

Fruitfulness

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[0:00] Music Tonight I want to talk on the subject of how can we live an effective and fruitful Christian life.

! It's something I trust that we all want to have. To live an effective and fruitful Christian life. It's God's desire that we be that.

It's God's desire that we be fruitful for Him. In Colossians 1 verse 10 we read as Paul prayed for the Colossians he says, Verse 10, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Paul prayed that the people here would walk worthy of the Lord, that they'd be fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God.

God's desire is that we be fruitful. Firstly, what kind of fruit is good fruit? What kind of fruit is good fruit? Galatians 5 is a familiar one, isn't it?

[1:22] It tells us of the fruit of the Spirit. If you'd like to turn to Galatians 5 verse 22.

And it's interesting, the fruit singular. So, some have elaborated that the fruit could be love. Love in all of these various manifestations.

The fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5 verse 22 it says, 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. The fruit of the Spirit. Precious fruit.

God glorifying fruit. Fruit that we should aspire to have. The fruit of the Spirit. Is it evident in our lives? God wants it to be. He desires this fruit.

[2:28] Paul in the context tells of the works of the flesh. Which are contrary. Opposite to the fruit of the Spirit. In the verses prior. The works of the flesh. The works of the fallen nature.

They are opposed to the new creation. That is the new man. He wants us to be in Christ Jesus. And there is this warfare if you like between the flesh and the Spirit.

The works of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit. The flesh lives according to its own energy. The Spirit produces fruit. According to the working of God.

The fruit of the Spirit. Is the character of Christ. These are wholesome, godly, desirable things. Things of character. And of life.

The life of God. The life of Christ. And the fruit of the Spirit. It comes from a chaste heart. It comes from the Spirit of God. It is the fruit of the Spirit.

[3:29] The fruit of the Spirit. Is something that glorifies God. And it is a process for us sometimes. Developing this fruit. As God works daily in us. Drawing from us this fruit.

In the believers life. And the fruit is produced in us by the Holy Spirit. We see there is nine here. Nine listed. Nine fruit. Love. Love. Love.

God's Spirit produces love. Love towards God. Love towards one another. Love towards our brothers and sisters in Christ. The love of the brethren.

And the love towards our God and Saviour. Joy. God's Spirit creates joy. In our fellowship. In our fellowship with one another. In our fellowship with the Father. In our fellowship with the Father.

In 1 John 1 verses 3. It goes in part from verse 3. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

[4:26] And these things rightly unto you. That your joy may be full. Your joy may be full. If you have that fellowship. With the Father. With his Son. With his people.

There's a fellowship there. There's joy there. 1 Peter 1 through 8 through 9. It says of our Lord. Who having not seen. Ye love. In whom though now.

Yet believing. Sorry. In whom now. You see him not. Yet believing. Ye rejoice. With joy.

Unspeakable. And full of glory.

Receiving the end. Of your faith. Even the salvation. Of your souls. It says of Christ. Whom having not seen. Ye love. Yet believing. Ye rejoice. With joy.

Unspeakable. And full of glory. Joy. Peace. Peace. The peace that God gives to us. Is peace with God.

[5:23] In Romans 5 verse 1. It says. Therefore. Being justified. By faith. We have. Peace with God. Through. Our Lord Jesus Christ. As we trust him.

As we have faith towards Christ. We make justified. We declare just. Declared. Legally. Free from guilt. Declared just. Given peace with God.

Given peace with God. There's a wonderful transaction. A covenant. Made. Of peace with God.

Through Christ. Through faith. Peace.

With God. And also. Peace. Of God. The peace. Of God. In Philippians 4. From verses 6 through 7. It says. Be careful.

Or in other words. Don't be full of care. For nothing. But in everything. By prayer. And supplication. Make your requests. Make known. Unto God. And the peace of God.

[6:18] Which passeth. All understanding. Shall keep your hearts and minds. Through Christ Jesus. In other words. Don't worry about anything. Pray about everything. And the peace of God. Is going to keep your hearts and minds. Through Christ Jesus. The peace of God.

