

“Fertility and the Lost Ark”

(8th in our series, Jesus Everywhere)

2 Samuel 6:12-23; Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:5-8*

Pastor Peter Hiett

February 19th, 2012

**All scriptures are ESV unless otherwise noted.*

Sermon:

Video showing the introduction of the sermon from February 12th with Peter dancing and throwing Twinkies[®], Slim Jims[®] and raisins into the congregation.

Susan:

What are you doing? What do you think you're doing? Dancing in front of all these people like this? In your underwear and your Bart Simpson t-shirt? What were you thinking? How the pastor of the Sanctuary honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his parishioners and female parishioners, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself! What were you thinking?

Peter:

Well Susan. I'm trying to have free, spontaneous, un-restrained and outrageous joy like David, the "man after God's own heart." So why don't you sit down and listen or you might not ever get pregnant again.

Well that's how the message started last week. I took off my clothes, danced, and passed out Twinkies[®], Slim Jims[®] and raisins. This sermon is a continuation of that sermon, but I didn't want to take off my clothes, dance, and pass out Twinkies again...because it makes me feel awkward, ridiculous and vulnerable. And yet, that's usually the way I feel when I preach: Absurd... and yet called to deliver something absolutely Holy.

Well I danced, my wife scolded me and then we read our text:

¹²And it was told King David, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. 2 Samuel 6:12

Now if you've been here the last two weeks you know about the Ark.

God gives Moses the Law. But he's not to hang it on the wall, where people can see it or put it on some courthouse lawn in Texas. He's commanded to put it in a box called the Ark...covered with a thing called the "Mercy Seat," placed in the "Sanctuary" inside the "Temple." No one is to open the box or even approach the box except the High Priest, who sprinkles the Blood of Sacrifice on the "Mercy Seat." The Blood is the Life.

"Put the knowledge of good and evil...in the box covered in Life."

- The Ark was wood – "ates" – tree containing the Knowledge of Good and Evil and Tree covered with Life – guarded by cherubim and a sword.
- The top of the Ark was the Throne of God – a Judgment seat named the "Mercy Seat."
- God was somehow enthroned on this "Tree of Law" which bled Life that is Mercy.
- And from the Tree, from the Throne, from the Mercy Seat – God would speak His All-Powerful Word. The Word of God – Jesus called it "seed."

Well that's "the Ark of the Covenant."

¹²And it was told King David, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. ¹³And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. ¹⁴And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. 2 Samuel 6:12-14

Now scholars debate what's meant by this. Some say that, in this instance, it must've been a loin cloth. Others argue that it was more substantial. Whatever the case, it was considered Holy, so even if it was underwear, it was Holy underwear ordained for the Levitical priests (Exodus 28).

But David wasn't a Levite. So if he was a priest, he was a priest after the Order of Melchizedek. In Genesis 14, Melchizekek – "King of Righteousness" and King of Salem (Jeru-salem). He meets Abraham in the Valley of Shaveh (probably Gehenna) and blesses Abraham with bread and wine. A covenant of Grace, 500 years before the Law is given to Moses. Scripture says "*Jesus is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.*" It appears that David is acting like a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. Like Melchizedek blessed Abraham, David blesses the Seed of Abraham.

¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn.

¹⁶As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. ¹⁷And they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. ¹⁸And when David had finished the offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts ¹⁹and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house.

²⁰And David returned to bless his household.

David offered burnt offering and peace offerings. Nobody told David he had to love God in this way – it wasn't required. And nobody told David he had to love people in this way – it wasn't required. He didn't have to – he wanted to love God and love people – make offerings.

I was surprised to discover that King Saul was rejected by God for doing just what David did. In 1 Samuel 13:12, Saul takes the place of Samuel the Priest, making burnt offering and peace offerings. Saul makes the same offering to God, but not because he wants to, but because he thinks he has to – has to in order to save himself from death. He says to Samuel "*I forced myself and offered the burnt offering.*" David worships in gratitude for Grace 'cause he wants to. Saul worships to pay for Grace 'cause he thinks he has to. Saul is using God to save himself. David is debasing himself and starts to dance. Saul is religious and he doesn't dance.

²⁰And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" ²¹And David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father

and above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord – and I will make merry before the Lord.

Everyone expected Saul to be king. He was the tallest and most handsome man in all Israel. But God chose David, that's Mercy and that's the meaning of "Election" – not deserved Favor – but underserved Favor that's Grace.

and I will make merry before the Lord.

