

Producing Fruit

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[0 : 00] My introduction is this question, would you like to live a fruitful life?! A very simple question, but actually a very searching question.

! If you're a young man, I could ask you, would you like to live a fruitful life?

As you look about your life before you, is it not the most important thing to you? I would like to live a life that counts for something.

I don't know how you would measure that, what you think that would look like. Whether you think a life that counts for something would be a life at the end of which you could say, I have earned this vast amount of money.

That means my life counts for something and is fruitful. Whether you might say, I have lived my life, here are my children.

[1 : 07] This one has got a PhD in something, that one's got a Masters in something else. This one has got two PhDs but struggles with their sense of worth.

That's sort of like the Christmas letter thing. Whether you feel that would be an achievement, a life worth living. What would make a life fruitful?

And young women, as you look out into life, what do you think would be what you want to achieve in life? What would be a fruitful life for you?

What would be fulfilment and worthwhileness? Would you say that the key to that would be finding a nice husband?

Or would you say that the key to that would be having a really influential and powerful career? Or would you say that the key to that would be having a nice family?

[2 : 09] And when you get older and you look back, do you say, are you in a position to say, I have had a fruitful life?

Or would you be in a position of saying, when I get to whatever age, would I look back and say, if only I... And it's relatively easy to pose it as a question like this.

But actually, it comes very deep to the heart of what makes each of us tick. We don't want to come to the end of our lives and feel that we've just been a failure and achieved nothing.

Jesus would agree on the importance of a fruitful life. And he says that the key to this is actually very simple.

The key to a fruitful life is him. Now that answer is both remarkably simple and remarkably profound.

[3 : 21] It's remarkably easy and remarkably difficult. It's remarkably comforting and it's also remarkably threatening. It's all of those things.

But Jesus says the key to a fruitful life is him. And that's what we're going to look at this morning. So you're in John chapter 15.

And Jesus says, I am the true vine. My father is the gardener. He says, I am the vine. Verse 5. You are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him.

He will bear much fruit. That's what Jesus says. That's what we're going to look at. The subject of the verses is really worked on a very simple idea.

Jesus is like the vine. So I copied a picture of the vine. A gnarly old vine. Jesus is like the stock of the vine.

[4 : 38] The branches are like the disciples. Or the disciples are like branches. And the end result. As with blackberries. As with any other fruit thing.

Is that you produce fruit. That's the whole thing. That's what this passage is all about. And Jesus promises fruitfulness. To those who remain in him.

I am the vine. You are the branches. If anyone remains in me. And I in him. He will bear much fruit. So just notice what he's saying.

He uses one of the favourite words in John. To abide. To remain. To stay. He doesn't say fruitfulness to people who used to.

It's a present tense. It's saying this is how you live. And he links it with love. And obedience. And listening. And this slide is in the wrong place.

[5 : 39] Which is why I was puzzled by it. And that's the end. Right. I was puzzled by why that one came up. I'll have to remember to come back to that in the end.

So let's put it into context first. Fruit in the Bible. Fruit in the Bible. Did Adam and Eve have anything to do with fruit? What were they told?

Be fruitful. Be fruitful and multiply. So right at the beginning of the Bible. God was saying. I want you human race to be fruitful.

Did they also have a problem with fruit? Fruit. I'm quite sleepy this morning. Did they have a problem with fruit?

Yes. They did. Fruit turned out to be problematic. Remember they ate the fruit. The wrong fruit. The fruit they shouldn't have touched. And they were sort of. It was sort of a bid for independence.

[6 : 39] Wasn't it? God said you can eat all the fruit. But not that. And they thought. Well no. We'll eat that. So they were functioning independently. Of what God had said.

Noah. You know what God said to Noah. At the end of the thing with the ark. Be fruitful. An increase in numbers in Genesis.

So Noah was told to be fruitful. Did he have a problem with fruit? Was there anything problematic? In Noah's life about fruit? Those of you know your Bible? Yes. What was the problem with the fruit? He had some fermented fruit. And drank it and got drunk. Yes. So fruit isn't always a straightforward thing. Abraham. The promise to Abraham.

I will make you very fruitful. And so far. All of these verses. The fruitfulness. Is in terms of what? We haven't got a quiet congregation this morning.

[7 : 45] We're so well behaved. We don't want to answer a question. The fruitfulness was in terms of having children. Wasn't it? Multiplying numbers. Be fruitful and multiply.

But that's not the only sort of fruit that God is interested in. If we go forward in the Bible to Israel. Deuteronomy 28.

