



This sermon series uses the image of a tree, from seed to sprout, to sapling, to fruit bearing and back to seedling for the next generation. As First Church ends 2019, we have the opportunity to look ahead to 2020 praying and working for a new vision, a new way of being in ministry at Third Street and Broadway. The year 2020 will be our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Being good stewards of the gifts of those who have gone before us, means that those who follow us will have the resources available for years to come. Our tithes and gifts mean the daily, weekly and monthly ministry (and the bills that come with those ministries) are funded. We are all at different stages of our growth in our walk with Christ, but each of those stages have gifts to share. Often growth comes from difficulty. Paul reminds timothy that growth takes time whether one is a soldier, or a farmer or an athlete. Perseverance and prayer encourage us to hold fast and work toward the reign of God. This week may you feel God’s strength comfort and love in an adversity you may face.

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Anticipating the Fruit from the Flower”**

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**Daily prayer:** *O God, our source in all things, you have showered us with blessings. Help us to be rooted and established in your Word and your love so that we may be like trees planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in season. Pour out your spirit on us as your people and guide us in our praying, serving, giving and living. May we offer the best of our lives and gifts out of our faith in Jesus; it’s in Christ’s name we pray, Amen.*

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## Study Guide

### **Monday, October 28, 2019** 2 Timothy 4: 6-8

This scripture picks up from last week's reading about running the race with perseverance. The scripture today is about the gift of a life well lived with faith. As the leaves begin to drop, we see sights of the life cycle of a tree beginning to go into dormancy. My neighbor has two gorgeous maple trees and they are a vibrant red right now and are beginning to drop leaves into the yard. These red leaves remind me of the libation being poured out over the altar, a sacrificial offering. Take a walk today or look outside your window and hold onto the beauty of the foliage this day. If you walk, pick up a red leaf and pray about how you can live life to its fullest so that you may one day be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race."

### **Tuesday, October 29, 2019** 2 Timothy 4: 16-18

"At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me." As the leaves fall from the trees, we begin to see more and more bare limbs and twigs around. What you might not notice is that on these twigs there are buds. Buds begin growing in the summer when the tree gets most of its energy, the buds survive on the woody plant during the winter dormancy. The wood and bud have an intimate relationship. They need the other to grow and produce. Imagine the Lord as the wood and your life as a small bud. Pray that you cling close to God during the long cold months to come. Pray that you will be sustained by God and strengthened by God when you feel weak.

### **Wednesday October 30, 2019** Luke 18:9-14

During stewardship season at the church, I find it easy to fall into the trap of justifying all of the good things I do and how I already give. The Pharisee cares about holiness and following God, yet he directly turns his back on his neighbor. We know that the greatest command is to love God and love neighbor. The tax collector knows that he is a sinner so he prays, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" this short yet profound prayer is one that we can all use and take to heart during stewardship. Whether we think we have all our ducks in a row or not, the humility to come before God and ask for forgiveness and mercy is how we best begin stewardship. Spend some time saying the tax collector's prayer. Repeat it several times and allow periods of silence in between listening to God's voice. At the end of your prayer ask God to lead to you the next faithful step in how you are to give of yourself.

### **Thursday October 31, 2019** Psalm 65 (All Hallows Eve)

Can you believe today is the last day of October?! All month the trees changing colors has been a reminder of God's beauty and promises to always be with us. On All Hallows Eve there are many traditions to dress up in costume and go door to door trick or treating. Perhaps you are preparing for a rush of children this evening, or maybe you have fond memories of taking young children throughout the neighborhood to greet neighbors with a fun costume and a smile. This celebrated day in our culture is for some a way of bringing community together, and uplift identity. The scripture for today is all about thankfulness. You are invited to make a list of things you were thankful in this past month. When you are finished with you list, be sure to share a few things from your thankfulness list with a friend or family member.

### **Friday November 1, 2019** Ephesians 1:11-23 (All Saints Day)

Today is All Saints Day, in Hispanic culture, Dia De La Muertos. This is a day where we remember those who have departed this earthly home. Often people make alters inside the home, eat the favorite foods of their ancestors, sing songs together, and visit graves of relatives and dear friends. As you read the scripture for today you are invited to imagine the bigger family that we are part of and remember all of the saints of your lives and the saints before our lifetime. *Draw a picture of a tree on a blank piece of paper, on the tree begin writing names of people who have passed on in where the leaves would be.* These people are now part of that great cloud of witnesses, or for our theme, the great canopy of the trees that shelter and protect us. The fruit they have shared is a lasting memory and the legacy they leave helps us to reach up and stretch to our greatest capacity.