Hebrew "I will make tzahak" - laughter, play, even romance – "I will make 'tzahak' like 'yitskhok.'" That's Isaac, meaning "he laughs." "In Isaac shall your seed be called" says Scripture.

²²I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes.

The Hebrew is abased in "my eyes."

For Michal, joy was being exalted in her own eyes.

For David, joy was being abased in his own eyes (not pride but humility).

Proud people make lousy dancers because they can't hear the music; they can't hear Grace.

But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor."²³And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death. 2 Samuel 6:20-23

Now all sorts of saintly, righteous women in Scripture struggle with barrenness and a lack of children. But Michal's womb is barren because she despises the Bridegroom's Dance.

Michal is barren of children and children are fruit. Michal is barren of fruit. All sorts of people don't have physical children but are profoundly fruitful. But maybe the way you produce children, is the way you produce fruit??

Do you remember the very first commandment in all of Scripture???

"Be fruitful and multiply."

The idea that sex is the result of the fall is just about the most Biblically absurd and Satanic idea imaginable.

- Genesis 1:28 *"God blessed them and said 'Be fruitful and multiply.'"* First command.
- Jesus said the first commandment is this: *"You will love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, soul and mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself."*

Jesus was quoting Moses in Deuteronomy 6:5 as Moses summarized the Ten Commandments, but I bet He was also paraphrasing that very first commandment, saying *"Be fruitful"* and *"Love"* are the same commandments.

Romans 13:9 – *"Love is the sum of the commandments."*

Galatians 5:22 – *"The Fruit of the Spirit is Love."*

"Be fruitful" means *"have:"*

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faith and Self-Control
(that's not self in control, but self under control of Love)

You know the Law is a description of Love – a description of fruit – but the Law can't make you fruitful. Actually the Law can make you barren if you rely on the Law, not because the Law is

bad but because we are bad and if you rely on the Law, you rely on yourself. So, the Law reveals that you need to be saved from yourself – the Law reveals that you need Mercy and Mercy is Love poured out.

In the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus expounds the Law saying, *“When you give...when you love, your right hand shouldn’t even know what your left hand is doing.”* In other words, *“when you obey the Law, you shouldn’t even be conscious of doing it”* like...a dance. You know as long as you try to dance, you’re really not dancing. It’s when you’re no longer thinking about the dance steps – that you’re really dancing. It’s when you lose yourself in the music, that you find yourself dancing.

Jesus said *“You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.”* As long as I think about loving, like that; as long as I try to love like that – I’m not loving like that. If I have to try to love, it reveals that:

I don’t want to love or at least, part of me doesn’t want to love;
which means I’m not loving with *“all my heart, mind, soul and strength;”*
which means I’m using love for some other reason;
which means I’m not loving Love but using, abusing, or raping Love.

If I love for a reason, it’s not love.

If I obey the Law for some reason – I’m not obeying the Law!

Love has no reason – for it is the Reason – the Logos – the Word.

So if for me, Love is a Law that I must fulfill for some other reason; I abuse Love – crucify Love – can’t love and am already dead.

You know you can read the Law like it’s a commandment that you must fulfill or you can read it as a promise that God will fulfill in you. Moses and Jesus did not say *“You should love”* (imperative tense). They said, *“You will love”* (indicative tense). Jesus, the Word, that does not return void, said, *“You will love.”* Do you believe Him?

In Genesis 1, God speaks His Word and Creation happens. In Genesis 1:27, He makes Man – male and female; blesses them and says, *“Be fruitful.”*

May 28th, 1983, Susan and I entered into a Covenant (which is a picture of God’s Covenant). After the ceremony, we drove to a romantic hotel in the Vail Valley. We broke bread, drank wine, and retired to the sanctuary of our Covenant – the bed chamber. By the grace of God we had made it to this night, but for 6 years I had ached for the most intimate communion with this gorgeous creature. She went to the bathroom, came out wearing nothing but, like an ephod. Oh I gazed at her and said *“This is no time for frivolity, playing around, or debasing ourselves in any way. This moment is Holy. This is the moment we sanctify our covenant. This is the moment we choose to obey the 1st commandment of God – Genesis 1:28 ‘Be fruitful’ – we must produce Fruit!! So for God’s sake, put something on; turn off that ridiculous music. We’ve got work to do. We need to make a child!!!”*

Fortunately I had graduated from the University of Colorado just the week before and so I was full of it – Knowledge. I pulled out my Physics book, Chemistry book, Psychology book,

Paleontology and Biology and we got to work producing fruit. Stayed up most of the night and this is what we made.