This is also about fruit. But it links it to the obedience of. Or disobedience of the people. And in ancient Israel. There was a sort of linkage.

Between Deuteronomy 28 verse 1. If you fully obey the Lord. Then you are fruitful. And if you disobey the Lord. Then it affects your fruitfulness.

So if you are obedient. Deuteronomy 28 verse 11. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity. In the fruit of your womb. The young of your livestock. The crops of your crown.

[8 : 45] In the land he swore to your forefathers to give you. So actually there's a linkage. It isn't just numbers and crops. It's linked quite early on in the Bible.

To the moral and spiritual health of the nation. And as we read through the Bible. Israel is spoken of a number of times.

As being a vineyard or a vine. Hence the picture of the vine. And as Jamie read to us. In Isaiah chapter 5. Which you might just like to flip back to.

God. There's a sort of song about Israel. A song. It's sort of a metaphor. Of ancient Israel. As being a vineyard.

A field full of vines. I will sing for the one I love. A song about his vineyard. My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hill. And he tends this vineyard.

[9 : 43] And looks for. As all fruit growers do. Fruit. He looked for fruit. But the only fruit.

That he could find. Was in verse 2. Which is. Bad fruit. Am I right? Isaiah 5 verse 2. I looked for grapes. Verse 4.

But only bad grapes. And in verse 7. It's spelled out in terms of the life of Israel. I looked for justice. But saw bloodshed. I looked for righteousness. But heard cries of distress. Yes. So.

There in the history of ancient Israel. God. Had his people. Planted them. Looked after them. And expected and wanted fruit.

[10 : 45] Do you remember Jesus entering Jerusalem? Do you remember what he did? He did a very strange thing. On his way there. To do with a tree. Does anybody remember what he did?

I know. If you don't know your Bible. It's a bit of an unfair question. But I know. There are a number of people here. Who do know their Bible. And they can tell us. What did Jesus do. When he was entering Jerusalem. With a tree. It was a fig tree.

Rather than a vine. Yeah. Yeah. What did he do. Before he got crossed with it. He did something. Before he got crossed with it. He looked for fruit.

Yeah. Yeah. I just wanted to spell that out. He looked for fruit. And there was no fruit. And it seems to me. That's sort of a parable really. Of what God has been doing. All the way through the Bible. And what Jesus was particularly doing. When he went to Jerusalem. He said. Where is the fruit? Where is the fruit? Where is the. The. Not just the numbers of people.

[11:43] But the. The spiritual. And moral quality. The righteousness. And justice. The kindness. And goodness. Where are those things? And Jesus. And Jesus looked for fruit. And.

When he looked at the. Nation of Israel. He was. Cross. Because he found. None. And he was looking. But there was none there.

He looked for. Things like. Righteousness. Love for God. Obedience to his word. Prayer. Faith. And.

If you look at the story. Of Jesus going to Jerusalem. In those last. Last days. All the conversations. Are sort of probing. Are you people of faith?

Are you people who take God seriously? Are people of prayer? And. And Jesus. Finds. Pretty much. Absolute blank. All the way through. Let's put.

[12:44] John 15. Into context. For. The people. Who are walking with him. In the Bible.

This statement. About fruit. As we shall see. Is really. A key statement. But just think of the people. That Jesus was talking to. In John 15. He had said.

In the previous verse. Come now. Let us leave. And we could imagine. Jesus going along. To the. Perhaps the garden of Gethsemane. Walking along. With his disciples. With him.

And as they're going through. He says. See all these trees here. Well. I'm. The true vine. I'm the vine.

I am the vine. It's me. That produces. The fruit. And his. His. His. His. His. His. You're fruitful.

[13:39] Isn't it? And Jesus says. No. Belonging to a particular. Ethnic. Group. Does not guarantee. That you're fruitful. And his disciples.

Might have been thinking. Well. God has given us. All sorts of rituals to do. Like circumcision. And certain food to avoid. And certain times that we pray. And certain times that we don't pray.

Surely that's going to make us fruitful. And Jesus says. No. No. Religions. That based on doing a certain thing. At a certain time. Standing up.

And kneeling down. And pointing in a certain direction. As if that's the thing. That makes you fruitful. Jesus says. No. It doesn't. Or they might have said.

Well. We've got the best moral code. In the world. We've got the law of Moses. And surely that is the key. For us to be fruitful.

[14:34] And Jesus says. No. Jesus says. I am the vine. You need to belong to me. To be fruitful.

