

That You Bear Much Fruit
John 15:4–6

October 17, 2004

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction

1. the progression in fruitfulness
2. from bearing F_____ (verse 2)
3. to bearing M_____ F_____ (verse 2)
4. to bearing M_____ F_____ (Verse 5, 8)

B. What is Abiding?

1. the mystical U_____ between Christ and the believer
 - a. it is similar to that between H_____ and W____ Eph 5:32
 - b. this relationship involves
 - (A) U_____ (knowing another) 2 Peter 3:18
 - (B) T_____
 - (C) A_____ (like-minded) Phil 2:5, 1 Cor 2:16
 - c. Jesus P_____ that this would take place John 17:21,23
2. the practical U_____ of the believer with Christ
 - a. by practising living F_____ in Christ; depending upon Him
 - (A) for our N_____
 - (B) for overcoming E_____
 - b. by D_____ toward Christ
 - c. by our O_____ to Christ John 14:15

C. Why is Abiding Necessary?

1. Christ is the only Source of Life (verse 6)
 - a. John 6:48 ... the B_____ of Life
 - b. John 8:12 ... the L_____ of Life
 - c. John 11:25 ... the R_____ and the Life
 - d. John 14:6 ... the W____, the T_____ and the Life
 - e. John 10:10 that people have Life more A_____
2. Christ is the only Source of N_____
 - a. Jesus does this to the C_____ Ephesians 5:29
 - b. Jesus asked Peter to F_____ His flock John 21:15–17
 - c. Jesus the Living Word desires that we through the written word should G_____ in respect to salvation 1 Peter 2:2
3. Christ, as God, is the only Source of P_____
 - a. John 15:4: without Him we cannot B_____ F_____
 - b. John 15:5: without Him we can do N_____
 - c. Philippians 4:13: through Him we can do A_____ T_____

D. What is the Fruitfulness that Abiding Brings?

1. fruit gives evidence of saving faith:
 - a. evidence of genuine R_____ Matthew 3:8
 - b. evidence of genuine S_____ Matthew 7:20
2. it is the work of the Holy Spirit
 - a. who effects the new B_____ John 3:1–8
 - b. who effects the nine-fold F_____ Galatians 5:22–23
 - c. to give spiritual B_____ Isaiah 61:1–3
3. the purpose of fruit is propagation
 - a. transport the S_____ to where it can grow Matt 28:19–20
 - b. nurture the S_____ so it can grow 1 Corinthians 3:6

—{1}. **John 15:4–6** **That You Bear Much Fruit**

A. Introduction

1. John 15: 1–8 (NAS): ¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the Vine-dresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

2. note the progression in fruitfulness

a. verse 2

(A) and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it,

(B) that it may bear more fruit.

b. and now, in verse 5, he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit

c. and in verse 8, By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit

d. and today we are going to look more closely at verse 4–5, Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

(A) what is abiding?

(B) why is abiding necessary?

(C) what is the fruitfulness that abiding brings?

B. What is Abiding?

1. the mystical union of Christ with the believer

a. there is a mystical union between husband and wife

- (A) or, is it mysterious? — I know that some of you find it that way; for example, mysterious how Maureen puts up with so much from my rather twisted, warped sense of humour, all the kidding and teasing she takes
 - (B) a relationship of understanding
 - (C) a relationship of trust
 - (D) a relationship of agreement ... being like-minded
 - (1) shown that though taking differing perspectives on various subjects, come to same conclusions
 - (2) shown in sharing of values
 - (3) shown when children first try mother then father and get the same answer (No!)
- b. so, Ephesians 5: 32 tells us there is between Christ and His church, corresponding to that just described
- (A) for this union, Jesus prayed in John 17:21, 23 (NKJV) "... that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us ... I in them and You in Me" — note that the union between the Son and Father is bidirectional, as is that with believers
 - (B) abiding, then, is getting to know Christ better; 2 Peter 3:18 (AV) instructs us, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - (C) abiding is a trust relationship, the mutual recognition of being possessed by the other: that He is our Lord, that we are His disciples; of mutual interest and care
 - (D) George Robinson phrased it well in the hymn ...

