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Ye Shall Know Them By Their Fruits: Avoiding the paralysis of Analysis

A Commentary by Jason Curry



The Reverend Dr. Jason Richard Curry is Dean of the Fisk Memorial Chapel at Fisk University. He can be reached at jcurry@fisk.edu or www.fiskmemorialchapel.com.

I remember serving on a committee that was charged with the responsibility of allocating funds toward a particular project. We had a list of small and large projects, and we were expected to engage in a brief discussion regarding the manner in which we were going to spend two-hundred and fifty dollars. Some members of the committee thought that the money should be invested in our youth. Some members thought it should be spent on repairs needed to fix our capital infrastructure (e.g., a small hole in the roof). Still others argued that the money should be used to pay small, but outstanding bills associated with the organization. One meeting eventually turned into three, and, although we were good intentioned people, we found ourselves in a position in which we were unable to help ourselves or anyone else. We eventually spent the money on a particular project which reflected our

collective sense of goodwill; however, our group suffered from what Dr. Martin L. King called "the paralysis of analysis;" which is an inability to make progress in life because of a constant and irrational need to keep discussing the facts, challenges and problems in front of the group.

Jesus told the Christian community of his day that people will recognize them for the good work that they do for God. He said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits... (Matthew 7:16)." He goes on to say that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit (Matthew 7:18)." Unfortunately, there are times when the good fruit that we should bear does not come forth because of endless and senseless meetings, a constant and unproductive analysis of the facts, a fear of an unknown future and an unwillingness to have the faith of a mustard seed (Matthew 17:20). God has even assured or convicted some of us that He

will support and bless our personal or collective plans for success in the future, if we would only move forward in life instead of being bogged down with the "paralysis of analysis."

As we seek to glorify God through our thoughts, words and deeds, and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, let us avoid become preoccupied with analysis to the extent that we avoid the important ministries and blessings that God has placed before us. Indeed, we sometimes need comprehensive plans or blueprints before beginning a great work, but these plans should never distract, dissuade or discourage us from beginning or completing the work that God has placed upon our hearts. Thank God for the possibility and reality of bearing "good fruit." We pray that God will increase our fruit, as we seek to address the needs of a suffering humanity.