And he says it in words like this. Apart from me. You can do nothing. That's what he says in verse 5. So Jesus is pointing out.

That it's him. Who makes people fruitful. And just to put this into the context. Of the flow of these verses.

Of these chapters. That we've been looking at. This is the last things. That Jesus says to his disciples. Before he goes away. And they're very shocked to know. That he is going away. But. As you'll know.

If you can remember. Back to when we were looking at this. A few weeks ago. The whole point of these chapters. Is to say. Even without Jesus being physically present.

[15:30] It is possible. To live the Christian life. It can be done. And Jesus gives a sort of weaving. Of different themes together.

And you can say. The themes are something like. By the living power. Of the divine person.

Of the Holy Spirit. The life of God. Inside people. By the words of Jesus. By keeping the words of Jesus. The words of Jesus seem to have.

A particular significance for Jesus. In terms of relating. To him. By walking in obedience. By keeping his word. That crops up several times.

In these chapters. By prayer. Praying to the Father. In the name of Jesus. And by loving one another. And these are the.

[16:25] These are the strands. That crop up through. Which you might remember. And he says that. There will be. There will actually be people. Who come to faith. In the future.

Even through. You guys. And your testimony. There will be fruit. In terms of conversions. That's how it fits in. With the. The chapter that we've been. The chapters that we've been looking at. So. Coming specifically to chapter 15. Now let's stop for a minute. Are you very hot? Not now. Is there a possibility.

Of opening a door in that direction. Get a little bit of ventilation. And if we open that door. We get. Extra sound effects. So. Right.

Looking at John chapter 15. I'm trying to put it in context. And we'll look at the. The way the verses work. It's like a tapestry.

[17:28] With threads that run through. And pop up. And then pop down. And pop up again. Or it's a little bit like. A sliding block puzzle. I tried to find a picture. Of a sliding block puzzle.

Can you see that one? That one's. From. Boomcock.co.com. No. Dot com. It's a Chinese. Vendor. Of. Puzzles and novelties. You can obtain one of those. For \$7.95. If you look. The sliding block puzzle. On Google. You'll get one. It's got.

It's got little. Um. Wooden. Squares. With things written. In Chinese characters. I don't hope they're nothing rude. I mean. I don't know. What's written there.

Anyway. The puzzle is. You slide these along. And this gentleman. This gentleman. Could be slid down. Next to that gentleman. Or that gentleman. Could be slid up. Next to that gentleman.

[18:20] Or this. Whatever that is. It might be a lady. It might be a lady. Can be slid down. Next to that lady. And you can slide them all around. And presumably. The idea is to make some sort of. Let's use some sort of. Goal.

Arranging them. You can slide them all around. And. I think Jesus takes. A number of things. Sort of slides them around. Puts this one. Next to that one. And then moves that one. Next to that one. Then moves that one. Next to that one. And that's the way. He teaches. It's not a one. Two. Three. Four. Five. Five. Thing. Like I would like to do. But he. He takes different combinations. Of thoughts. The basic. Arrangement is. As we've said. The vine is Jesus. The branches are the disciples. Put some leaves on. Because he needs some leaves. And fruit production is what it's all about. And there's some grapes. And he slides around and adds in. And refers to other topics. Like the whole business of remaining. The role of the father.

[19:19] As the farmer. The idea of pruning. The question of what happens. If there is no fruit. And the question of how you get more fruit.

So that's the way it works. Let's look at the first four verses then. First four verses say. Jesus says. I am the true vine.

My father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me. That bears no fruit. While every branch that does bear fruit.

He prunes. So that it will be even more fruitful. So he sets it up this way. Jesus is the vine. The disciples of the branches.

We're talking about producing fruit. And the thing he adds in this time is. The father is the farmer. Farmer. The Greek word for farmer is Georgios.

[20:14] Which is why so many Greek people are called George. Because George is the name which means farmer. And it says. My father is the Georgios. He's George.

It's a funny thing to say isn't it? My father is the gardener. Now what does the father do? The vine picture is to do with being joined intimately on the inside.

Isn't it? To the plant. And what the father is doing is working on the outside. And what he's doing is. Well what Jesus comes straight in at this point.

He says. He cuts off every branch in me. That bears no fruit. So that's stern. Do you not think that that's stern?

He looks at the lives of people. And says. If there's no fruit there. Finish. Rubbish. Cut it off.

[21:15] I mean that's terribly stern. Makes me think. Is there fruit in my life? This is where Jesus comes straight in on that. He says. If there's a branch that's just a dead.

