

Sunday Morning Message

November 6, 2022 (Adapted from a message originally preached on January 8, 2012, and July 9, 2017)

Title - *Without Me Ye Can Do Nothing*

Topic – The Power of Fruit Bearing - Abiding in Christ

Text – John 15:1 – 11; 16

Congregational Reading – John 15:1 - 5

Introduction

We are continuing our series of messages through the Gospel of John, and we have come to this very famous chapter that deals with the subject of bearing fruit for the Lord.

Notice in v. 2, Jesus speaks of no fruit, fruit, and then more fruit. In v. 5 and in v. 8 he says, “much fruit.” Notice finally in v. 16, Jesus speaks of “fruit that remains:”

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” (John 15:16)

The goal that God has for every Christian is that they bear fruit:

The word, “ordain,” in v. 15 means to set apart in a specific place or for a specific purpose. God has set us (Christians) apart in this place for the particular purpose of bearing fruit.

In the next few messages, we will be spending a little time in John chapter 15, the “fruit bearing chapter”, and we will look at what this and other Bible passages have to say that will instruct us and encourage us to bear fruit for the Lord.

Explain fruit-bearing. The term fruit-bearing can mean two things which are different but also connected.

1 Making disciples. (Great Commission)

When we prea

2 Manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” - (Galatians 5:22-25)

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." - (Ephesians 5:8-11)

I believe the context of John chapter 15 primarily deals with the fruit bearing of spiritual reproduction. However, I do not think that we are violating Biblical principle when we say that the "fruit of the Spirit" is in view here as well, especially because we know that being "filled with the Spirit" is pre-requisite for bearing the fruit of reproduction (or winning people to Christ).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Here in our text, Jesus has left the Upper Room with the eleven Apostles (Judas has gone to betray Him). It is after the last supper, and before His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, before His arrest and crucifixion. He is comforting these disciples and preparing them for what is about to take place. It is important to note that He is addressing only believers here. Judas had already left to betray Him.

He reminds these men that are going to have to remain "in Him," "abide in Him."

This morning, we are going to focus on Abiding in Christ. Unless we are abiding in the Lord, we can neither manifest the fruit of the Spirit, nor can we reproduce the spiritual fruit of new converts.

What does it mean to abide in Christ?

Notice that the word "abide" is found here in John 15 - 9 times. It is only used 24 times in the entire New Testament, and only two other times in the Gospel of John.

Another interesting point is that only John uses the word in reference to specifically abiding in Christ. John uses it also in his epistles:

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." - (1 John 2:27)

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have

confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." - (1 John 2:28)

What does it mean?

The Greek word translated "abide" here in this passage is "meno". It means to dwell in; to remain; to continue; to endure.

All the above definitions together express the idea that Christ was trying to share with the 11 that He was addressing at that time. It speaks of a closeness and communion with God, and a continuation of that relationship through even difficult trials.

It also carries the idea of consistency: "The very thought of abiding insists on continuing in something, or consistency in doing something. In fact, the word translated "abide" in our text is sometimes translated "continue" in other places in the Scripture. Abiding in Christ is not a temporary act, but it is a perpetual act. It requires consistency/faithfulness."¹

Transition – This morning I want to give you three ways that the believer must abide in Christ if he is going to bear fruit:

1. The Believer Must Be Plugged In

- **Through a Walk with God**
- **To the Worship and Work of God (God's House)**

Keep yourself intimately connected to the local church; to people who are going to hold you accountable.

- **To the Word and Will of God** – find out what God wants you to do

Abiding in Christ carries the idea of obedience to Him. Jesus refers often in this passage to keeping His commandments.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2:3-6)

Spurgeon said, "Abiding in Christ helps us to live as Christ lived; not, as one well observes,

¹ John G. Butler, *Sermon Starters*, vol. 1 (Clinton, IA: LBC Publications, 2014), 144.

that we can walk on the water as Christ walked upon it, but that we can walk in our daily life even as he did, because we abide in him.”²

2. The Believer Must Be Persistent

v. 9 says – “continue ye in my love.”

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" - (John 8:31)

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;" - (Colossians 1:23)

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;" - (Colossians 4:2)

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." - (1 Timothy 4:16)

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;" - (2 Timothy 3:14)

Illustrate – “Squirrel!” – The movie “Up” – the dog, Doug, is easily distracted.

Christians are just like Doug. We get sidetracked easily.

Sometimes it is just busyness. (The cares of this world)

Sometimes it is the pursuit of pleasures. (The deceitfulness of riches)

Sometimes it is just plain boredom. We need continue, persist when the newness wears off. Illustrate – marriage, new car

Sometimes it’s something more serious like doctrinal heresy.

When the passage says in v 2 *“every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away”* it is not talking about an unbeliever – it is talking about a believer that perhaps was once a fruit bearer but did not persist. He wandered off course, somewhere; and if He stays off-course the Lord will have to remove him.

3. The Believer Must Be Perseverant

² C. H. Spurgeon, “Restraining Prayer,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 51 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1905), 335.

The flesh, the world, and the devil will do everything to try to get us to un-plug from the vine.

When you first get saved, the experience is new and exciting. Your flesh will even enjoy the new experience for a while. You won't be able to get enough of God, and the church. But be careful because those feelings may not always be there; sometimes they come and go. That is why, you must develop spiritual disciplines based upon what you know God wants you to do. It is easy to serve God when you feel like it, but the true test of Christian maturity will be the ability to serve Him when you don't.

The world around you will sometimes get excited about the things of God.

Illustrate – VBS, BTS Rally, Revivals, the Summit – everyone is enjoying church. It is a spiritual high; but many who were happy and excited about what was going on fizzled out. You must be careful that you do not let your Christianity fizzle out.

You cannot base your walk with God on what other people are doing. It is easy to serve God when others are with you, but many times you will be called upon to stand alone.

The devil will also attack you if you are faithful to the Lord. He hates God; He hates Christians, especially those that are on fire for God.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1 Peter 5:8)

The devil is a deceiver – He will try to get you to doubt God.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

The devil is a discourager – He will try to convince you that the spirit-filled Christian life is hopeless.

The devil is a destroyer – He will try to tempt you to fall out of the will of God and into sin.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:" (Luke 22:31)

Your flesh will not want to persevere. The world will not want to be around a Christian that is plugged in to the vine. The devil will do everything in his power to stop you.

The Christian life, the spirit-filled Christian life, the abiding in Christ Christian life is an abundant life, filled with much joy and reward, but it will have its many challenges. God will allow your faith to be tested, He will permit many discouraging trials in your life, but you must persevere.

If you have already quit and turned back on God – turn around. God allows U-turns.

Conclusion

The result of getting plugged in to Christ, persisting and persevering in Him will be fruitfulness. Your life will impact others. Your testimony will cause others to want Jesus as well.

Christians that get plugged in, and persist, and persevere will bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit, and finally fruit that remains.

Stay plugged in to the Vine – Jesus is the Vine.

Look at verse eleven – there is another benefit given there. Not only will you be fruitful, meaning your life and words will impact others for Christ; but you will also have fullness of joy. Isn't that what the world is craving; isn't that what everyone wants. God says that you can have it, if you will abide and keep abiding in Christ.

You cannot abide in Christ unless you are "in Christ." You must be part of His family. You must be born-again into the family of God. Have you been saved.

How about you, Christian? How is your closeness to the Lord? How about your communion with Him? Are you as close to Him today as you once were, or have you fizzled out a little in your relationship with Him? Don't ask yourself that question because your heart may lie to you. Ask Jesus: "Lord, am I as close to you as I used to be?" Or "Am I as close to you as I should be?"