

Sermon Title: Fruitful Living (John 15:1-17)

Preached By: *Caleb Mayberry, 8/5/2007*

Introduction

Jesus is currently in the midst of giving his farewell sermon to his disciples and so Jesus is likely trying to drill into some of the most foundational doctrines that his disciples will need to know when he leaves. In Chapter 14 of John we see Jesus unpacking the depths of who he really is as the way, and the truth, and the life, the only way to the Father. Jesus emphasizes the point that he is the focal point of salvation and life itself. He also tries to comfort his disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, so that they would know that they would not have to go it alone.

It is here that we pick up in Chapter 15, as Jesus moves from teaching Christology to practically applying that knowledge to how we can be living fruitful lives. This is where the gospel gets legs and feet. **What do we do in the mean time between when we're first saved and when we meet Jesus?**

Abiding in Christ for a fruitful life

The driving commandment that Jesus gives us in this passage is to **abide in Christ**. This command is the foundation for what is ultimately expected by God and desired by us, namely a fruitful life. We see here that Jesus metaphorically calls himself the vine and God the Father the vinedresser. Christians are referred to as the branches. And so the metaphor is used to highlight the analogous relationship between the vine and the branches and Christ and the church. Just as the branches depend upon the vine in order to bear fruit, so **we also depend upon Christ to bear fruit**. Indeed we depend on Christ for our very survival as the branch that does not bear fruit, i.e. is not truly rooted in the vine, is eventually gathered up and thrown into the fire. By analogy we see that the branch is intimately rooted in the vine, such that the same life-giving sap that runs through the vine also runs through the branches and so likewise the **life-giving spirit of God runs through us who abide in Christ**.

What does it mean to abide in Christ? Probably a better way to say this is that Jesus commands us to **remain in Christ**. What we see in verses 4 and 5 is a mutual remaining. Verse 7 is very helpful for further understanding what it means to remain in Christ. It says, "and my words abide [remain] in you". So we see that having Christ in us is the same as having his words in us. And so we ought to **treasure Christ's words in order to remain in Christ**. We could also infer based off the vine metaphor that we also have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, for we are connected to God.

Fruit-Bearing

We as Christians are called to bear fruit. The good news is that we are empowered by God to bear much fruit when we abide in Christ. And so we'll see in the following verses that the fruitful life desirable way to live and only way to live based off the **three effects of fruit-bearing**.

1. Glorification of God

- a. Verse 8: "By this my father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." So not we can conclude that prayer is for fruit-bearing and fruit-bearing is for

the glorification of God. Also notice that this proves that we are his disciples. Fruit-bearing is not optional but essential.

2. Generation of joy in man

- a. Verse 11: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” These things are the previous things regarding abiding in Christ, praying to Christ, bearing fruit, and glorifying God: these things all lead to our joy! This is a powerful reason why we ought to desire the fruitful life.

3. Fostering of love between persons

- a. Verse 17: “These things I commanded you, so that you will love one another”. The final outcome that Jesus desires to see is that we love each other. This is also meant to be an outworking of prayer and fruit-bearing. And this puts fruit-bearing into perspective, since it infers that the fruit is for the benefit of others to the glory of God. Therefore v. 16 and 17 really take on more of a missional bent, as our love for one another is meant to be a witness to all peoples. (John 13:35)

Conclusion

We as Christians are not called to sit on our hands and wait for the rapture after we trust in Christ. But God has appointed us to bear fruit for the kingdom and that we would live radically different lives in the here and now as we participate in God’s plan of redemption and the restoration of his kingdom. And by God’s grace he has given us his word that we will be empowered through prayer to receive all that we need to bear not just fruit, but **much** fruit.