This is Frank – we named him Fraunk – “Frankenbaby.” He is a bit disturbing, but honestly the best I can do. Now you may be familiar with Frankenbaby; often you can spot him at church. Have you ever been in a class on “*Living the Christian Life*,” “*Being Fruitful*,” or “*The Obedience of Faith*” and after a while you get this creepy feeling that they’re talking about Frankenbaby?

Well Susan and I actually weren’t very fertile that first night – we failed.

So anyway, how can we obey the Law? How can we be fruitful?

It’s interesting that Obed-edom was fruitful. We just read that he was “*blessed because of the Ark*.” 1 Chronicles reveals the form that the blessing took – Obed-edom had 62 sons and grandsons. How did he do it? All we know is that he put the Ark in his barn.

And David was fruitful. If it weren’t for the Seed of David, you wouldn’t be here today. Actually there would be no “here” and no “today.” No “thing” at all if not for the Seed of David. But you know David didn’t see his seed come to fruition. That wouldn’t happen for 1,000 years, until the “Son of David” was nailed to the Tree of Law in a garden and bled Mercy that is Life for the World. David didn’t see his fruit. Yet, even that day, that David danced, he was fruitful:

He loved the Lord with offerings and he loved his neighbors with cakes of bread, pieces of meat, and cakes of raisins.

So, how did he bear fruit? Well it wasn’t really what he did, but what was done to him... by the Ark.

1. David thought he captured the Ark, but after the death of Uzzah and the blessing of Obed-edom, David was captured by the Ark.
2. And it stripped him of control, arrogance, and pride. Captured him. Stripped him...
3. And Caused him to dance.

The Law of God, covered in the Mercy of God, which is the Word of God, caused him to dance. The Word of God – literally Logos of God, logic of God, caused him to dance; but not like a description of music.

[Image of sheet music]

Not like notes on a page David could read and try to obey.

No. The Law was encased in a box; covered in Life; encased – incarnate in Life.

[Image of a person singing]

So the Logos wasn't merely a description of music; the Logos was the music. So David didn't dance because he took knowledge of the notes and decided to obey. David didn't dance because he controlled the music, but because he surrendered control to the Music; the Logos of Mercy; Life covering Law.

David didn't control the Logos; the Logos controlled David.

David didn't make the Music; the Music made David.

David didn't animate the Mercy; the Mercy animated David.

The Logos was incarnate –then incarnated in David.

I doubt that his *“right hand knew what his left hand was doing.”*

I doubt he debated *“should I dance – should I not dance.”*

I doubt he calculated *“I'll give 10% of my raisin cakes, Slim Jims™ and Twinkies™ to Israel and 1 ox, 2 pigeons to God... that should be enough”*

No. He didn't control himself, for he'd lost himself in the Dance and was being controlled by the music – The Word, The Logos: Mercy.

And David fulfilled the Law or should I say the Law was fulfilled in David.

David danced as the King of Israel before the Throne of God. He danced representing the Bride before her Groom and he was impregnated with Life.

Then, he went home as the groom to dance before his bride and Michal despised his dance. I bet she said something like “You look like a putz – naked, awkward, shameless. What a _____. You look like a _____. Don't be a _____.” (You know the word.) And Michal had no child to the day of her death. Why???

Well it's obvious. She would not receive the Seed of David.

Hey! Do you remember who did receive the Seed of David? (She's the great, great, great, super-great grandmother of Jesus.) We preached about her a few weeks ago – a gal named Bathsheba. You know she valued Mercy, longed for Mercy, needed Mercy, and received Mercy. Once her husband had been stripped of dignity and once they repented and the child died and David worshipped before the Ark in the Sanctuary with tears, David comforted Bathsheba and she received the comfort and was impregnated with Solomon, the “Prince of Peace.”

Well, Bathsheba received the Seed of David and Michal must've despised the Seed of David and so never bore fruit – never obeyed the Law.

What's the Seed of David?

How can we fulfill the Law?

How can we do it?

The story of the *Old Testament* is that we can't do it.

- Joshua 24:19 *"You are not able."*
- Psalm 14 *"None is righteous; no not one."*

No one does it and we can't do it.

Yet there is an amazing verse in Deuteronomy where God says we can do it.

