

The Butler's Branches - Your Life in Three Limbs

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, that's pretty good stuff to consider being whiter than snow, being washed of your sins. I don't think too many people in the world are maybe really thinking about that.
- They might feel the burden of their sins, they may feel the emptiness in their soul, but they don't know what in the world it is to trust what the Bible says and to acknowledge what God's intentions are to just clean you up, completely clean you.
- Because you're dirty. Because you're filthy. All right, before we get into the Bible, it just struck me standing there. We don't do this very often, but if anybody has a testimony or has something they'd like to share with everybody, the church this morning, something the Lord's doing in your life or something that he did in the last week or two weeks or whatever, that is, you just want to give him the glory for and declare his doings.
- Yes, sir? Went to my aunt's funeral last week and learned that she was saved. Wow, okay. And then a bunch of my lost family got the gospel and the preacher just talked about the love of God, the love of God, the love of God, the love of God, waiting and waiting and waiting.
- Then you did it with what Jesus Christ and that was... There it is. You did it on the church, you did it on the grave site, you did it at Farsi, you did it in several languages and I was just a little bit of a word.
- [1 : 3 3] Amen. I imagine so. Plenty of funerals don't go that way. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I submitted an application to the Bible Doctrine and Institute for the same one that Brother Eric is in.
- I'm going to Bible school with a bachelor's of a divinity program. It's a lot of work, but I'm excited. We're going about God's book.
- I appreciate your prayer. I need them. When did you enroll? This morning. So he didn't get accepted yet. So we don't have to pray yet.
- We'll see. No, that's great news. That's great. So Brother Eric Peterson is in that same correspondence program. He's almost one year into a three-year program.
- And so Eric, I mean, Greg's going to catch up to him here pretty soon. It can be three years, I guess. Or it can be more. The time constraints can be awful hard.
- [2 : 4 2] So, yeah, it takes prayer. It takes dedication. It takes a lot. So anybody else? Okay. Then let's open up the Word of God this morning to two places.
- If you can please find Genesis 40. Genesis chapter 40. The second place is the Gospel of John in chapter 15. And we're going to read and consider some verses from both of these passages and kind of merge them together into a thought.
- And I hope you'll pay close attention and analyze the Scripture here with me. And in doing so, be serious this morning and be honest and allow the thoughts and allow what we try to draw out here to apply to you.
- Not to us or to them, but to you. And let's try to get something here this morning. Genesis chapter 40. And we're just going to spend a little time in it.

So we're going to read. First, we'll skim maybe some of this. But we'll begin in verse 1. Where the Bible says, And it came to pass after these things that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord, the king of Egypt.

[4 : 03] And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them. And they continued in season, a season in ward. And they dreamed a dream, both of them. Each man his dream in one night.

Each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker, the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came into them in the morning and looked upon them, and behold, they were sad.

And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly today? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.

And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me.

[5 : 03] And in the vine were three branches, and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth, and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand.

And I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days.

Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head and restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand after the former manor, when thou hast his butler. And then Joseph pleads with him, Think about me.

You know, remember me. Say a good word for me. Get me out of here. I'm innocent. I don't deserve to be in here. And as you know, if you know the story, if you've read this, I hope you have. You know, the baker then got the gall to tell his dream, but that wasn't so good.

It turned out he's going to get hanged. But we're going to focus in on this dream of the chief butler, because it gives us a vine. It gives us three branches, and it talks about it bringing forth ripe grapes and being pressed into Pharaoh's cup.

[6 : 06] Now, let's hold that thought, and now we'll go back to John chapter 15, back to the Gospel of John in chapter 15. And look at verses 1 through 6.

So the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking. He says, I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.

For without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. And men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

[7 : 13] Now let's look again into verse number 2 here, and notice you get the similarity, you know, the conjunction here of these two thoughts, the vine, the branches, the bearing fruit.

Let's look before we go anywhere else at verse number 2 and notice that these branches, there's three branches here. It says in verse 2, Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.

So there's the empty branch. That's the branch that beareth not fruit. Nothing on it. And so might as well get rid of it and throw it in the fire. In verse number 2, it says, Every branch that beareth fruit.

So there's a branch that's bringing, we'll call that the fruitful branch. That's bearing fruit. There's something on that branch. That's what we're looking for. That's great. But then there's something else. He says he takes that branch and purges it.

