

### Introduction

1. When a boy my neighbors had pear trees in backyard. (Show) Never produced ripe fruit.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Conditions in W. MI were not warm enough w/enough sun to produce mature pears.<sup>2</sup>
  - b. God's intention for pear tree is produce pears, but won't happen if conditions are wrong.
  - c. This is an analogy of Christians. Why did God save us? To produce fruit. His purpose.
  - d. But we will not be fruitful if the conditions in our lives are wrong.
2. Some years ago I was meditating upon John 15 which we will look at today.
  - a. Word *fruit* occurs 8xs in first 10 verses. Realized God's whole purpose for me = fruitful.
  - b. Wrote life mission based on Jesus' teaching in this chap. My Life Mission (Show):
  - c. **To glorify God by being a fruitful disciple myself & reaching & developing others into fruitful disciples.**
3. Don't know what your life mission is. Probably not worded the same as mine.
  - a. But somewhere in it should be fruitfulness. That's God's purpose for every Christian.
  - b. Jesus answers 2 questions: How? What are the benefits? (Show Title/Text)

## **I. Requirements for a Fruitful Life, vv. 1-5, 9-10.**

### **A. Jesus' Exclusive Statement**

1. Jesus opening I am is the 7<sup>th</sup> of the 7 "I am statements" in John's Gospel.
  - a. This one reminds of the 6<sup>th</sup> one in Jn. 14:6: I am the way, truth, life, etc.
  - b. That's an exclusive claim isn't it? Jesus is the only means of salvation.
  - c. This also is an exclusive claim. Jesus is the only one can make us truly fruitful.
2. Did you know that vine branch has only two purposes? Absolutely useless for timber.
  - a. It either grows grapes or cut off and burned to make a fire.<sup>3</sup> Vine = produce grapes.
  - b. Jesus is clearly claiming that it is only thru Him that we can be spiritually fruitful.
3. In order for Him to produce His fruit 2 things: One by us & one by the Father.

### **B. Abiding By the Believer**

1. Abide, v. 4 = 11xs in vv. 4-10.<sup>4</sup> Clear that this is condition for spiritual fruit.
  - a. Means: stay at home, stay where one is.<sup>5</sup> Remain in same place over period of time.<sup>6</sup>
  - b. In some cultures when ask people where live they use the word "stay" instead of live.
  - c. I say I live at 527 Forest Park Dr. Some cultures I stay at 527 Forest Park Dr.
  - d. That's my home; that's where I stay, lodge, dwell, live. Fellowship with my family.
2. **Means to keep in fellowship w/Christ so that His life can work in & thru us produce fruit.**<sup>7</sup>
3. Do you know it's not automatic that we'll stay in fellowship w/Christ? Must be cultivated.<sup>8</sup>
  - a. We abide when we accept Christ as Savior & He comes to live within, v. 3.
  - b. We abide when we grow in our love for Jesus by learning of His love for us, v. 9.

<sup>1</sup> [www.shutterstock.com/video/clip-2295428-stock-footage-branch-of-tree-with-an-unripe-pear.html](http://www.shutterstock.com/video/clip-2295428-stock-footage-branch-of-tree-with-an-unripe-pear.html). Accessed 1/21/16

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.starkbros.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Harvestable-Pears\\_LG.jpg](http://www.starkbros.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Harvestable-Pears_LG.jpg). Accessed 1/23/16.

<sup>3</sup> Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Jn 15:2). Galaxie Software.

<sup>4</sup> Gangel, K. O. (2000). *John* (Vol. 4, p. 280). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). *A Greek-English lexicon* (p. 1103). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>6</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 728). New York: United Bible Societies.

<sup>7</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 355). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

- c. We abide when we obey God's Word by practicing what it says, v. 10.
4. Did you notice that there is a clear progression that is key to abiding in Christ?
  - a. **Faith in Christ → Love for Christ → Obedience to Christ's Word.** (Show)
  - b. Read 1 John 3:23-24. Why important? Never work.
  - c. If say Okay, I have to obey so I will read my Bible and obey. That's drudgery.
  - d. If we try to love w/o trust, there will be no connection point. Have to trust so X enters.
  - e. Then love will come naturally and we will want to learn more about Christ & love more.
  - f. Then when our love is growing we will want to obey Him more & more. See 1 Jn. 5:3.
5. Are you involved in this process? Abiding is a process. If are your life will be fruitful.
6. I prayed for faith and thought that someday faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Now faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since.<sup>9</sup>

