

What Fruit God Expects from Christians

Saint Macarius the Great

All things that are seen were created by God, and He gave them to men for refreshment and enjoyment, and He gave them also a law of righteousness. But from the time of Christ's coming God seeks other fruit, and another righteousness, purity of the heart, a good conscience, kind words, holy and good thoughts, and all the discipline of the saints. The Lord says, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. In the law it is written, Thou shalt not commit fornication; but I say unto you, Thou shalt not desire, neither shalt thou be angry." He who wishes to be a friend of God, and a brother and son of Christ, must do something more than other men, that is to consecrate heart and mind themselves, and to stretch up his thoughts towards God. In this way God secretly gives life and help to the heart, and entrusts Himself to it. When a man gives God his secret things, that is, his mind and thoughts, not occupying himself elsewhere, nor wandering away, but putting constraint upon himself, then the Lord deems him worthy of mysteries, in greater sanctity and purity and gives him heavenly food and spiritual drink.

A man who is possessed of much substance, and has both servants and children, gives a different kind of food to the servants from what he gives to his own born children, because the children are their father's heirs, and eat with him, being made like to their father. Even so Christ, the true Master of the house, who created all things Himself, nourishes the evil and the unthankful, but the children whom He has begotten of His own substance, to whom He has imparted of His grace, in whom the Lord is formed, these He provides beyond others with special refreshment and diet and meat and drink. Going up and down with Jesus their Father, they receive the gift of Himself, as the Lord says, He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him, and he shall not see death. Those who possess the true inheritance have been begotten as sons of a heavenly Father, and pass their time in their Father's house, as the Lord says, The servant abideth not in the house, but the son abideth forever.

If we then desire to be born of the heavenly Father, we ought to do something that exceeds the rest of mankind- diligence, effort, zeal, love, a good conversation, to be in faith and fear, as desiring to attain good things of such magnitude, and to inherit God. The Lord, it says, is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. Thus the Lord, beholding our good purpose and our endurance, performs His mercy, and cleanses us from the defilement of sin, and from the eternal fire that is in us, and makes us meet for the kingdom. Glory to His tender compassion and to the good pleasure shewn of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As I start a new school year, what fruit does God expect from me and how can I work on it?