Why? That it may bring forth more fruit. And that's going to be called the purged branch. Because that branch is not just bearing fruit, but it's bringing forth more fruit. It's a whole other level.

[8 : 17] And I realize while we're looking at this, these aren't necessarily three separate branches. But in this case, even that's the same branch as the one that bear fruit. But probably one single branch we're looking at here representing an individual.

But let's pair these thoughts together from Genesis 40 and John 15. In the butler's dream, we saw something there that there were three branches.

Does anybody remember what we read? He said, this is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three what? Three days. Now, if I was the butler and I had this dream, I'm not thinking branches are days.

I'm thinking they're people. They're kingdoms. You know, the tree grows up. It gets big. Planted by the rivers of water. It's always kingdoms. Kings. But these are branches and they're growing forth in their days.

And Joseph, he's a fruitful bough. He's likened to that. It's a person. It's his life. These are three days. It's an interesting thing. It's a time element. It's a time element.

[9 : 23] It's what the branches are. And we might have expected something else. But in John, Jesus Christ says, ye are the branches. Now, as I said, to merge these passages, I'd like you to consider the time element that is related to you.

It's not three days or three months or three years necessarily. But rather, if we could merge these ideas that ye are the branches and their branches are representing a time element, then what else could there be in your life but the past, the present, and the future?

And let's analyze. Let's consider that this morning. That in these three branches that the butler sees in his vision, in these three branches, they can represent, and then we can look at them and view the entirety of your life.

From the beginning to the end, we can see the whole thing in three branches, three stages of your life. Now, not everybody's branches look the same. As a matter of fact, they're very different.

Many are very different. Some are heavy. Some are full. Some are skimpy. Some may be mixed with a little here, a little there. There's clusters, some portions, and not in others. And then there's probably some that are just the empty branch.

[10 : 42] And I want these three branches to represent our lives today, your life this morning. And so you have the thought. Now, as we go into it, pay attention to it and consider yourself, your life.

And I want to preach this morning about the butler's branches and calling this your life in three limbs. Let's pray. Our Father, we come to you now.

We seek you to help us in this next time to pay attention and to consider these things and to receive these things and to be obedient to your word.

Father, it's my prayer that every individual would care enough and would open their heart enough and dismiss themselves from everything, everyone, but just seek you and just want to hear from you.

And so, Lord, help us. We need your help. I pray you'll give me the clarity here and the understanding to not say anything foolish but to preach and just to display this truth that I believe is here.

[11 : 45] And, God, may your people receive it and have ears to hear and then decide to act upon it. For Jesus' sake, for him, we pray these things. Amen.

All right. There's going to be three branches. The first will be the branch of the past. The branch of the past.

You say, what, yesterday? That's in the past. Well, no. We want to make this, build this a little more biblically, okay? So, not speaking yesterday. Not to you. Speaking of the past, I'm speaking of a time before you knew the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

And, again, I want to, this is Bible, so let me give it to you. Look at Ephesians chapter 2. And you can keep your place in John. We will come back to John. But look at Ephesians chapter 2.

And let's consider some things about the branch of the past. Your life in three limbs. In Ephesians 2, the very first verse, says, And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.

[12 : 58] You remember that first branch in John 15? It was an empty branch. It beareth not fruit. And this branch is dead. It needs to be made alive.

You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. In verse 2, it says, Wherein, notice, in time past, you walked according to the course of this world, according to the spirit, or the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

I'll move ahead to verse 11, where it continues the thought, saying that, Wherefore, remember that ye being in time past, Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that at that time, the past, at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, but now, notice that, we'll come back to that.

So there's a time past when you were without Christ, a time past when you were, we'll say, lost. You're on your own, you're dead in your sins, you're just fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, you have no hope.

You're on your way to hell. You don't even know it. You don't have peace in your heart, you don't have joy, you're a dead branch. You're a dead branch and you're empty.

[14 : 33] And so there's the dead branch. I want to say a few things here. Consider that this branch of the past, it's dead, it's empty. Now, dead branches can blend in, can't they?

They can look like the rest of the branches. And there's trees around this property that, there's this one back over here that has dead limbs on it. And I noticed it last year during the year, I saw it a few times and I thought, I'd better get those limbs off of that thing before they come down and do some damage or before this guy with his pool and blah, blah, blah.

