

## APPLES FROM APPLE TREES?

**1 Thessalonians 4:13** *“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.”*

A funny thing happened a few days ago, at least it seemed funny at the time. Dennis and I were at a local store (to remain unnamed) and happened to see some little Colorado blue spruce trees that we thought would be ideal to fill a large empty spot in our backyard. When we went to the check-out line the cashier first of all said we would need to bring them inside to ring them up and as Dennis walked away to get them, said, “I didn’t know we even had trees outside.” I told her there were a few evergreen trees in addition to some apple trees. She said, “Really? Do they grow apples?” and I, thinking she was being silly said, “Well, no. They produce little jars with applesauce in them.” I was certain she would laugh at that point but she said, “Really?” I was caught up in being a smart alec by that time and said, “No, really, they grow little apple pies.” She finally started feeling me pulling her leg and when Dennis came in with the trees, we paid for them and left. We laughed all the way home after I told him about that bizarre conversation.

**Romans 1:20** *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities---His eternal power and divine nature---have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

The more I thought about it I realized that there are worse ways of being ignorant than not knowing if apple trees produce apples. At church we are challenged to be students of the Word; being familiar with Scripture and using it as our road map for daily living. I was reminded of an incident a number of years ago when we were having a Bible study on the book of James in our home with 4 or 5 couples. As I recall, they had all “grown up in the church” and had been believers for their whole lives. In spite of that however, the comment was made about not knowing where the book of James was! That has stuck with me all these years later as an example of a more important kind of ignorance of what should be the most important reading we ever do. I have always heard that if a word or statement is repeated in Scripture, I need to pay attention to it. As I was looking at verses regarding our need to be informed and armed, I kept seeing two phrases repeated in the New Testament by Jesus. The first one starts in Matthew and is repeated 30 times throughout that book and a number of times in the other Gospels. As Jesus was talking to the disciples and the crowds in general He said, **“I tell you the truth....”** and then He covered topics He deemed important for their spiritual growth. I’m sure there are some that I’ve missed, but this will give you an idea of the things Jesus wanted them to know as “truth”:

*Fulfillment of the Law, Giving, Prayer, Fasting, Faith, Judgment, Persecution, Caring for others, Status, Privilege of hearing; 2<sup>nd</sup> coming; Salvation; God’s care; Future hope; Obedience; Priorities; Betrayal; Forgiveness*

The bottom line is this: we cannot know God or know His will for us by hearing *someone else* talk about Him. We have to find out about Him for ourselves.

The second phrase is much less numerous but still contains words of Jesus that point us in still other areas important for living. Beginning in [Matt.5:21](#), Jesus says, **“You have heard it said....Do not murder...But I tell you the truth.”**

[Matt. 5:27](#) **“You have heard that it was said....Do not commit adultery. But I tell you the truth....”**

[Matt.5:33](#) **“You have heard that it was said....Do not break your oath. But I tell you....”**

[Matt.5:38](#) **“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. But I tell you.....”**

[Matt.5:43](#) **“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you.....”**

We have been given all the words necessary to be informed and to avoid being ignorant. So, you tell me, where *do* apples from come?

With all the resources we have at hand, we have no excuse to fall in the category that Paul writes about in I Corinthians 15:34 .....*there are some who are ignorant of God.....*”

Blessings on your week!  
Georgia