

September 29, 2019

“You Were Chosen To Bear Fruit” by Pastor E A Terry Delivered 09 29 19

Galatians 5: 16 – 26; 2nd Peter 1: 5 – 8; Matthew 7 15 – 23; **John 15: 1- 17 (Sermon)**

Jesus often used parables and allegories to describe Himself and our relationship with Him. In this allegory God The Father is the gardener, Jesus is the true vine, and Jesus’ disciples are the branches. In this allegory Jesus is explaining our relationship with Him, our dependence upon Him, and our responsibility to Him.

In The Old Testament Israel is frequently symbolized as a grape vine. Grapes symbolized Israel’s fruitfulness in doing God’s work on earth. (Psalm 80:8; Isaiah 5:7, Jeremiah 2:21& Hosea 10:1). So when Jesus said; ***“I Am The True Vine”*** and ***“I Am The Vine”*** (Verses 1 & 5) the Jews knew Jesus was claiming to be Israel’s Messiah. A vine serves two main interrelated functions. The vine is the source of life and the vine is the source of fruit. The vine sends life giving sap to the branches so that the branches can produce fruit.

Verse 2 tells us that God The Father, the gardener: ***“He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will bear more fruit.”*** And in verse 6: ***“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned.”*** The gardener removes all dead branches and he prunes the live branches so that they will produce more fruit. So what we have here is the clear teaching that God is in control of the vineyard and it is God’s desire for us to produce fruit. Jesus gives us life and the ability to produce fruit. The gardener gets the praise when fruit is produced.

In verse 5 Jesus clearly says, ***“you are the branches.”*** Branches are an extension of the vine. A branch receives life from the vine. A branch produces the fruit consistent with the kind of vine it is attached to. The life is in the vine and a branch that is cut off from the vine will die. A branch has no root. And since an unconnected branch has no life, a branch can not bear fruit by itself. There is no life and there is no fruit apart from Jesus! Jesus clearly says our purpose as a branch is to bear fruit. That is why God created us, that is why Jesus chose us, and that is why we were saved.

The vine has two kinds of branches; branches that bear fruit and branches that do not bear fruit. The branches that bear fruit are genuine believers. However, there are sinful and worldly attitudes in all of us that need to be pruned. The branches that do not bear fruit are those people who have separated themselves from the vine. They may profess to believe in Jesus but since they are not producing fruit that is an indication that genuine salvation has never taken place. Remember Jesus was teaching The 12 Disciples and Judas Iscariot was with them at this time. Sin blocks the life giving sap from flowing from the vine into the branches.

As disciples our responsibility to Jesus is clearly stated in verse 4 ***“Remain in me.”*** That message to remain in Jesus runs all through this passage. The relationship between the branch and the vine can be summed up in one word: dependence. We all are dependent upon Jesus to supply life to us. As we receive spiritual nourishment from Jesus fruit is produced. As Christians we are simply an extension of Jesus’ life. We must think according to that truth, we

must act according to that truth and our whole lives must be lived in the light of that truth.

Now what does it mean to remain in Christ?

- Remaining in Christ means “*don’t leave*”. We are to remain in Jesus’ presence all day / every day.
- Remaining in Christ means we obey all of Jesus’ commands. In verse 10 Jesus says “***If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love...***” (John 15:10) If we really love The Lord we will want to obey all of His commandments. When we disobey Jesus we chose to remove ourselves from The Lord’s presence and our sin blocks the flow of God’s Spirit into our life. The way we remain in Jesus and in Jesus’ love is to obey all of His commandments.(Verse 10)
- Remaining in Jesus means my first priority is for spiritual blessings not physical blessings. We want what God wants for us. Our priority is no longer for worldly attention or selfish ambition, because that is not God’s goal for us. We pray according to Jesus’ will rather than my own will. Remaining in Jesus means we seek The Lord’s approval more than anyone else’s approval.
- Remaining in Jesus means we know we are dependant on Jesus and we know we are dependent upon The Father to prune the things in our lives that are preventing us from being more fruitful. We strive to yield ourselves wholly to Jesus. We know our weakness and we are driven to prayer.
- Remaining in Jesus means loving each other (Verse 12)
- Remaining in Jesus means we live to honor and bring glory to God.

A branch that is not attached to the vine is useless!