### C. Pruning By the Father

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> thing that must happen is we must be pruned by the Father, v. 2.
  - a. Did you notice a progression? Fruit → more fruit → much fruit. vv. 2 and 5.
  - b. God wants us to produce as much fruit as possible. What is this fruit? Seen already.
  - c. Growing love for Christ is fruit. Godly behavior resulting from obedience is fruit.
  - d. The fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23 is fruit. (Show & Read) Witnessing is fruit.
2. Problem is that we still have an old nature & sinful habits & bad priorities.
  - a. Prunes = to cleanse.<sup>10</sup> Play on words with v. 3. We are cleansed w/forgiveness w/salv.
  - b. But we still have sinful habits & bad priorities that must be cut away. So God prunes.
3. In viticulture the vines are pruned by cutting away unnecessary growth that drains sap.
  - a. (Show) Grapes don't become as ripe as can be if unneeded growth saps energy.
  - b. Look at the cutting process. That's what God does to us. Painful, but needful.
  - c. Let's just say it right out what it is. It's suffering. The pruning is suffering. Trials.
4. Suppose you eliminated suffering, what a dreadful place the world would be. I would almost rather eliminate happiness. The world would be the most ghastly place because everything that corrects the tendency of this unspeakable little creature, man, to feel over-important and over-pleased with himself would disappear. He's bad enough now, but he would be absolutely intolerable if he never suffered.<sup>3</sup>
  - a. That's what you call laying it on the line. Pulling no punches. Who say not true?
  - b. To have fruit of the Spirit, self, self-importance, self-pleasure, must be rooted out.
  - c. When I have suffered I read Bible more, pray more, get counsel more & learn more.
  - d. As a pastor I've seen the people who embrace the suffering go deeper in their abiding.
5. In the storm the tree strikes deeper roots in the soil; in the hurricane the inhabitants of the house abide within, and rejoice in its shelter. So by suffering the Father would lead us to enter more deeply into the love of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Dwight Moody quoted in Ritzema, E., & Vince, E. (2013). *300 quotations for preachers from the Modern church*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>10</sup> Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on the Gospel of John* (pp. 479–480). New York: United Bible Societies.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge in Hughes, R. K. (1999). *John: that you may believe* (p. 354). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Murray quote in Ritzema & Vince, op. cit., "Deepening Roots in Suffering" entry.

## II. Benefits of a Fruitful Life, vv. 6-8, 11.

### A. Answered Prayer, v. 7.

1. Why do some Christians get their prayers answered more than others? Wonder that?
  - a. V. 7a answers that question. When abiding controlled by God's Word.
  - b. When controlled by God's Word our desires are in accord with God's will.
  - c. God loves to answer prayers that are in His will. 1 John 5:14-15.
2. More abide in Christ, more our hearts like His, more our prayers in His will.
3. Who doesn't want their prayers to be answered? It's a benefit of abiding.

### B. Proven Relationship, v. 8.

1. Verse 8 is an amazing verse. It teaches us two extraordinary things.
  - a. Fruit-bearing is what glorifies the Father the most. It proves we are His children.
  - b. **Presence of fruit in believer's life shows others we really possess eternal life.**<sup>12</sup>
2. Who then are those that don't bear any fruit, v. 2? Mentioned again in v. 6.
  - a. These are people like Judas who appear to be believers but attachment is external.
  - b. When Jesus said one would betray disciples had no idea who. Judas seemed real.
  - c. But he didn't believe; he didn't love Jesus; and he stopped obeying Him. Didn't abide.
  - d. Because he didn't abide in Christ, he bore no fruit and he was lost for eternity.
3. I believe the three greatest tragedies of Hell will be these:
  - a. Being eternally separated from God forever and forever w/o another chance.
  - b. Realizing one's life was an unfruitful waste of no value to God.
  - c. Thinking one was on the way to heaven but ended up in Hell because never in the vine.
4. **Some claim to be in the vine, but the absence of fruit disqualifies them. If there is no fruit in our life, we had better reconsider the authenticity of our Christianity.**<sup>13</sup> *By their fruits you will know them, Lk. 6:43f.*

### C. Overflowing Joy, v. 11.

1. Look at what v. 11 says. A fruitful life is a joyful life. W/o doubt most joyful are fruitful.
2. If unhappy if Christian life w/o love, joy, peace directly related to not abiding & fruitful.
3. Look at stunted pear tree again. Now compare to healthy tree. (Show)
  - a. If compared to people which one be happiest. One fulfilling purpose.
  - b. No joy in life like knowing fulfilling purpose for which God saved us – being fruitful.
4. Most of us know this man – Bill Bright. Founded CRU and led for 50 yrs.
  - a. When died in 2003 at 81-yrs-old CRU was largest Christian ministry in the world.
  - b. Dr. Bright died an old man, full of yrs with an amazingly fruitful life. Heard once.
  - c. **To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with Christ. The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ. Therefore, if I am filled with the Spirit, I am abiding in Christ.... And if I am controlled and empowered by Christ, He will be walking around in my body, living His resurrection life in and through me.**<sup>14</sup>
  - d. That's the greatest joy anyone could ever know.

<sup>12</sup> Constable, op. cit., (Jn. 15:8).

<sup>13</sup> Hughes, R. K. (1999). *John: that you may believe* (p. 352). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>14</sup> Bill Bright. Morgan, R. J. (2000). *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed., p. 437). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.