

Cultivating Fruitfulness (Jn. 15:1-3)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Last week I shared a message out of the gospel of John.** I spoke about how Jesus said, **I am the Way, The truth, and The Life (Jn. 14:6).** I love reading and meditating on the Word, especially the Gospel of John. **Think about all the main truth's about Jesus that are contained in this gospel.**

II. THE STARTING POINT—OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

- A. **John 15 is a highpoint in the Scripture in terms of our relationship with God.** Jesus revealed Himself as the true vine (source of our spiritual life), and His people as His branches (the expression of His presence). We are called to abiding in Him which results in the miracle of bearing fruit as believers.

¹“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser...²every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit...⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me [talks to Me, fellowships with Me]...bears much fruit...¹⁶I chose you... that your fruit should remain.”
(Jn. 15:1-5, 16)

- B. **To bear fruit is to produce godly character in our lives.** Fruit inwardly in our character and outwardly in godly character (Gal. 5:22) (Phil. 1:27). Fruitfulness is about *possessing* love, humility, and purity, and then *inspiring* it in others.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passion and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”. (Gal. 5: 22-23, 24-25)

“Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”. (Phil. 1:27)

- C. **To be fruitful means to abide (remain) in Christ:** We become fruitful as we develop an ongoing dialogue with a Person (Jesus Christ) and fellowship with Him through intimate relationship. **Jesus becomes part of our daily routine. We talk to Him as we do a close friend!**

III. JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE (JN. 15:1)

- A. **Jesus began by emphasizing two important truths necessary to cultivate an abiding life that bears fruit.** The First truth is that Jesus is the true vine. The second is that the God the Father is the vinedresser. Jesus is where true life comes from.

¹“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser...” (Jn. 15:1)

- B. **Jesus as the vine is the source and model of how to relate to God and bear fruit.** Jesus in us is compared to the sap in a vine; He is the source of divine life in our life. We bear fruit as our words and deeds move people spiritually to embrace love, purity, and humility more in responding to love and obey God. This takes the presence of the Holy Spirit.

IV. THE FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER WHO PRUNES TO MAKE US FRUITFUL

- A. **Jesus said, My Father is the vinedresser:** He is the chief gardener who oversees the health and fruitfulness of His vineyard (You and me). He takes the initiative to intervene, to train, provide, heal, protect, and direct every fruitful believer to bring them to greater fruitfulness.
¹“...My Father is the vinedresser...²Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” (Jn. 15:1-3)
- B. **He is the vinedresser who “prunes”:** A gardener cuts branches off the vine so it will be more lush with life. Each year after the harvest, in early spring, the vinedresser prunes (cuts away) over 80% of the vine from the previous year’s growth. **If it is not cut off, the vine will grow as a wild vine without producing many grapes.** Producing godly fruit that remains takes many years—sometimes 10, 20, 30 years. We think in terms of a few months—God thinks in terms of decades.
- C. **The purpose of the Father’s pruning is to remove distractions from us: (15:3)** The Father wants every fruit-bearing believer to bear **more fruit**. His commitment to prune us is a *glorious promise*, not a *dreadful warning*. He intervenes (Gets involved in our lives) to bring forth more love and godly character in our lives.
- D. **Too much blessing in one season can create added distraction in the next season.** Too much activity often diminishes our abiding in Christ. Fruitfulness often leads to growth that results in more demands on our lives, along with more responsibilities, which causes people to have greater expectations of us.
- E. **Practically, the pruned branches speak of removing some of the increased activities:** Demands and responsibilities that came with increased fruitfulness in the previous season. Pruning involves decrease, which is meant to lead to an increase in our fruitfulness in love, spiritual safety, satisfaction in God, and rewards in the age to come.
- F. **He prunes every fruitful believer so that they become more fruitful in His sight.** Pruning results in us *possessing* more love and humility in our lives that become a reflection of His character to others.
²...and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. (Jn. 15:2-3)
- G. **By understanding the Father as the vinedresser resulting in the pruning process,** it equips us to trust His leadership with gratitude for His intervention in our life as we respond rightly.
- H. **Sometimes we confuse God’s pruning with an attack of the devil.** Seasons of pruning can help us shift our primary focus from man’s definition of success to God’s definition of success which is to grow in love, humility, and purity.
- I. **The picture of abiding with “lasting fruit” is seen in the life of Mary of Bethany.** Jesus told her that what she had would “not be taken away” (Lk. 10:42). She prioritized sitting at His feet to talk more with Him. **⁴But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” (Lk 10:42)**