In Deuteronomy 29 through 34, Moses speaks his last words to Israel as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. In 29:15, through Moses, God says *"The Covenant is for whoever is standing with us here today and whoever is not standing with us here today."* (which according to my calculator pretty much covers you) He tells them that if they fail to obey the Law, they'll perish. Then He tells them that they will fail to obey the Law. And then He tells them he'll fix their hearts so they will love Him with all their hearts and then He says this:

¹¹*For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.*

¹²*It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?"* ¹³*Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?"* ¹⁴*But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.* Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Well, *"What's the commandment?" "What's the Word?"* We don't have to climb to Heaven to get it; nor the depths of the sea to dig it up. The Law brings death, but this Word is Life – what Word? No one knew until 1500 years later when Rabi Saul (St. Paul) wrote the following in Romans 10:5.

⁵*For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.* ⁶*But the righteousness based on faith says, [And now he quotes Deuteronomy.] "Do not say in your heart 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) [Did you get that? Paul just equated the commandment with Christ.] ⁷or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is to bring Christ up from the dead).* ⁸*But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim):* Romans 10:5-8

I hope you go back and study this. But Scripture equates the commandment with Christ, Christ with the Word, and the Word with faith. That is, Christ is equated with faith; faith in our hearts and faith on our tongues.

Jesus said the Word is seed and we all know Jesus is the Promised Seed, Seed of Abraham, and Seed of David. In Greek you can't miss it – *"sperma of David."*

So let me make it clear, in case the lights haven't come on for you...

The only way to obey the Law,
which is to produce fruit,
is to be actually impregnated with the Life of Christ.

And the process for getting pregnant is vastly different from the manner in which most people go about trying to obey laws:

- One is seizing control and one is surrendering control.
- One is judging and one is being judged.
- One is getting dressed and one is getting undressed.

- One is arrogance and one is humility.
- One is taking knowledge and one is being known.
- One looks like a march and the other is a dance.
- One is the work of the flesh and the Fruit of the Spirit.
- One is work and the other is play.
- One is work and the other is worship.
- One is the barrenness of Michal and the other is the dance of David.

Bride of Christ – do you see why Satan works so hard to distort our view of sexuality? And do you see why God is so concerned that our sexuality be bound by a covenant and celebrated as sacrament – a communion of love – bearing fruit that is love?

I think we live in one of the most sexually depraved and sexually repressed societies that ever existed. I mean by that that our hearts are repressed or we no longer seem to be aware of where fruit comes from. In biblical society there was no pornography and yet every little kid knew where baby goats and baby sheep and baby people come from...There was no need for “the talk” when 10 people lived in one room on a farm raising animals. But in our society, you will never see *Playboy* magazine next to *Motherhood* magazine on the rack at Barnes & Noble.

And so in our depravity, and the stupidity of modernity, we modern Christians seem to have forgotten what fruit is, where it comes from, and what that means. Fruit is Life and so Fruit of the Spirit is not simply “a work of our flesh.” That means,
 you can’t simply choose to be a Christian and
 you can’t simply choose to have faith for faith is fruit and
 you can’t simply choose to produce fruit—be pregnant with Love, Joy,
 Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faith and Self-control.

Fruit is a good choice – obedience is a good choice – that’s true. But if you make that choice, you must realize it’s not your choice. It’s God’s choice being born in you – His Judgment born in you; His Will born in you; His Word born in you; His Life born in you; His Spirit crying “*Abba, Father in you.*” It’s Christ in you.

We are “saved by Grace through Faith and this (Faith), not of ourselves, lest any should boast.” Faith in us, is the faithfulness of Christ in us.

As soon as I take credit for Faith, it’s not Faith, its Frankenfaith.

As soon as I take credit for Love, it’s not Love, its Frankenlove.

As soon as I take credit for Fruit, it’s not Fruit, its Frankenfruit and real fruit dies.

As soon as I take pride in Fruit, claiming it as my own...

I pick the Fruit from the tree;

I take Christ’s life on the tree;

I crucify Christ and make myself an anti-Christ... a FrankenChristian.

But as soon as I surrender my life,

He gives His life on the Tree;

He gives body broken and blood shed;

And it's "no longer I that live, but Christ in me..."

That is Fruit in me and Fruit on me; Life hanging on me;
A tree of Life – a tree of His life – His tree, that's me;
not a Frankenme, but a new me.

I turned 50 this summer and all my life I've worked really hard to produce fruit: Graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a Geology degree I never used; Worked crazy, long, hard hours building a church that blew up; Wrote a couple of books – that are out-of-print; I toiled, struggled and sweat making "Frankenbabies."