That passeth all understanding. Peace. It means a working steadily. Without giving up. God gives us longsuffering. You know. Asked my wife about longsuffering. She's had a bit of a bit of a bit. Longsuffering. It means a lot of patience.

To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those. To some of those.

To some of those. giving up god gives us long suffering you know ask my wife about long suffering she's had a bit of it you know long suffering it's about patience isn't it it's about perseverance it's about forbearance it's about working through those times that we might feel like quitting there's a patience there's a long suffering there gentleness gentleness one of the works of god's spirit is gentleness you know was it moises he says that his gentleness made him great there's a gentleness there's a kindness that god gives to his children that we are gracious towards others in our lives gentleness it's a fruit of the spirit sometimes we lack that very much so don't we i know in we're inclined at times to lack gentleness and we can be so right that we can be hard-nosed about it but we can be right and still be gentle with others the goodness is another fruit goodness god's spirit produces goodness in us goodness in other words doing what is right and honoring to god goodness faith god produces faith and faithfulness by his spirit meekness god grants us meekness and tenderness that we can be meek and tender considerate of one another and lastly temperance temperance god's spirit gives us temperance in other words self-control he helps us to have that strength that holds our tongue and holds our course temperance self-control you know there's some well-meaning christians that lack self-control they lack that they lack that temperance and they lack that soberness if you like but god's spirit gives us these nine qualities nine fruit god's will is that his children demonstrate these character traits these wonderful qualities of the christian life fruit and god's spirit will produce that through his control and friends we live in our world today when we see the opposite of all of those nine you think of what is the opposite word for each of those things and our world is filled with them isn't it and we see the works of the flesh too in the same context we live in a world full of god haters god haters prideful god haters and there's a lot of the works of the flesh going on all around us bad kinds of fruit and it's interesting that when our lord spoke of fruit that he scrutinized the pharisees and he said by their fruits you shall know them the ones that are not genuine you will notice that because of the fruit that comes out of their lives by their fruit you shall know them whether it's those that are of god or those that are not of god we see the fruit it will show where they stand and of course we know an apple tree produces apples you know a christian filled with god's spirit will produce the fruit of god's spirit it's a natural consequence of his spirit at work so we see of this time of the end we see a testing time we see a time where the works of the flesh will

prevail just look at your newspaper or you know the uh the news feed on your uh your news uh browser we see what the world wants to feed its mind with they want to feed on this stuff that is vile and what they call news today is largely just the uh the hot gosh it's the the latest uh sinful carryings on of the celebrity culture that we feed from this fattish fleshly culture that feasts on flesh and there's some bad kinds of fruit and this is what our world wants as it says in 2 timothy 4 it says they shall turn away their ears from the truth they shall turn away their ears from the truth who's seen people like that you seek to encourage them you seek to point them to christ to the truth to expose the lies of evolution and such things and they turn their way their ears from the truth it's a feature of 2 timothy 4 of the end times we see atheists and skeptics today bent on undermining faith in the word of god and sowing down rather let us be champions for the truth champions valiant for the truth people with a conviction for the truth and not be afraid to declare it god help us to determine our priorities as spiritual ones as colossians 3 verses 1 and 2 says set your affection on things above not on things on the earth set your affection there brother set your affection there sister let your affection be on those things that are above now we still have the day by day um natural needs of every man and woman as far as making a living and the practicalities of life but what should possess us what should enthuse us what should grab our affection our attention our priority should be those things that are above that is what we should set our love upon what we should set our priorities for that which is eternal that which is everlasting that which is going to be forever and spiritual and so we see what is good fruit and what is bad fruit we see the fruit of the spirit we see that god wants us to be fruitful as paul prayed that we would be fruitful in every good word how can we bear such good fruit is the next question how can we bear good fruit the lord jesus tells us in john 15 you might like to turn there the lord jesus shows us how we can be a fruitful christian a fruitful christian by illustrating it with an analogy of a vine and branches the lord jesus has the vine his people as the branches of the vine in john 15 from verse 1 through 8 the lord jesus says i am the true vine and my father is the husband man in other words the vine dresser the gardener verse 2 every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit he purchase it that it may bring forth more fruit now here i glean through my word the word which i 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 you can do nothing if a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and then gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned if ye abide in me and my words abide in you you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you herein is my father glorified but you bear much fruit so shall you be my disciples in this analogy the lord jesus says that he