Loved with everlasting love,
 Led by grace that love to know:
 Spirit, breathing from above,
 Thou hast taught me it is so!
 Oh this full and perfect peace,
 Oh this transport all divine —
 In a love which cannot cease,
 I am His and He is mine;
 In a love which cannot cease,
 I am His and He is mine. ^{—{2}}.

- (E) abiding is a relationship of agreement with Christ

- (1) we are to “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” (Philippians 2:5 AV)
 - (2) Paul could say concerning himself and his readers, “But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16 AV)
- c. so, there is this mystical union, this abiding in Christ, for which the believer has a responsibility, in part, but note that there is also to be found
2. abiding as a practical union of the believer with Christ
- a. abiding is met by the practice of living faith in Christ
 - (A) where is our dependence for our needs?
 - (1) it is so easy in today's secular society
 - (2) to divorce our spiritual life from our material life
 - (3) to depend on God for spiritual blessing
 - (4) to depend on self to everything else
 - (5) but the abiding Christian realizes that every need, every problem, every effort from the time one gets up in the morning (including getting up!) to when one retires at night is to find its fulfilment in God
 - (B) where is our dependence for overcoming evil?
 - b. abiding is met by devotion toward Christ
 - (A) piety, or the worship of God is to be so measured
 - (B) what is our feeling toward Christ?
 - (1) is He simply an admirable, interesting historic figure, to be considered as an example?
 - (2) or is He the One that alone gives live meaning?
 - (3) is He the joy of life?
 - (4) is He the object of our every love? our all in all?
 - (C) or, as Oscar G. Eliason wrote

I've learned to know a name I highly treasure,
Oh how it thrills my spirit through and through;
Oh, precious Name, beyond degree or measure,
Oh wondrous Name of Him so kind and true.

My heart is stirred whenever I think of Jesus,
That blessed Name which sets the captive free;
The only Name through which I find salvation,
No name on earth has meant so much to me. —{3}.

- c. and, abiding is met by our obedience to Christ
 - (A) it is hard to consider a marriage union successful where one or both of the members do not take into account the wishes and aspirations of the other
 - (B) in the seventh verse of this chapter, as in many other places in Scripture, we find that Christ Jesus cares for us and our aspirations (NAS): "... ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you." now, isn't that really something ... a verse we'll come back to next month!
 - (C) & the way that we show our care for Christ is through obedience to Him, as Jesus said in John 14: 15 (NAS): "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

C. Why is Abiding Necessary?

- 1. Jesus is the only Source of life; only by abiding can we enjoy that life in the fulness intended by God
 - a. now, if I should go out to one of the trees or vines on our property, and cut off a branch, be it large or small
 - (A) through it onto the pile (under which some rabbits live)
 - (B) and come back in a few days to look at it
 - (C) the leaves will have withered, even fallen off
 - (D) and, in time, the branch will harden, become brittle, without life: dead
 - (E) in the case a vine's branches, fit only for burning
 - (F) as described in John 15:6 (NAS): "... thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."
 - b. in like fashion, Christ is the only Source of life
 - (A) to be united with — that is abiding in — Him is life
 - (B) think of a few of the "I AM's" of Jesus
 - (1) "I AM the bread of life." John 6: 48 (NAS)
 - (2) "I AM the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8: 12 (NAS)

- (3) "I AM the resurrection and the life" John 11:25
- (4) "I AM the way, and the truth, and the life" John 14:6
- (5) and one, not strictly an "I AM," but that applies: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10

2. Christ is the only Source of nourishment

- a. Ephesians 5, in comparing the relationship of husband and wife to that between Christ and the church, tells us that a husband should love his wife as his own body, and then in verse 29 says, "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church"
- b. after His resurrection Jesus had a three-part dialogue with Peter in which each part was ended with the commission, "Feed my lambs" or "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15–17)
- c. yes, the Lord Jesus is concerned that the child of God be nourished in his or her faith:
 - (A) He is the source of nourishing; He is the vine
 - (B) 1 Peter 2:2 instructs us (NAS): "like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation"
 - (C) Jesus, the living Word, is to be our nourishment