Yet looking back, hands down, by far and away, the greatest fruit (tangible, physical fruit) I ever produced is this:



Jonathan, Elizabeth, Becky, and Coleman

Except for the fact that they're a little harder to control and rather expensive, each one of them is vastly superior to "Frankenbaby." Each one – the greatest thing I ever made and yet this is the weird thing: I don't even remember making them. Actually I didn't even try to make them; actually for five years Susan and I tried to make a baby and couldn't seem to make a baby. So we gave up on making babies and just made love and look what happened. We would just get naked..."*Do a little dance...make a little love.*"

But we really didn't make Love (God is Love); Love made us. We didn't make Jonathan, Elizabeth, Becky, and Coleman; Love made Jonathan, Elizabeth, Becky and Coleman and He used us! But if I think I make 'em, I kill 'em. Love makes them and Love uses me – incarnate in me, like an Ark of the Covenant – incarnate in me and now incarnate in them.

Now I said they were my "greatest tangible fruit." They're physical fruit laced with real fruit, spiritual fruit. See whether or not you have children, all Christians bear fruit. Jesus bore fruit and He was single. You bear fruit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faith and Self-Control. You bear fruit in your life and fruit in other's lives: not just books, but Faith, Hope, and Love in others' hearts. Not just church buildings, but communions of Faith (that's real church).

You have borne Fruit. However, you may not know when and where it happened. Like David, you were lost in the dance. So on Judgment Day, Jesus will say, "*You gave me Twinkies™, Slim Jims™, and raisins – enter the Kingdom.*" And you'll say, "*I don't remember passing out Twinkies™, Slim Jims™, and raisins.*"

But you did... and you bore fruit... and fruit is more seed.

You may not remember the fruit, but you may remember sowing the seed. Remember feeling a bit naked, awkward, and exposed? (Michal will point it out to you). You may remember feeling like a putz... a _____. Well, you know.

But see ? That's how seed (even the Eternal Seed) is delivered. And it's implanted in broken and dirty soil. So producing fruit is a joyful business (just like David's dance), but it's not a respectable business like earning a degree, ruling as queen or acquiring the honor of Pharisee. Producing fruit is mess and miracle – its life.

So how do we bear Fruit?

Well you stop trying to bear Fruit and start worshiping the author of Fruit.

So how do we bear Fruit?

Well, we can't make this a formula, but if we take our cue from David, it will look something like this:

1. We stand before the Ark of the Covenant.
We stand before the Judgment of God.
We stand before the Tree of Law, drenched in Blood that's Life.
We stand before Jesus Christ and Him, crucified for the sins of the World.
We stand before the Lord of the Dance.
See? He was stripped first. He danced first. He loved first. He abased Himself first.
Awkward. Vulnerable. Exposed.
We stand before Him in the Sanctuary.
2. And allow Him to strip us of our arrogance and pride and fig leaves.
3. Then we receive His Word of Mercy: The Promised Seed.

Communion

He took the bread and He broke it saying *"This is my Body given to you. Take and eat."* And in the same manner, after supper, He took the cup saying *"This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink it my bride."*

And...

4. It is implanted in the broken fertile soil of our hearts.

Now if you feel like dancing... just go with it. Amen.

Benediction

And Lord God, we say we are yours and we surrender ourselves to You because we see that You're good. And so Lord God, we thank you that you became flesh and you danced upon this Earth before us; romancing us that we would surrender to life and bear the fruit that is life. Lord God, thank you that you are good.

In Jesus' name, the Spirit and the Bride, they say *"Come Lord Jesus, for you are good."* Amen.

Now before you go, let me say that I talked about sex this morning. Did you notice that? And even while I'm preaching, I'm like *"Oh my gosh, I can't believe this."* But we're so messed up sexually, as a culture, and everyone in this room is broken sexually. But this is what I'd encourage you, don't be offended, don't cover up before the Lord, but surrender to the Lord because in all of these things, you see He is telling a beautiful story. We are His bride and He loves us no matter what.

There are members of the Prayer Team up front to pray with you.

What I'm saying is that don't run from God in shame; surrender to God and believe that He's good. He's in the process of speaking life into you. And you see, this really is good news because if I'm honest, what I really think that God wants most of the time is this (holds up Franken Baby). I think He wants me to go manufacture Franken Baby and I just fail at it. I just can't do it. And what the Devil wants you to do at that point, is to cover up and run in shame and what Jesus wants you to do at that point is to surrender and worship. And He does it; He speaks His life into your heart and you begin to dance. Love is a dance. Heaven is a dance. That's where you're going. He said *"You will love me with all your heart."* That means when you get there, you're not going to be divided like, *"I don't know, should I love Him? I don't know. I'd kinda rather do something else."* But no, *"You will love Me with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, all your strength. You will love Me in freedom."* That's good news. Believe the Gospel and you can start dancing, even today. Amen.

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