

Remaining in Christ

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[0:00] The title of the sermon today is Remaining. And if you have your Bibles, I have you turn to John chapter 15. Let me bring you up to speed where we are. I started preaching through the Gospel of John because we have at Northwest Bible Church, we have a lot of young families who really have never been in church.

And so one of the things I really believe is true for young believers is they need to know, first of all, who Jesus is. And then they need to know who they are in Jesus, in Christ.

And so I decided back in January we would go through the Gospel of John verse by verse. We started in January. I think we're going to be done by Christmas.

Maybe. And so we're actually in John 15. And the reality, I think, of John 15 is the Lord Jesus really teaches us here a number of things.

But if we just look at the first 11 verses, which is what I want to do this morning, there is one word that repeats itself over and over and over again in the New American Standard where I preach from.

[1:15] And it's the word remain. Okay? Let me read the text for you. And then we'll pray. And then we'll kind of unpack it a little bit this morning. Verse 1 of 15.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, so that it may bear more fruit.

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. The one who remains in me, I think you're getting the picture, right? And I in him bears much, much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up, and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

[2:23] My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. Just as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you.

Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love. These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be made full.

Let me pray for us. Father, thank you again for the truth from this gospel, that we, being in you, in Christ, are joint heirs with him.

And because of that, Lord, you are at work in our lives, not just transforming us, but equipping us to be your representatives in a culture that has lost its way.

Thank you that we don't have to figure it out, that you are at work, and what you began in each of us individually and us collectively as the body of Christ, you will carry it on to completion, even to the day of Jesus Christ.

[3:37] So, Lord, give us wisdom, insight into what you're saying in this verse, not only for these men that Jesus had surrounded himself with, not only for them, but for us in application.

In Jesus' name, amen. If I could ask you to do something this morning, I would like you to mentally transport yourself back to the night that Jesus spent with his disciples.

We know this as referred to as the upper room discourse. And from John 13 all the way through 17, Jesus is with his men in that upper room hours from being arrested and less than a day before he is going to be crucified.

And he shares with them some of those unique things that they needed to know in order to carry on in life without him.

That night, his men were not full of joy and praising for, it was not what they were experiencing. [4:52] And I think a lot of times we can judge them for their lack of perspective and focus, but we have to understand that they were utterly confused. They didn't understand.

They had a mindset for what Jesus was going to accomplish as the Messiah of Israel, restoring Israel to its national prominence and delivering them from oppression from the Romans. And that wasn't Jesus' plan the first time he came. He will do that when he comes again, but that wasn't his plan here. And as a result, the Lord shows an incredible amount of patience and compassion and understanding as he prepares them for life without him.

I think the information that he gave his disciples that night is of prime importance for not just his men, but for all believers, all followers of Jesus.

As a matter of fact, I think by applying what Jesus gave them that night, we can have joy in spite of the circumstances that we find ourselves in, in spite of the hardships, the financial difficulties, the relational breakdowns, the physical challenges that we face.

[6:09] My wife and I took our two daughters and their husbands and children, and we went and did a little camping trip the first part of July up at Glacier National.

And Heidi and I have a fifth wheel trailer we go, and we were parking it, and I opened the storage door. And when I opened that storage door, a full 20-pound propane tank, tumbled out, and landed on my right foot.

That was not a joyful experience. But in the moment, I mean, within just a few moments after I hobbled around a little bit, I was grateful for the Holy Spirit's control.

Because two of my granddaughters were right next to me when this happened, and nothing, when that hit my foot, came out of my mouth. That's not like me.

Okay? And yet, that's the work of the Spirit transforming us, which Jesus refers to here. Now, one of the truths that Jesus gave His men that we're going to be looking at, and you'll see in John 15, in my opinion, is one area that is of the greatest need for us as followers of the Lord, and that is in the realm of relationships.

[7:43] I think we struggle in the area of relationships because I don't think we've ever really understood what Jesus said about relationships the last night He was with His disciples.

So I'd like you to take a look at this, if you can, because this is just a quick survey of John chapter 15. John 15 has a major theme, and the major theme is that relationships are one of the most important things that we can maintain as believers in Jesus.

That's what John 15 is all about, and if you look at that chart, you'll see it falls into three sections. The first section really talks about His remaining in Him.

The first five, excuse me, the first 11 verses, and it's all about our union with Christ. Maintaining that vital union with the living Lord.

That's the most important, I think, things that we can know and apply. The second section, which my son Taylor today is talking about at Northwest Bible Church, is our relationships with other believers.

[9:00] And the key word in that section, verses 12 to 17, is the word love. And it appears four times in six verses. Next week, I'm going to be dealing with the third section, and that is our believers' relationship with the world, verses 18 through 27.

And the key word there is hate. And hate is what we should expect from the world, because it is out of touch with God, out of touch with union with Christ, and so there is to be a detachment from the world, and yet we're in the world, but we're not of the world.

We are to be ambassadors for Christ in the world, taking the truth of the gospel, Christ in you, the hope of glory, to the world, because that is its only hope.

It's interesting, if you watch the news at all, how often we hear political leaders try to talk through this idea of trying to sign peace treaties.

There's never going to be one. Okay? Ever. Why? Because the heart of humanity is at war with everyone and everything.

[10:29] I won't take time to dive into that. Okay? Now, specifically in John 15, 1-11, we want to begin by making four observations. And those observations, I hope, will build a context for our understanding of this idea of relationships and our union with Christ.

Okay? The first observation I want to make is the entire passage is for followers of Jesus only. The person who is not a follower of the Lord Jesus and goes to these 11 verses is going to be hopelessly confused.

