daily devotional for December to each other around the nativity narrative. (My brother Greg had given a copy to all of our siblings and we are reading it as a group, commenting via text message the things we are learning.)

A thought struck me as we read about Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1. The text says they were “both righteous before God and walked blamelessly.” Yet here they were in the “golden years” of life with no offspring. How natural it is for me to think that God is obligated to “perform” because I had my devotions today. While we read the Luke account of our Lord’s birth we have in mind the “rest of the story.” We don’t remember that these stories unfolded over decades of human experience. So when we are in the midst of some life experience that seems unpleasant and we cry out to God for immediate deliverance we need to keep in mind that God is on His throne and He works in his own time.

Proverbs 13:12 “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” (ESV) We know that verse but to live it out over days, months, years and decades puts pressure on our faith.

Let me relate a story from nature. My son and family are “Business as Mission” missionaries in Burundi, Africa. They have developed a couple of coffee washing stations, giving the local farmers a decent wage for their labors. So far they serve 5,000 coffee farmers in this the poorest of countries.



I asked Ben what makes for good coffee. He related that coffee trees (that is a somewhat of an exaggeration in that coffee trees usually grow to 8 feet) grow the best in the tropics at sea level. There the foliage is lush and the coffee cherries are soft. But, you take the same bourbon coffee tree and plant it at 7,000 feet in a tropical zone and you have a different outcome. The plant is stressed, the foliage is stifled and the coffee cherry is hardened resulting in “flavor.” Add to the altitude a canopy of trees so that the little coffee tree is stressed even more as it seeks sunlight and you have an even better coffee crop.

How amazing it is that our God gives us examples of living the abundant life. God is not in the business of growing foliage in our lives. He is in the business of growing FRUIT. To Him be Glory!

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