Dead branch. It isn't really any living connection. That's cut off. And it's. Well it just says cut off.

He'll come back to that in a minute. And say some more about it. So this tells us that fruit. Is indispensable. So if there is no fruit in a person's life.

Then that means any thought of them being a living, growing Christian is complete nonsense. Complete nonsense. Don't belong to Jesus at all.

Nothing to do with him. You might like to look at your life. And tremble a little bit. Fruit is indispensable.

[22 : 15] It's stern judgment. On. Professing Christianity. On. Professing Christianity. That's people who say they're Christians. But in fact have no Christian life in them.

It's all on the outside. There's no real heart. Joining with Jesus. And Jesus. Comes straight in on this very stern thing. He cuts off.

Every branch in me. That bears no fruit. Fruit. And. In. At the time that Jesus said. This may be. This was a threat against ancient Israel.

You have been the favored people. All these hundreds and thousands of years. And there's still no fruit. And. Things are going to change so radically.

That you're going to be cut off. Certainly a warning today. To people who are. Believers. Believers. In. Name. Only. What does the father do.

[23 : 19] To that which is fruitful. It says. Every branch in me. That does bear fruit. He prunes. So that it will be. Even more fruitful.

Now there's a pun. A play on words. Which is difficult to. Express in English. Because. Clean. And prune. Are the same word.

In Greek. So. When it says. He prunes. So that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean. Because of the word. I have spoken to you. It is. Making it up.

Upon there. Because it's the same. Same word. And what. What. This says. The father will do. Is to. To clean. To prune. To trim.

To tend. Every. Branch. That is fruitful. So that it has. Greater. Fruitfulness. So. I've drawn up. Pruning.

[24 : 13] Pruning. Scissors. Now. I'm not an expert. On. Pruning. Things. I have. To be. Maria's. Cousin. Has a vineyard. In. In. Cyprus. And we were.

Privileged. To want to go and spend. A week there. Out of season. A couple of years ago. And. I'm not an expert.

But I. Would imagine. That if. I were. A. A vine tree. And some. Farmer. Came along. With a hacksaw.

And started. Cutting bits. Off me. Which is what they do. They cut them right back. I would not find that. Very. Pleasant. You agree? I don't know. Pruning.

Business. I said. What are you doing? That's very harsh. I like that bit. But he. He prunes it. And cuts it away. And Jesus.

[25 : 11] I think. Is telling us. That. The. Part of the. Loving. Father's work. For the dear. Children. That he loves. Part of the. Father's work. On the vine. That he tends. Is to prune it. And pruning. Might involve.

Loss. And hurt. And tough things. But the father. Will do that. And what's the aim?

To produce. More fruit. The Bible. The Bible. Isn't the only place. That the Bible. Says such a thing. The Bible.

Says something very similar. In Hebrews. Chapter 12. Where it says to us. About the father's. Discipline. Endure hardship. As discipline.

[26 : 07] God is treating you. As sons. The Lord. Disciplines. Those he loves. And chastises. Everyone. He accepts. As a son. It goes on to say.

No discipline. Seems pleasant at the time. But painful. Later on however. It produces a harvest. Of righteousness. And peace. For those who have been. Trained by it. And I point out.

That although this is. A rather. Solemn thing to say. It's actually very helpful. Because. As Christians. We sometimes think. God is making my life.

Very tough at the moment. Perhaps some of you. Have experienced. Illness. Or disappointment. Or trial. Or setbacks.

Or perhaps you think about. How you were treated. In your early life. And you think. That was pretty harsh. Bear in mind. That God uses.

[27 : 06] Tough things. To produce more fruit. That's what it says. It's like a. Like a farmer. Pruning. So that.

The vine will grow. Better. Stronger. More fruitfully. Maybe that's a helpful thought. To reassess your life. Maybe you're thinking. Ungratefully. God's been really. Unhelpful to me. These past few months. Well actually. It might be the other way around. The toughness. Might be God. Being really helpful. To you. Because. He wants. He's seen the fruit. In your life. And he wants more of that. And the way he goes about it. Is to prove you. The other thing. That is pointed out. In these first few verses. Or one of the other things. Is the importance. Of. Remaining. Abiding. Staying.

[28 : 03] In Jesus. And. Jesus says in verse 4. Remain in me. And I. Remain in you. Whether it's a promise. I will remain in you. Or whether it's a statement.