So exactly what is the fruit that we as Christians are expected to produce? First the fruit that Christians are to produce is obedience to Jesus. Jesus said; “***If you love me you will obey what I command.***” (John 14:15) And in John 15:17 “***This is my commandment: love each other.***”

Secondly the fruit that Christians are expected to produce is other Christians. One of the signs of life is that life reproduces itself. Matthew 28:19 is Jesus’ great commission to believers; “***Go and make disciples of all nations...***” And in Acts 1:8 Jesus said; “***You shall be my witnesses...***”

Thirdly the fruit that Christians are expected to produce is The Fruit Of The Spirit which we read about in Galatians 5:22 & 23. “***... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.***”

Without a doubt the fruit Christians are expected to produce is spiritual fruit. The New Testament describes fruit as Godly attributes (Galatians 5:22-23), righteous behavior (Philippians 1:11), living as Jesus lived (1st John 2: 5 – 6), loving one another (1st John 4:11 – 13), praise (Hebrews 13:15), as well as leading other people to faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 1:13-16). The only way we can lead someone to Christ is for our lives to reflect the holy attributes of Jesus. This is clear in Matthew 7:16-18. “***By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad***

tree cannot bear good fruit.” When we are exhibiting Godly attributes in our daily lives we will be fruitful and unbelievers will be attracted to Jesus Christ.

The question for each of us this morning is; *am I connected to Jesus* **or** have I become disconnected from the vine? The way we know that we are connected to Jesus is that we are producing the kind and the amount of fruit that God desires? In verse 8, Jesus said, ***“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”***

In this passage of scripture Jesus tells us there are four levels of bearing fruit; no fruit, some fruit, more fruit, and much fruit. So the next question for each of us is; *“how fruitful are you?”*

Then in verse 16 Jesus talks about His will for our lives. John 15:16 ***“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.”*** God designed each and every one of us to be fruitful. Jesus expects each one of us to be fruitful!

The next question for each of us this morning is; *are you bearing the fruit God designed you to produce?* The good news is we do not have to work at producing fruit. All we have to do is stay connected to Jesus and to allow Jesus to work through us. And when we allow Jesus to work through us we will produce large crops of fruit that are pleasing to Almighty God.

In this allegory Jesus also list some wonderful promises to those who remain in Him.

Jesus said ***“If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*** (John 15.7) The conditions are remaining in Jesus **and** Jesus’ words remaining in us. When we are spiritually alive in Jesus, and Jesus’ words remain in us, we will pray according God’s will, and then our prayers will be fruitful.

The next promise is producing much fruit. In verse 8 Jesus said; ***“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit....”*** (John 15.8) The foundational and essential fruit of abiding in Jesus is a Godly character. Remember ***“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”*** (Galatians 5.22-23). As Christians we are called to display the character of Jesus at all times and in all places. When we remain in Jesus we will produce fruit and that glorifies God. Remember your habits, your temper, your words, your attitude, and a cheerful disposition are controlled by faith in the sovereignty of God over each and every circumstance.

The third promise of remaining in Jesus in this passage is joy. Jesus said; ***“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*** (John 15: 11) Jesus wants to share His joy with us. The key to experience joy is having our lives intertwined with Jesus.

The fourth promise of remaining in Jesus is the ability to love one another. Jesus said; ***“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*** (John 15: 12) Jesus loves you unconditionally and sacrificially. We can only love other people the way Jesus loves us as the life and the character of Jesus flows through us by the power of The Holy Spirit.

The fifth promise is we are Jesus' friends. Jesus said; ***"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."*** (John 15: 15) It is incredible that the creator and ruler of the universe wants to be our friend.

The purpose of a vineyard is to bear grapes, and that is exactly the point Jesus is making in this passage of scripture. God had expected The Nation of Israel to bear luscious, rich, beautiful, tasty grapes, but the only grapes He got from them were sour, rotten, stinking, and tasteless. When God looks at your life and mine, God expects to see love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control exhibited in every aspect of our lives every day.

Imagine how much different our lives would become if we included Jesus in every activity of our day. Every event in our lives would become holy and an opportunity to bring glory to Almighty God. In itself there is nothing spiritual about looking after a patient, teaching a class, spending time with your children, or assisting a customer. But all of these activities can become sacred events when you do them for the glory of Jesus Christ.

God's word to us this morning is crystal clear. Jesus chose us to be His disciples and when we chose to accept Jesus' offer of eternal life Jesus expects us to bear fruit. So the question is; ***"Are you producing Godly fruit that is pleasing to Almighty God?"*** Remember Jesus said; you will be fruitful when you are connected to Jesus, you keep His Word in your heart, and you obey all of Jesus' commands. When we are producing Godly fruit the unsaved people around us will see Godly attributes in our daily life and they will be attracted to Jesus Christ. ***Jesus chose you to bear fruit.***

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