3. as God, Christ is the only Source of power

- a. John 15:4 says "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself"
- b. John 15:5 says "for without Me you can do nothing."
- c. so it is eminently clear that without the vital relationship to the Christ, the Christian is powerless
- d. on the other hand, with Paul we too can say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13 NKJV)

4. Abiding in Christ then is necessary for He is the only Source of life, of nourishment, of power.

D. What is the Fruitfulness that Abiding Brings?

1. fruit, like the flower that precedes, gives beauty to the plant
 - a. fruit gives evidence of saving faith
 - (A) gives evidence of genuine repentance: the Baptist told the religious rulers to "Bring forth, therefore, the fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8 AV)

(B) gives evidence of genuine salvation — Jesus: “Therefore by their fruits you shall know them”
Matthew 7:20

b. it is a work of the Holy Spirit

(A) it is the Spirit who effects the new birth (John 3:1-8)

(1) the species of a plant or animal is determined by its birth, its parenthood

(2) its character and nature is likewise determined

(3) that which is born of the flesh ...

(4) so the only way to become children of God is by the regenerating work of the Spirit of God

(B) and in our scripture reading today we looked at the nine-fold fruit that the Holy Spirit develops in the life of the believer (Galatians 5:22-23)

c. these fruit are God’s intended spiritual beauty to believers; the reason for the Incarnation of the Son of God, for the ministry of Jesus, for the death of the Christ on the cross

d. “The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” Isaiah 61:1–3 (NKJV)*

(A) with the beginning of these words, Jesus commenced his ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth

(B) but you can see also God’s purpose in that ministry

(1) that believers may be trees of righteousness

(2) that they will be the planting of the Lord

(3) that they will be a cause of glory to God

(C) the parallel with this passage in John is quite evident

2. but the purpose of fruit is propagation

a. so, while fruit is pleasing in its own right

(A) often in its appearance ... an apple, a peach, & so on

(B) often in its fragrance ... for me, that’s a lemon

(C) usually in its taste

- (D) all this beauty is to serve a purpose
- b. fruit is used to transport the seed — some examples
 - (A) squirrels burying nuts
 - (B) birds eating berries – they take berries of the common buckthorn, then sit on our fences, dropping the seeds, so that we have to cut down these “weed” trees yearly
- c. fruit is used to nurture the seed
 - (A) many nuts, such as the walnut, are enclosed in a fruit
 - (B) many seeds are likewise enclosed in a pulpy fruit
 - (C) so that when this drops to the ground
 - (D) it provides an environment where the seed can thrive once it germinates
- d. God, then, likewise intends that the believer
 - (A) by beauty of life, will attract others to the seed, the message of the good news, the gospel (Mt 28: 19–20)
 - (B) by take that seed with him wherever he goes
 - (C) will care for that seed as it germinates to produce a new plant, a new believer (Apollos, 1 Cor 3: 6)

3. sometime next month, Lord willing, we will look at how God uses fruitfulness in our lives for His own glory

E. Conclusion

1. now we didn't look to any extent at that verse 6
 - a. *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*
 - b. which is a warning
 - (A) as the word “anyone” indicates
 - (1) where Jesus shifts from the second person “you”
 - (2) in which he is addressing His own true disciples
 - (3) but to others who may associate themselves with Christ, with Christ's church
 - (4) a warning to those who are professors, but not possessors of faith in Christ
 - (B) a warning
 - (1) not to the true disciple; to the one who is linked in a vital, spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ

- (2) a frightening warning, indeed
- c. so,
 - (A) if that describes your position before God and before Christ this morning;
 - (B) if the Holy Spirit is convicting you of your need for the Saviour, Christ Jesus
 - (C) then heed that warning and come to Jesus so that you may be united in reality with Christ the Vine; and you are so invited to come to Him this morning
- 2. but, on the other hand, for the believer
 - a. there is a calm assurance in these verses in John 15
 - b. of all that God intends to do in the life of His children
 - (A) to cause them to grow in the things of the Lord
 - (B) to endow them with a beauty of character that reflects in some small measure God's own beauty and grace
 - (C) to use them to attract others to trust in Christ
 - c. then, "Through the love of God, our Saviour" we may be assured as we sing our concluding hymn, "All Will be Well" (Praise 332)

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NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. George Wade Robinson (1838-1877)
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