[15:06] is the true vine he is the genuine vine and he says that god the father is the husband man the one who comes alongside and gardens and trims and tills the soil the farmer the gardener the vine dresser what can we learn here about being a fruitful christian how can we be a fruitful christian there's some points that stand out to me that my trust will help us reflect how can i be a fruitful christian number one we see the fruit comes from cleansing by him fruit comes from cleansing by him we read here of a purging to purge something it needs to clean it purging or pruning we read of a pruning process now the gardener comes and he cleans up his garden he cleans it up he makes it how he wants it to be he cleans up the vine we know as vines can get straggly and they can get um untidy and the vine dress of the gardener comes and he prunes it he purges it he cleans it up he tidies it up by pruning it and verse 2 the lord jesus says 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 so god does a work of purging in other words pruning that he may bring forth more fruit notice that it is the branches that bear fruit that he prunes he trims them he cleans them up he purges them he prunes them and his object is that they will bear more fruit now brothers and sisters this can be a spiritual truth that is hard for us that sometimes god prunes us he prunes us he takes the shears out if you like the hedge trimmer he takes those uh trimming tools and he cuts away and he does that to you and me sometimes god purges so that more fruit will come

fruit comes from cleansing by him don't shy away from his cleaning from his pruning word and how does he clean us by his word in verse 3 it says now ye are clean through the word which i have spoken unto you you are clean through the word which i have spoken unto you we've talked of late of the washing of water by the word there's there's a wonderful refreshing a wonderful satisfying of the the past uh thirst that we can know him and we can know that refreshing of that water of the word there's a wonderful satisfying of man's thirst of the soul thirst as we read in psalm 1 we see again the bible spoken of as something in which we can find our nourishment our nurture in psalm 1 it says blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful but his delight is in the law of the lord and in his law does he meditate day and night and he should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper it goes on psalm 1 have a read of the whole psalm there's a fruitfulness here spoken of as

the tree is planted by the river of water and there's a fruit that comes and the leaf will not wither there's fruitfulness for us as we like this blessed man what does he do his delight is in the law of the lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night that's his source that's his source for that fruitfulness of this blessed man of psalm 1. there's a fruitfulness that comes from the nourishment of god's word just like a tree uh draws its nourishment and those nutrients that feed the tree come as it taps in to the supply of water whether it's subterranean um aquifers and so on whether it's um deep in the ground yet it's the water that brings the fruit and so for us there's a cleansing a cleaning that brings forth fruit and secondly we see that fruit comes by continuing in him fruit comes as we continue in him if there's a problem with our fruit check the connection check the connection with the source we know the bible says that our lord jesus is like the head and we are just members parts of the body that he is the one who is in that absolute authority over us and so too with the vine he is the vine we are the branches of the vine are those branches in connection with the vine the longer we are connected with the life source the lord jesus the more of his character will be drawn into us as those branches the more we connected to that vine who is christ the more of that good fruit that is his nature and character will result and when a connection is faulty the life cannot flow now of late i had occasion to do some pruning at home i've got a creeper along the front of my house and i just pulled it a little bit and then suddenly it all started to pull away and fall off and i had to cut it uh lest it all fall down on the ground and i left a little bit in the corner it looked green enough it looked like it might survive on the corner it seemed to be quite self-sufficient but just hours later could see that it was withering away because the connection had been cut it had been cut from the source the plant that was in the ground the plant that was grounded and planted was cut off from this part of the plant and we see that when um we're cut off we will die and dry up so abide in me he says in verse 4 abide in me he says i am the vine in other words continue remain it's the same word translated in john 8 31 where it says some believed on him and he said to them if ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed this word continue if you continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed the same word here abide abide in me continue in me remain in me the lord jesus wants us to have that close uh living communion with him that close connection with him don't break your fellowship with him rather refresh it restore it renew it enliven it will we know that holy desperation of wanting more of him and of him having more of us that he would have more of us and that we would have more of him as we draw nigh to him he will draw nigh to us one follows the other 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 he abide in me continue abide in christ let that precious connection be refreshed and renewed let it be something that is precious to you that connection with him that communion with him whether it be through personal prayer personal time of devotion personal reflection and meditation on his word as you go about your day by day regular activities you can meditate on the word of god you can sing the word of god you can be encouraged and encourage yourself in the lord day by day as you abide in him one john two we read in verse 28 and now little children abide in him and when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming it's interesting isn't it does that mean some may be ashamed