And so I saw it, but then by the time I went to really look after getting up to that thing, the leaves were gone. I couldn't tell the difference. Which one's dead? Well, could go up there and guess, but what I thought I'd do, I'll wait till the leaves come back out.

because that'll tell me which ones are dead and which ones aren't. Pretty significant, huh? Pretty smart. I learned that one. There's a tree over here that has tons of limbs all over the thing.

And if you go up and look closely, you got to look close, you'll see that one's dead. That one's dead. You just whack at it. It snaps right off. But for a time, they can really blend in with the rest of the limbs.

[15 : 48] And that's the truth about a lost soul. They can blend in. They can sneak in. They can come in. They can sit down, look like the rest of us, look like the rest of you. They could blend in.

But inside could be just as dead and without Christ and no hope and on their way to hell as you were in time past. This branch is dead.

It can blend in. And something else about a dead branch or empty branch, you can hang on for a while. They can stick around for a little while. They don't last forever. But they can hang on for a while.

And you know what really reveals something? When the wind comes, when the storms come around Silmar, it starts snapping off the dead ones. It starts throwing them down into the flowers and down onto the street.

And I got to go clean up a bunch of little tiny dead little faggots all over the place. And gather them up and storm for a fire over here. The branch is dead.

[16 : 45] The branch of the past. This branch cannot bear fruit. Look at John 15 where we were. And we saw that two times in this passage. This branch cannot bear fruit.

In verse 4, Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except that abide in the vine, no more can ye. And in verse number 5, he said, For without me, ye can do nothing.

The dead branch, the branch of the past, cannot bear fruit. It can look like a fruit-bearing branch. It can have some decent qualities on the surface.

It can look nice. It can be moral. It can be friendly and smile. But inside, it's worthless to God. It's actually abominable to God.

What God sees is a dead branch. He sees emptiness. It's fit for the fire. And then this branch, you see in verse 6, this branch gets burned.

[17 : 45] This branch, at the end of it says, It's withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. The branch of the past. Now, doctrinally speaking, in this passage, the audience of Jesus Christ is not on this side of Calvary.

It's on the other side of Calvary. His teaching in this gospel, in this moment, matches a lot of what he said in Matthew to the Jews about the kingdom of heaven and him returning to earth and there being a gathering and there being a major bonfire taking place on the earth.

And this thought here in John 15, 6, doctrinally we'll find application there. But spiritually speaking, allowing this branch to represent a portion of your life without Christ to where it's just useless, it's dead, what else should be done with that life?

What else should you do with that portion of your life? Do you remember last Sunday? I am crucified with Christ. Do you know what Paul said to that whole life? I count it lost, count it but dung.

I'm crucified with Christ. I'm dead to the law. It's dead. There's nothing in that to hang on to or to talk about or to brag about or to glory in. So no, that branch needs to go.

[19 : 01] It gets burned. And that's what you should do with it. That's what you should do with your branch of the past where you don't have Jesus Christ. Burn it. Separate yourself from it.

Don't glory in it. Grow away from it. Let it be gone. We don't want to see it. I don't want to see it come in here. You shouldn't even want to have it be part of you anymore.

That branch of the past is fit for the fire. But we're not going to dwell on that branch because that's useless. It's dead. It's empty. In John 15, there's the second branch, the fruitful branch in verse 2.

It's a branch that beareth fruit. And we're going to call this the branch of the present. So consider in your three branches in your time of your life, past, present, the branch of the present representing the life since you've trusted Jesus Christ through this moment today.

Consider what we read in Ephesians. But now, there was time past without Christ, but now, remember in Ephesians he said the word, henceforth, you're going to serve Jesus Christ.

[20 : 06] From now, the time present when you have life, when you've been given life in your body. So, what does this branch look like? It may be 40 days old, it may be 40 years old, but what does it look like?

Well, if you're saved, if you're, as this passage says, if you're in Christ and abiding in me, then there ought to be fruit. And I'd venture to say that everybody here that has taken Christ as your Savior, I would venture to say that in every single one of you there is fruit.

fruit. Now, the fruit may not be what it should be, and the fruit may not be even evident. Maybe it's a little bit evident here today around us, but maybe out there it's not evident to anybody.

