

Thank you, Thome West...
...for being our speaker for today!

August Birthdays

1 Paige Cree
12 Debbie Hoffman
16 Nick Hoffman
27 Isaiah Diaz

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

Galatians 5:22-23

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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Indio Informer

Vol. 37 No. 32
August 9, 2026

*"Trust in the Lord with all
your heart and do not lean on
your own understanding."*

Proverb 3:5

- *"Fight the good fight"*
- *"Keep the faith"*
- *"Finish the course"*

Where's The Fruit?

By Wayne Greeson

Every few years a commercial comes along that is priceless. It strikes a chord with Americans everywhere. Soon, the jingle or slogan is heard not only from television but from the lips of senior citizens to babes—the commercial becomes a bit of true Americana.

One such commercial was Wendy's Hamburgers, "Where's the Beef?" commercial. Who hasn't entered a fast food place, ordered a hamburger, sat down to eat and, in the words of Wendy's commercial, wondered: "Where's the Beef?"

Many will chuckle as they dig through their hamburger bun in an attempt to find "the beef" in their 98 cent hamburger. Yet, how many will go through their lives looking for the insignificant beef in their hamburger and fail to ever search for the more weightier spiritual fruit in their lives? Instead of asking "Where's the Beef?" a person needs to examine himself and ask:

Where's The Fruit?

Just as a good hamburger contains plenty of beef, a person acceptable to God bears much fruit. To be "fruitful" means to be productive. A fruitful garden produces much fruit; a fruitful worker is a worker productive in his work. To produce fruit for God means one is working and serving God in the works God would have him do. Paul wrote that we must "*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work...*" (Col. 1:10). The fruit that God expects of men "consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9).

Relationship with Christ

The New Testament uses the phrase "in Christ" to describe those who have a spiritual relationship with Christ. To get "into Christ" one must first be obedient to Christ by being "*baptized into Christ*" (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13).

Those outside of Christ cannot bear fruit for Christ. It does not matter how pious, humble or sincere one becomes there is no producing for the Lord outside of the Lord. Jesus said, "*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me ... for apart from me you can do nothing*" (John 15:4-5).

Relationship And Service

Christians must recognize that the Christian life does not mean "being" a Christian but rather doing what a Christian does. Jesus spoke of the vine and branches in John 15 to illustrate the Christian life as a relationship to Christ (abiding in Christ) and a service to Christ (bearing fruit). Jesus warned His followers, "*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away*" (John 15:2). Those branches taken away are cast "into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6). Jesus explained the twofold purpose of His disciples bearing fruit, "*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear*

much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8). This brings up once again a question every Christian must ask and examine their lives with, "Where's the Fruit?" The Christian life is to be one of labor not loafing, fruit not foliage. Is your life producing for the Lord or are you just putting off the Lord?

Christians who would walk out of a restaurant that cheats its customers of the meat in their hamburger, will short change the Lord's service. If you set out tomato plants in the Spring, you expect tomatoes come summer. If all you received was sucker vines, its doubtful you would leave those plants taking up space in your garden for the rest of the year.

Jesus cursed a fruitless fig tree. "*And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it 'No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you' and at once the fig tree withered*" (Matt. 21:19). If Jesus would not tolerate a fruitless fig tree, will He tolerate a fruitless Christian?

"You will recognize them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?"

Matthew 7:16