Remain in me. And I remain in you. He's saying. There's a. A. A. A. A. A. A. A. A. Lunch. Can bear fruit. By itself. It must. Remain in the vine. Neither can you. Bear fruit. Unless. You. Remain in me. And he just.

Says it. Time and time again. Just keeps. Hammering. at that. It is absolutely necessary if you're going to be a fruitful Christian to remain in Jesus. For him to remain in you, to be connected to him at every point, in every way.

You cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me. Jesus is going to go on to say, apart from me, you can do nothing. So if you were to say how much of my life do I need to be connected to Jesus, and how much of it can I just manage on my own?

[29 : 21] The answer is, you can do nothing on your own. The whole thing has to be connected to Jesus. That's what he's saying, isn't it? You can do nothing on your own. You can say, I need Jesus' help my family life, but my work life just runs on its own.

And Jesus says, actually you can't do your work life without me either. My social life I can manage on my own. I just need Jesus for my prayers. And Jesus says, well your social life, you need me in that.

Without me you can do nothing. There's no department that works by itself. And Jesus keeps on coming back to this. He's not saying to attain something.

He's saying to stay where we've been put by God's grace. We didn't get ourselves into Jesus. Jesus brought us into himself.

And he says, just stay there. In some ways that's terribly simple. I mean, what could be simpler than just staying where you put? I mean, there's no effort. You're sitting in a chair.

[30 : 27] In a moment you'll probably get a bit want to walk around. But in a moment, what's the problem? Just stay where you put. And he says, abide in me. Just stay in me.

And I could ask, how do you characteristically live your Christian life at the moment? Do you characteristically live your life abiding in Jesus? I think Francis Schaeffer said, moment by moment dependence on Jesus Christ.

Words to that effect. I mean, what a wonderful summary of a Christian life. Moment by moment depending on Jesus Christ. Let's look at the next few verses.

Verses 5 to 8. So, you know, sliding block and tapestry and things get a lot of repetition. But here we go. Same idea. I am the vine.

You are the branches. And we're looking for fruit. So this time he says, if someone remains in me and I in him, he or she will bear much fruit.

[31 : 33] So this sort of blocks all the way around. So fruit is essential. It says, if you abide in me, fruit is unstoppable. That's really encouraging, isn't it?

Isn't it? I think it is. If you abide in me, you will produce fruit. So simple. But, yeah, so profound. I think encouraging. That's what Jesus says. If someone remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit. That Jesus sort of puts it the other way around now.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. Let's just look at some of the sort of fruit that the Bible says will be produced. Galatians 5.22, for example.

So this is a different writer, but he uses the same picture. This is the Apostle Paul, and he talks about fruit, and he says, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

[32 : 49] And he tells us that if we walk in the Spirit, we will produce this sort of fruit. So I think there's something rather beautiful there, and in a sense, something quite spiritually simple.

You stay in Jesus, you'll be fruitful. You're a young mum, you stay in Jesus, you'll be fruitful. You're an older gentleman, you stay in Jesus, you'll be fruitful.

You're a young man, you stay in Jesus, you'll be fruitful. Etc. And then Jesus turns it around the other way, and says, if we, if you take the opposite situation, if anyone does not remain in me, and we've already been told that means there's no fruit, if anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers, such branches are picked up and thrown into the fire and burned.

So there's a dead branch, gets thrown into the fire and burned. And what could be a starker picture than that? The picture of producing fruit is very beautiful. But the alternative of not producing fruit, not remaining in Jesus, is frightening.

If you don't remain in me, you dry up, you'll wither away, and God will chuck you onto his bonfire. I think that's really frightening.

[34 : 15] James says something quite similar. He says, if you say you have faith, but it doesn't change your life, then that's dead.

So let me say to you, in case you're in any doubt at all, Christianity is not just saying, I love Jesus, and then living your life as if it was complete, as if you were no different from anyone else.

If you say you have faith, then your life must change. There must be some fruit, or God will say, that was nothing.

What was all that about? Just dead. Withered, thrown into the fire, and vermed. What else does Jesus say?

He says in verse 8, no, have I got to that? Verse 8, this is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit.

[35 : 26] So he sort of brings another block into his sort of sliding picture. Here's the block about glory. God is glorified when we produce fruit.

Isn't that a brilliant thing? When God makes us into people who are thankful, and kind, and thoughtful, and loving, it reflects on God and says, what a great God he is.

That would be a wonderful thing to bring glory to God. To have lives that bring glory to God. and people will say, what a great God he must be to take those funny old people there in Brighton Hove and make them into thankful, kind, loving, believing, praying people.