And maybe you're not displaying much fruit, but I believe if you are saved that there is fruit. Now, this is a difference from what typical big mouth preachers would say is if you don't have any fruit, bless God, you're not saved.

fruit and they demand that they see a change and a separation and a living for Christ or otherwise you're not saved. No, that's not necessarily true. I believe there's fruit. You might just have to look awful hard to see it.

[21 : 16] Probably, for most of you, the evidence that you're here this morning is, the fact that you're here this morning is evidence of salvation, of fruit, of wanting to be here, of knowing that this is where you belong for the glory of God.

Now, it's not proof that you're saved, but if you're saved, there ought to be fruit and I'd venture to say that somewhere there is fruit. If it's not evident big on the outside, I bet it's on the inside.

I bet it's something going on in there that is different from when you were lost. You've learned some things, you understand some things, you've read some things, there's been little changes, maybe not big, maybe they should be big, they ought to be getting bigger.

We'll get to that. But there probably is fruit somewhere. If there's no fruit, if there's no fruit to be seen, then you're just, if you're saved, this is what we're talking about, the branch of the present, then, well, you're just living in the old man.

You're living in the flesh, you're wasting your life and you will absolutely regret it. A saved man is expected to bear fruit. In the parable of Jesus Christ in Matthew 13, he said, they'll bring forth some 30, some 60, some 100 fold.

[22 : 30] there's going to be fruit. And as that fruit is brought forth, if you're abiding in Christ, it may not be the same for everybody, it may not be identical, but there will be visible fruit.

I want to say this as strong as I can, that this branch, if you're born again, you've taken Christ, this branch that we're talking about, the branch of the present, should not look like the branch of the past.

It should look different than the dead branch, the empty branch. This branch, sadly, for many lazy Christians, looks pretty close.

And for some, from a distance, they look the same. You'd have to get really close and up in there to say, oh no, this thing's pool on a little bit, it's flux, yeah, it's actually alive.

I thought I was dead, but it's not. Sadly, some of you, you have to get real close. You have to really analyze to find some evidence. And when you find it, praise the Lord, there's evidence.

[23 : 33] But this branch, sometimes, sadly, looks from a distance, it looks like the rest of them. There might be these tiny little buds that just want to get going.

And they want to start. But they're in such a cold environment, they're just not able to get going. They're not getting the nutrients. They're not getting what they need to grow.

They're not abiding in the vine like they ought to abide. Now just remember this, believe this, understand this branch ought to look different. Now spiritually speaking, if this branch is empty and it looks empty and it's never putting out any fruit, in 1 Corinthians 3 it describes a fire that tries every man's work of what sort it is.

And there are certain sorts that will be burned and will never show up for anything. And there'll be nothing to show for that whole portion of life where it's just burned up, wasted it, it's gone.

But in John 15 in verse 5 the Bible says, I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit.

[24 : 43] So godly fruit is an evidence that you're abiding in Jesus Christ in the present. Any fruit that shows up in your life that is godly is evidence that Jesus Christ is in you and fruit is coming forth.

keep your place but let's run a quick little chain here of references. You can scribble them down or just and listen but look at look at Romans 6.

I'm just going to move through a few Pauline epistles here they're real close together and this will be fast. Romans 6 and look at verse 22. Actually let me start man I like to go all the way through it but verse 20 we'll start in verse 20 it says for when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed for the end of those things is death.

That's all that was there a dead branch an empty branch but verse 22 but now being made free from sin and become servants to God ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life for the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life.

There's the fruit of holiness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Look at chapter 7 and verse number 4 wherefore my brethren ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ that ye should be married to another even to him who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

[26 : 23] Come to Philippians Philippians chapter 1 after Ephesians Philippians 1 verse 11 I like verse 10 that ye may approve things that are excellent that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ because he's the vine you need to abide in him and the fruits of righteousness will blossom and will bring forth on the branch the branch of the present being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ turn a few pages Colossians chapter 1 the next book Colossians 1 in verse number 10 Paul says that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God is there any doubt is there any doubt at all that abiding in Christ will yield fruit in your life what kind of fruit let's look back at this passage you know this one

