

A sermon series  
Stewardship 3: Bearing Fruit - Multiplying Blessing for Others  
From the texts Genesis 1:28 and 9:1-7  
Preached by Rev. Peter Blank  
At Plymouth Presbyterian Church,  
St. Helens, Oregon  
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Genesis 1:28b — “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”  
Genesis 9:1-7 --- “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.”

## **Introduction**

When I was a kid in northern California, I remember planting one small strawberry plant in the backyard. The first year, it gave us just a handful of berries. But the second year? It spread, multiplied, and soon we had more strawberries than we could eat. We ended up giving bowls of them to neighbors.

That’s what fruit does. It multiplies. It spreads beyond us. And that’s what God commands humanity to do: “Be fruitful and multiply.”

Now, this isn’t just about population growth —this is about living lives that multiply blessing. It’s about a way of being where goodness refuses to stop with us.

## **I. Fruitfulness as God’s Design**

From the very beginning, God built fruitfulness into creation. The apple doesn’t just drop to the ground — it hides a seed inside, ready for new life. Dandelions scatter seeds on the wind (and if you’ve ever tried to keep a yard free of them, you know how persistent that design is).

God designed the world for growth, for multiplication. Families nurture new life. Communities share wisdom across generations. Faith spreads from one heart to another.

God’s intent was never for life to be stagnant. It was always to be abundant, expansive, overflowing. That’s the rhythm of creation.

And you don’t have to be a farmer to join in that work. You can plant encouragement instead of criticism. You can sow patience in a tense moment. You can grow generosity right where you live.

## **II. Fruit as Generosity**

Jesus picks up this same theme: “By this the Creator is glorified, that you bear much fruit.” (John 15:8)

Fruit is not for the tree itself — it’s for others. Have you ever seen an apple tree eating its own apples? No! Fruit is always a gift.

The fruit of our lives — our kindness, our creativity, our humor, our willingness to help — is meant to nourish others.

And here’s the beautiful part: when we give our fruit away, God multiplies it. That’s what happened with the boy’s lunch in the feeding of the 5,000 — five loaves and two fish became dinner for a stadium crowd.

It’s the same with us. A kind word can ripple farther than we think. A small donation can start a big ministry. A simple invitation to church can change a life.

So, if you've ever thought, "What difference can my little bit make?" — remember the strawberry plant. Or that boy with the lunch. Or your own experience of receiving a blessing that someone else thought was small.

### **III. Fruit in Our Community**

In our congregation, we see this all the time.

- A few cans of food become a pantry that feeds dozens.
- A Saturday at a Habitat build becomes a home for a family who thought they'd never have one.
- A few dollars in an offering plate becomes mission work, children's education, and worship that touches lives.
- Even our pledges — those lines on a card — are seeds. They may feel small. But when God adds the water and sunlight of grace, they grow into something that reaches far beyond us.
- If you've ever helped with Vacation Bible School (and, yes, we had one), sung in the choir (and, yes, we had a choir), or made coffee for fellowship hour — congratulations, you've been part of the orchard!

That's what stewardship is. Not about maintaining an institution, but multiplying blessing. It's about fruitfulness that spills over the fence line into the neighborhood.

### **IV. Jesus the True Vine**

In John 15, Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches." Fruitfulness doesn't come from trying harder — it comes from staying connected to the source.

When we abide in Christ, fruit grows naturally. Sometimes we don't even notice it happening until someone else points it out.

It may look like patience where we used to be irritable. It may look like generosity where we used to cling tightly. It may look like joy even when circumstances haven't changed.

And let's be honest — not all fruit grows at the same rate. Some of us are apples, ready in September. Some are pears, needing a little more time. And some of us are still green tomatoes on the vine! Yet God is patient with us all.

### **Conclusion**

Friends, stewardship is about asking: What fruit is my life producing? Is it blessing others? Is it multiplying hope?

The strawberry plant in my family backyard didn't stay small — and neither should we. God calls us to multiply blessing, to fill the earth with the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and generosity.

So, let's not hoard our fruit. It's time to share it — with our neighbors, our community, our church, our world — and watch how God multiplies it beyond anything we imagined.

And who knows? Someday someone might tell their own story about how one small act of your kindness grew into something that blessed their life.

Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe that on the first day,  
God released love and creativity over a void;  
and that void became mountains and rivers,  
sunsets and starry nights.**

**We believe God released  
God's people from the grips of slavery,  
liberating us day in and day out.**

**We believe God laid down with death  
and was released its grip,  
knowing suffering and freeing us from this fragile life.**

**And we believe God invites us—  
day in and day out—  
to release our fears,  
let go of assumptions, tear down walls,**

**throw open the doors, and walk closer to love.  
May it be so.  
Amen.**