What a great God can do that. Another thing that is in these verses is in verse 8. This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit.

What's the next word in your Bible? This is chapter 15, verse 8. What's the next word? Showing? Anybody got anything different from showing? 15, 8.

[36 : 44] I've got showing yourselves to be my disciples. Okay, I did my homework on this. The word showing is not there. It just says being disciples.

In other words, fruit doesn't, it does show you you're a disciple, but it's just what disciples are. It's being a disciple. You bear fruit, being a disciple.

That's what disciples do. What do vacuum cleaners do? They suck up dirt. That's what the vacuum cleaners do. What do kettles do? They boil water. What do disciples do?

They produce fruit. That's what a disciple is. That's what disciples do. They produce fruit. Let's pick up on one or two of the other blocks before we...

We'll carry on with this this evening. Let's pick up with one or two of these blocks that Jesus is sliding around. So let's pick up on the remaining or abiding idea.

[37 : 50] This is to do with being connected into, isn't it? Branches, vine, connected in. Now, how are we to understand that? So the first thing I would like to say is that this is not in a nature...

Jesus isn't saying you've got to attain something new. He's saying you've got to stick with something that's given. It's a given, isn't it? Do you understand the idea?

It's a given that branches are attached to vines. You don't take a vine and then glue the branches in later. It's a given of how a vine is. I know you can tweak that thought.

But Jesus is not telling us to go for a new situation but stay in a situation that's already been given to us.

In fact, the only explanation he gives of how they came into this situation is in verse 16 where he says, you did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.

[38 : 55] Well, that's not the only but that is one reference in this passage about how you've got to be where you are. I chose you to be there. And if you are not in the vine, if you've come on this morning, I'm not a Christian, how could I become a Christian?

How could I get involved with Jesus? And you come up against this verse which says, Jesus chooses who are in him. And that's a very baffling verse to come up against.

And I don't blame you for being baffled, it baffles me. But what I would say is, what to do with that bafflement is to say, Jesus, I really want to be joined to you.

And you say that you choose who is and who isn't. And I don't understand that. But would you do for me what you've done for these other people? And I understand it's in your hands to do this. Would you do this for me? And really pray that earnestly. So it's not attaining something new but sticking with a given. And it's got two sides to it.

[40 : 02] You are in me and I am in you. So that's a rather wonderful thought, isn't it? That it isn't just that we are stuck into Christ, that Christ lives in us.

Such an amazing thought. I think it's perhaps rather stretching even to think that, that God would come to live in my life.

That's what Jesus says. And he also links it with his words, verse 7. So I'm just picking up the threads of this abiding thing. Verse 7, if you remain in me and my words remain in you.

So he links it up with his words. He also says you're already clean by the word I've spoken to you, which is a verse I've been puzzling over. I don't understand it so I'm not saying anything about that. But the words is important. He does say, abiding in me links with my words abiding in you. And that's something that we could ponder, isn't it?

[41 : 11] Are the words of Jesus living in me, shaping my mind, shaping my thoughts, shaping what I desire, shaping what I do?

Jesus' words, it seems here, are a powerful extension of himself. He lives in us as and when his words live in us.

And he also links it with prayer. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will happen for you.

It will be given to you. So let's link in, here's another block in this sort of sliding block puzzle, I don't have mentioned here, but it's an important block, prayer. How can I abide in Jesus?

What would that be like? Well, it would be thinking about his words and obeying them, it would be coming back to him in prayer and being a person of prayer.

[42 : 12] And Jesus also links it with obeying his commands in verse 10, or keeping his commands. And the command that he emphasizes is in verse 17, and is it in verse 12 as well, to love one another.

Well, that's something that we can actively be doing, isn't it? We can stay in Jesus by keeping his commands and loving one another. So, my final slide put towards the beginning by mistake.

That's as far as we're going to go this morning. What a remarkable thing Jesus says. It's very simple, but it's very profound. It's very comforting, but it's very threatening.

It's as simple as staying where we are, and yet it doesn't mean that we just do nothing. It means that his words abide in us. We keep his commands.

We walk in his love. We are people of prayer. All those things. We'll look at a bit more of that this evening. But let me leave you with this question. Do you want to live that way? Is that what you want to be?

[43 : 35] Would you say from this morning, Jesus told me to remain in him, and that's exactly what I want to do. Lord, help me to remain in you. And thank you, Lord, for this promise that if I do that, I will not look back later in life and say it only, but I will say thank you, Lord, for the fruit that you produced in my life.

Let's sing together.