Galatians 5 come back to Galatians 5 we're going to park here just for a moment because here's the passage on the fruit of the spirit and this is this is what comes forth from your life among other things but this one for sure these qualities start to show up in verse 22 it says but the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace long suffering gentleness goodness faith meekness temperance against such there is no law and they that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts if we live in the spirit let us also walk in the spirit like verse 16 walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh now in this passage there's godly fruit that appears and is displayed and exhibited in your life but in this passage there's also something else identified the works of the flesh there's the works of the flesh look back at chapter 5 and verse 19 now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these oh that god would give us fruit of the spirit but we don't want these to be manifest in our lives adultery fornication uncleanness lasciviousness idolatry witchcraft hatred variance emulations wrath strife seditions heresies that's not all envyings murders drunkenness revelings and such like the list goes on and on and on and those are things displayed all over the place let it not be once named among you as becometh saints let not that be what's displayed on your branch is these ungodly works of the flesh the branch of the present will display godly fruit if the branch is abiding in Christ fruit will grow and develop when you walk in the spirit and abide in Christ alright come back to

John 15 if you're abiding in Christ the right fruit appears but the mere appearance of that fruit of that godly fruit that's not the ultimate goal with the lord with the husband men he's looking for much fruit look at chapter 15 in verse 8 herein is my father glorified that ye bear much fruit that brings glory to god pleasure to the one that loved you and gave him son himself for you that ye bear much fruit and now god has a way of getting more out of that branch in the present the branch that is bearing fruit is bearing fruit that's good it's alive there's something good happening here the branch that is bearing fruit though often can grow kind of wild fruit i mean it can just take off growing in all kinds of directions it can do things you know what it needs it needs to be tamed it needs to be brought back to control it needs to focus its energy in specific places that are going to bring forth the fruits of righteousness you can see this this christian that's in christ abiding in christ and growing and bringing forth fruit but there's there's something god says about this guy this branch that says it needs some work it needs to be purged and so that's our third branch and you see that in verse two again every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it notice the end of the verse that it may that's future may bring forth more fruit there's a future branch here this is the branch of the future the branch that god sees or desires to make you today and to get you to that place to get you to bear much fruit he's going to have to purge you he's going to have to do something it pleases god understand this it pleases god to purge the branch in order to get more out of it this is his doing he's the husbandman he knows what he's doing and it pleases him to do this but the negative the purging process is painful the purging process can be

I should say it's it's a cutting away it's it could be sawing or snipping it could be little or big heavy in any way it's it's a removal it's an elimination things that are part of the branch this living this branch that's alive that's growing that's thriving things that are going on in this branch have to be removed and god sees fit to cut back this living organism while it's growing how can this be good we're growing we're we were dead that branch was dead now it's shooting forth and doing going to the sky toward the heavens just growing fast like a like a weed why would god cut that back why would he prune it why would he purge it he says god sees fit to cut it back when it's growing it's actually helping and you don't even understand it the harmful things and let me say this about this this is where i want you to really consider this this third branch this purged branch sometimes god doesn't even do the cutting meaning he puts things on your heart he reveals things to your mind he shows you something in your life and says that's got to go that is not for you that is not of me i don't want that in your life he'll let you do the purging sometimes because he makes the decision ultimately yours sometimes he comes in by his mercy and by his grace and we don't always see it that way because it hurts but he comes in and does some steps to us and some work to us that in the end we say praise the lord look what it did but sometimes he allows you to do it or he puts it on your heart and says you gonna let that go from me you want more fruit you've got some fruit that's great but i want more and i deserve more this third branch is the purged branch it is the branch that has the most potential of all it's probably though in many lives it's the least of all branches why do i say that because most christians will avoid this process at all costs they don't want to be hurt they don't want to feel pain they don't want to be purged they don't want to be cut back if they're growing leave me alone i'm growing but the husbandman comes in and says i want more fruit i want more and i know how to get more and so i need to do some purging to my branch but christians want to avoid this christians are content to bring forth something aren't you isn't it true that you're content to just bring forth some fruit that way you can't say that i didn't do anything for jesus that i wasted my whole life there's fruit i've done something i read my bible sometimes and i come to church sometimes maybe sometimes more than i don't i come to church and i do some things and i've handed out a tract before i've done some things i got some fruit to the glory of god and you're content and that's all you want to be because you don't want to be purged you don't want to have to deal with it you don't want to go through that process you don't want to surrender and submit yourself to the purging so you're content to bring forth something but what it costs to bring forth more scares you and the truth is you deem it unworthy because you're

