



SUNDAY SERMON

RECAP

12 March 2023

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Sermon Notes

Sermon Title: Relationship that produces fruit

Pastor: John Roebert

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-11, 16

In this passage of Scripture, we read that:

- Jesus is the TRUE vine! This means that there are counterfeit vines (other beliefs, ideologies, philosophies)
- Apart from Jesus we can do nothing. We need to be grafted into the vine!
- The Lord wants our joy to be full. This happens when we abide in Him and bear fruit.
- There are 10 references in this text about abiding, and 8 references about fruit.

1. Jesus invites us to a life of abiding in Him.

John 15:4 "Abide in me, and I in you"

John 15:9 "Abide in my love".

We are privileged to receive such an invitation from the Lord. An invitation to abide in Him. The Lord of Heaven and earth has time for us and longs for us to abide in Him, to walk closely with Him.

It is one thing to hear the invitation, and another thing to respond to it. To abide. We need to be like Mary who wanted to sit at the Lord's feet, rather than like Martha who was busy with many things.

Abiding is not complicated. It is:

- Acknowledging His indwelling presence.
- Enjoying your relationship with Him.
- Praying and talking to God.
- Fellowshiping with the Lord.
- Staying in touch with Him.
- Looking to Him.
- Resting in God.

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A lady named Harriet Stow wrote a book titled, "How to live on Christ".

Quote from her book:

"How does the branch bear fruit? Not by incessant effort for sunshine and air, nor by vain struggles. It simply abides in the vine in silent and undisturbed union and then blossoms and fruit appears".

When we accept the Lord's invitation to abide in Him, the vine, He releases life giving sap into us, the branches. This causes us to flourish and to produce fruit, bringing great fulfilment to our lives.

Hudson Taylor the missionary to China needed to learn the lesson of abiding. At one point in his life he was labouring frantically for the gospel and his health was about to break. Just as he feared that he was nearing a breakdown, he received a letter from another missionary named McCarthy. In the letter he wrote about "abiding not struggling or striving, looking unto Him, trusting Him for present power. Christ is the only power for service, the only ground for unchanging joy".

Hudson heeded this counsel and said, "Oh the joy that flowed. My work was never so plentiful and the weight of it is all gone. The truth of our oneness with Jesus as I have never known before."

2. Jesus is determined that our lives bear fruit to glorify the Father.

If there is no fruit in our lives something is not okay!

John 15:8 "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit".

John 15:16 "I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain".

The reason farmers farm is for the fruit! In the same way God wants our lives to bear fruit. Imagine how God feels when He sees the fruit in our lives. The Bible says that He is glorified.

Some examples of fruitfulness from John 15:

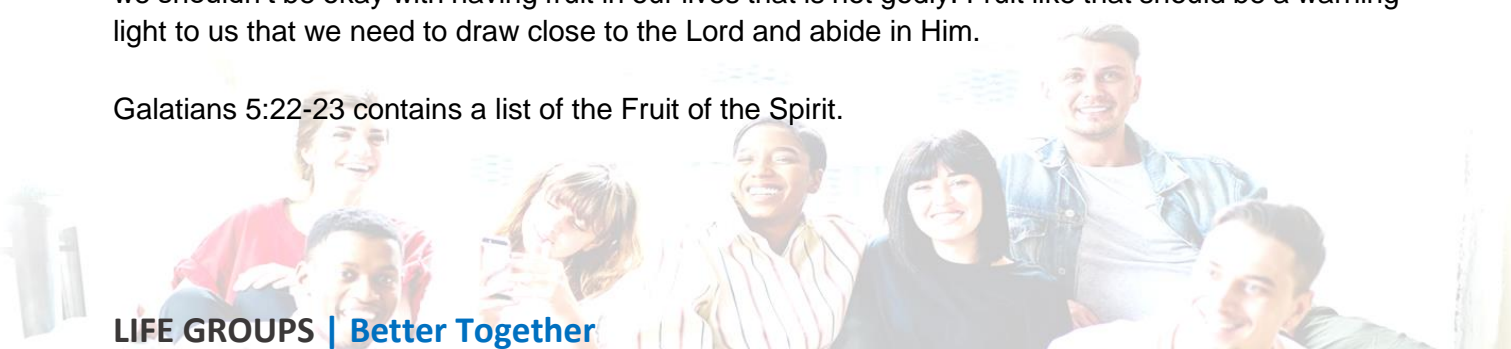
- Answered prayer.
- Having love for one another.

The key to bearing fruit is to stay close to the Lord in our hearts. When we do this God brings out the very best in us.

When we get distracted from Jesus, we become more selfish, difficult and irritable.

Some people refer to some ungodly fruit (e.g. grumpiness) as if that is just the way things are. But we shouldn't be okay with having fruit in our lives that is not godly. Fruit like that should be a warning light to us that we need to draw close to the Lord and abide in Him.

Galatians 5:22-23 contains a list of the Fruit of the Spirit.





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3. Sometimes God prunes our lives to increase our fruitfulness.

John 15:2 “He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”

God in His goodness will prune away unwholesome things that are hindering our progress. He prunes us so that we will bear more fruit.

In his book, *Secrets of the vine*, Bruce Wilkinson talks about 3 different levels of pruning (based on Hebrews 12:5-6)

- a. God speaks or gently rebukes through the convicting of the Holy Spirit, a timely word from a friend, a Scripture verse, and the preaching of the Word.
- b. God chastens us about something that is not right in our lives.
- c. God scourges us by allowing pain. This happens when we live in open sin and don't care about it. CS Lewis said, “God whispers through our pleasure but shouts through pain”. But even though we may experience pain as He prunes away things in our lives, He always does this with love in His heart.

4. Ultimately, a life of abiding leads to deep and lasting joy

John 15:11 “I have told you this so that my joy may be in your and that your joy may be full.”

God longs for us to experience abundant and lasting joy. We can experience this joy by abiding in Jesus.

True joy is not thrown off course by the ups and downs of life. True joy is steady!

We can trust the Lord for joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Song: The greatest thing in all my life is knowing you.