before him at his coming there's a question there isn't there abide in him that when he shall appear you may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming friends if the sin let it not be unconfessed sin before him confess your sins to him and he will cleanse you from all unrighteousness let it not be that there's some secret sin there's some um um cherished sin that you're hanging on to like a can have something hidden that he should have dealt with before god bring it unto him let there not be anything that you'll be ashamed of before him at his coming and truly abide in him abide in him hold him fast absolutely depend on him to bear that fruit that he makes possible so it's important who and what we're connected with what are we connected with it's very easy to have connections that are not good for us as god's people as god's children we've got to carefully measure what and who am i connected with in 1 corinthians 15 33 it says be not deceived evil communications corrupt good manners in other words evil company uh communicating with those who are evil those who are outside of christ we can corrupt the good morals and standards that god wants for our lives you know it's so easily done isn't it and and you know i work in a secular workplace there's people cursing and swearing around me all day long and you hear that and it's almost like it kind of just goes over your head sometimes because you hear it so much and yet it's offensive to our lord and savior and and you know sometimes we can if we're not careful we can tune in to that kind of thinking we want to be guarding ourselves against that we don't want to be um associating with that because those evil associations or communications can corrupt good manners and that's not to say we're holier than thou and you know i'm too good to be associated with these heathen you know but there's a sense where we don't want to kind of lock arms with them and walk down the road with them because the bible says how can you walk together accept you be agreed we don't join company with their sinful ventures and join in their sinful jesting but yet we want to reach them for christ we want to be witnesses for him and so there's that balance there but our associations our connections can have a big influence on us a big bearing as to the fruit that comes from our lives if we start to hang around with evil company we start to pick up the evil communications the evil language that that kind of cursing and such like rather psalm 119 tells us the kinds of people that we ought to hang around with the kinds of people who want to fellowship and spend time with in psalm 119 verse 63 it says i am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that king thy precepts a companion of those who fear him and a companion of those who king his precepts his word now proverbs 13 it says he that walketh with wise men shall be wise but a companion of fools shall be destroyed you know choose your company carefully choose your company carefully it says in exodus 23 verse 2 thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil you know how does the saying go um don't follow the crowd where's the crowd going that broad broad broad way all paths lead to god they say but jesus says i am the way the truth and the life it's a narrow way that leadeth to life a narrow way leads to life it's not a crowded pathway there's few there be that find it i mean how many found it in noah's day eight were saved planet earth millions were destroyed eight were saved in noah's day few that be that find it friends we ought to consider that very carefully a narrow way you know if someone says to you oh you're narrow-minded well in a way we should be narrow-minded not not meaning that we should be you know judgmental as and condemnatory but but we should have a this is the truth this is the way walk ye in it this is what it says this is what i'm going to do that should be our heart he says to you to me abide in me abide in me let's nurture that that close living communion that relationship with our lord and savior and foster that good fellowship with others who love him with those companions who are those who fear god and who love his truth his word let's make our companions those that are wise that we can learn from and we can impart to one another as iron sharpens iron we can teach one another you can teach me just as much as vice versa and that fruit will come that fruit will come firstly from cleansing by him as he trims us as he chops and and cuts us he'll chop off those dead things that we're better off without he'll chop those things off of our lives those things that those straggly things that are out of order and he'll clean us up he'll clean up our land and those fruit comes from his cleaning and fruit comes by continuing in him abiding me and thirdly quickly fruit comes from christ fruit comes and all credit is due unto him fruit comes and the credit is his the credit is his it says that you can do nada nothing zilch nix zero nothing without me without me you can do zilch nothing absolutely nothing you can do nothing you can do nothing without me all credit is due unto him all credit is due to his glory and praise and so it's important for us as christians when we get it all right and we've got fruit it's all to his glory and honor and praise it's all because of our absolute dependency upon him he says verse 5 for without me you can do nothing jesus makes it clear that he is the source of all