not interested in going through that it's unnecessary so you abide in christ a little and the evidence is you bring forth fruit a little but praise the lord right you're abiding in christ a little bit and just it's the natural thing you're in christ and the nourishment the truth comes through and it brings it bears some fruit and so on that branch there's some fruit but god wants more why should god be satisfied with a little fruit just because we are why should he when he laid down his life and paid for all of your sins you say pastor take it easy on us come on i'm bringing forth fruit i'm doing something i'm doing more than i ever did before that's great you know what that means you are primed for a purging you're right where you need to be why would god do that to you because he wants more and i said it he desires he deserves more and on top of that we should all desire that he gets more so we want you to offer yourself to him to take your hands off and say do what you want to do cut what you want to cut take it all back take it all back if that's what you want before the purging there's a little fruit there but the branch is just growing wild it's alive but it's untamed and it needs the hand of the husbandman it needs attention but after the purging christian listen branch of the future is stronger than ever before it thickens up it beefs up now the nourishment that it has it channels all of its energy into what it's supposed to be doing bringing forth much fruit fruit the purging process is scary it can be painful but it brings forth fruit and that's what you're here for if we could look and picture this church as a vineyard and we could see the lines of trees and as jesus christ walks through his vineyard and he looks for fruit he might see some fruit on that one and he might do some work to that one he might see that one's just full of nothing just looks like dead branches everywhere you know there's two times in the gospels that i these two that are right on the top of my head where christ is seeking fruit one of them literally happened he's walking and he sees a fig tree and he went to it seeking fruit and found none and so he cursed that fig tree and it withered up and it's done and the disciples were amazed another time he gives a parable in luke 13 that he says a certain man had a vineyard and he planted in his vineyard a fig tree and he came i forget the wording but he came and sought fruit and found none and you know what his words were cut it down why cumber it hit the ground get this tree out of here and the you know the man there no no let's let's work with it let's try it let's dig about it let's dung it let's try to get something going here because he didn't want to cut it down we're walking through the vineyard with

[40 : 10] Jesus Christ looking for fruit we see three branches on each tree the branch of the past the branch of the present the branch of the future we're looking at your life is there anything on these three branches anything at all any evidence that you're connected to Jesus Christ that he is alive in you and you're in him and should there be more should there be more will you submit yourself to the purging process so that there can be more has God laid something on your heart this morning has he already done that and now he's kind of bringing it back to the surface saying I'm talking to you about this are you willing to lay it back and say God I'm yours I just want to please you take everything away that you want to take away and I just want to please you you ever hear that song I just want to please the

Lord be in his will in every way to be lost in his presence and found in his likeness to hear him say well done someday I just want to please the Lord I want to bring forth fruit let's pray together father Lord I care about the lives of the people here I care about them because you care about them and I don't want to see them bring forth fruit that I can say look look what I did look what my preaching does but I want you to be glorified and I know you care more about them than I do and I know it's your will that we each submit to you and are willing to bring forth and to be cut back and to allow your hand to work on us to shape us and to prepare us to every good work I pray that you'll find submissive hearts in this place and willing minds that want to grow and want to please you and want to love you

God if there's dead branches in here reveal that as well if there's branches that are alive that don't look like much of anything God convict or inflict burn our hearts convict our hearts take away peace give us that gut feeling let us know that you're dealing with us and help us surrender with your heads bowed this morning for a moment meditate on these things what's on those branches you wake up today is there fruit on the way does the present branch resemble the past is that all it is going to be for you just just dead fruitless how long are you going to continue like that how long are you going to be okay with that you're going to waste a day a month you're going to waste a year a season of your life just looking like you're as dead as the lost are you willing to surrender to the

Lord that thing that's keeping you from bringing forth more fruit you're willing to lay it on the altar and allow him to purge it away that's the question if the Lord's putting something on your mind on your heart don't be ashamed don't be afraid to do business with him this morning now's the time I invite you to just take a step out of your pew and come up here and not to make it public but to show you're serious and unashamed and bow before your Savior and offer it up on the altar if the Lord's dealing with your heart about anything in this topic now's the time to respond we're going to sing a hymn as we sing invite you to come talk to the Lord whatever it is it could be private between you and him if you want to talk to me afterwards I'm happy to do that as well but let's bring forth fruit fruit that can glorify our father let's all stand turn to page 100 you