fruit and he works in us to do his good pleasure and it's all is his will all to his praise in ephesians 2 verse 10 for we are his workmanship created in christ jesus unto good works that god hath before ordained that we should walk in there you're created unto good works you're created to be his workmanship and we're still a work in progress amen we still that that vessel on the potter's wheel and he's still got a bit of twisting and turning and pushing and pulling and molding and shaping to make us that vessel that he wants us to be he's still working on me he's still working on us we're christians under construction it's still a work in progress and all credit is unto him for without me you can do nothing what's fundamental here is that close relationship with him is our strength it's our motive it's our our energy it's our ability is of god our sufficiency is of god he is our source of strength when you're feeling weak draw closer to him when you're feeling like you can't do his will get closer to him draw closer to him he'll give you the strength he is the source of your strength he is the vine you are the branches draw your energy your source your sustenance from him just as a vine uh draws uh its nourishment uh from the the roots into the branches verse 6 says if a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and then gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned now this tells us we ought to take careful stop of our standing with him there's different ways of viewing this verse my understanding is that it does speak of a christian who is judged and chastened for their sin that the bible speaks of a fire in 1 corinthians 3 as we talked last time that there is a judgment of our works and some will be cast into that fire and there'll be not much to show for their life and so the question for us today is will we bear fruit or face the fire will we bear fruit or face the fire of god's testing and be found wanting how do we rate our fruitfulness today friends it's for each of us to take stock are we a fruitful christian the bible says 1 corinthians 10 whatsoever you do whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do do all to the glory of god the fruitful christian glorifies god and we could all think well maybe i'm going to be not really very fruitful and maybe maybe i deserve to be burning up as it were in that time of testing or will we rather be ones that will bear fruit and be pruned and cut and shaped and made to bear more and much more even more fruit as we see in in verse 8 it says much fruit in verse 2 it says more fruit in verse 16 it says that your fruit should remain that's the kind of fruit that he wants for you for me so be fruitful christians fruit yielding christians and it happens as we allow him to continue to work in our hearts and we'll be like that blessed man of psalm 1 and a like verse in jeremiah 17 from verse 7 it says blessed is the man that trusteth in the lord and whose hope the lord is for she he shall be as a tree planted by the waters and that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see when he cometh but her fruit her leaf shall be green and shall not be careful in the year of drought neither shall cease from yielding fruit now we know a lot

[35:29] about heat at the moment don't we it's a hot day it's a hot time and you don't care for your plants they'll shrivel up and die but if you've got a tree that's planted by the waters it will live it will live it will be fresh and green and fruitful and it's the same for you and for me as god's people let's be planted where we can get sustenance let's be planted where the word is let's be planted where he is where he is that source for us in that close communion with him as the vine with the branches let us be so connected with the lord jesus that'll be that will be part of him and he part of us that will remain in him will continue in him will abide in him and he will continue and remain and abide in us that he will be in us christ in you the hope of glory that where you go christ is in that sense that you are his hands extended you'll be his voice in those workplaces and those places where you go and live you'll be christ to people as you go about your day by day and you'll bear fruit for him you'll bear that fruit that will be honoring to god is your life bearing fruit today it is one way or the other one way or the other you are bearing fruit is it good fruit or bad fruit is it the fruit of the spirit is it being fruitful in every good work is your faith fruitful how is your relationship with the vine let it be renewed let it be refreshed let it be strengthened that you can bear fruit unto god as being a christian that is fruitful and god helping you when you see well i can look back and think i've not been very fruitful back there there's been some things i'm a bit ashamed of that i i i think i would be ashamed before him as coming you can deal with them now at the foot of the cross

you can repent personally before him you don't have to come and confessing to any human being certainly to no priest so-called but you can confess your sins to god and he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and so it's a sobering thought when we bear fruit unto god or we will be cast into the fire will we bear fruit or face the fire i urge you tonight let today be a time of personal rededication to that fruitfulness that he wants for us let us pray so