They will try to remain in Him, as the section describes, and yet, that's impossible for them. And the reason it's impossible is because they can't, because they're not connected to Him.

Matter of fact, Ephesians chapter 2 says, they're not even children of God. They are children of their father, the devil. That there's this weird misunderstanding that all human beings, because we're made in the image of God, are God's children.

No, we're not. Only those who have been redeemed are God's children, are adopted into His family, the body of Christ.

[11:51] Those are the children of God. But those who are in rebellion to God are not His children. And we'll see that in this text.

Secondly, these verses are going to revolve around some symbols that we're going to talk about.

There's the symbol of the vine and the branches. And for the first century Jew, these symbols were as familiar to them as the stars and stripes are to us.

And what those stars and stripes refer to, and mean when we talk about our national flag. The vine, the branches, they understood what that meant.

As a matter of fact, in Herod's temple, there is a picture of the vine and branches of the olive grove on the temple.

people. And so that would have been very familiar to them. Thirdly, the subject, as I mentioned before, is remaining in Christ. Remaining connected to Him.

[13:01] The fourth is, the result of remaining is fruit bearing. Okay? Now, this is all about remaining. and if we remember that, these four observations, the entire passage is for followers of Jesus.

The verse revolves using symbols. The main subject is remaining and the results of remaining are fruit bearing. Okay? All right. Now, let's get into the interpretation here.

Let's take this in a verse-by-verse fashion. Let's spend some time. First of all, notice verse 1 and verse 5. We have the mention of the vine.

And we don't have to be confused on who the vine is. Jesus says, I am the vine. He says it in verse 1, I am the true vine.

Verse 5, I am the vine. So that's Jesus. Okay? Secondly, there is a gardener, or as the New American Standard says, a vine dresser.

[14:08] The end of verse 1, my father is the vine dresser. That's obvious. God the Father is the gardener. He is the one responsible for cultivating and pruning and working with the vine.

That's the Father's job, looking over the whole garden, working with those vines and branches so they can produce fruit. And then we have, of course, thirdly, the branches.

Verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches. So Jesus clearly identifies his disciples, his followers, as the branches who are to continue to follow Jesus.

And if I may suggest, even those of us today, during the body of Christ, we are to be identified like branches.

We're not the branches, but we're like them. Okay? Now, now that we've got the identity of those three, what's the importance of this passage? Okay?

[15:14] I believe that God not only brings seasons to change the trees and to change the weather, but also to change his children.

God gives us seasons in life that we might pause and reflect, that we might look within as we look back.

A couple weeks, I'm going with 20 other pastors and my two sons to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago.

It's a Catholic thing, I guess, a spiritual pilgrimage where you walk 500 miles from the border of France and Spain all the way to the Atlantic.

I'm not walking 500 miles, I can tell you that. Not a mileage. By the way, Heidi and I are going to celebrate 45 years of marriage next month, which is surprising because I'm only 47.

[16:31] That's not true, but anyway. But it's this whole idea of pausing and reflecting during certain seasons. We're fast approaching a new school year and parents are rejoicing because pretty soon the kids will all be at school and summer's coming to an end.

And at the risk of ruining someone's summer fun, at least the kids, I think it's always helpful for us, as the Lord is doing with his men here, to really give us some space to reflect. That's what we're going to be doing on the walk on the Camino. There's a couple days planned where we're walking about 17 miles and we're going to be walking in silence. everybody's going to be encouraged to not talk to each other and just consider. So I don't know how fast you walk, but if you walk two and a half miles an hour or thereabouts, that's some serious time when you're quiet.

let me suggest that your future will be no different from your past unless you take some time to reflect and realize there are some changes that need to be done.

[18:14] If you've trusted the Lord Jesus as your Lord and Savior, if you've become a member of his family, the body of Christ, however long ago that was, if you don't look back and see changes, it might be that you're not actively involved in remaining connected to him.

And if that's true, I want to tell you, God wants to get your attention today. God desires that you hear what his word is saying, not just for the sake of your parents, not just for the sake of your children, or your spouse, or your friends.

God wants you to hear what he's saying to you for your benefit, and for the benefit of those people that you are in relationship with.

To begin with, the author of scripture, the spirit of God, speaks of the vine. If you look back at chapter 15, if you look at 15, 1 and 2, I am the true vine, my father is the vine dresser, every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he, the gardener, does something with it.

Okay? Notice a couple of things that are unique and distinctive about the vine. Jesus says something here regarding position, and then he says something about production.

[20:09] They're not the same. Matter of fact, I think they're mutually exclusive. One has to do with being in me, verse 2.

The other has to do with producing no fruit. The phrase every branch in me concerns your position. By application, when you placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, trust in his death, burial, resurrection as the complete payment for your sin, you were placed in Christ at that moment that you believed.

And at that point, you were made a new creation in Christ. I'm sorry. There we go. I'll get caught up. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 says this, if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, new things have come. Now all of these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

[21:27] think about that. And then listen to this, and not counting their wrongdoings against them. Really? God is not holding the wrongdoings of the world against them. That's what he says. Which tells us what?

That God is reconciled to every single person that lives. Does that mean everyone is going to be saved? No. Because we have to be reconciled to God.

When a marriage breaks down, it doesn't matter how one person desires to be reconciled to the other, and does everything possible to reconcile, ask for forgiveness, whatever it was, if the other person isn't working, you're not reconciled.

God is reconciled to the world. That's how sufficient Christ's death at Calvary was in taking care of sin. And he has committed, excuse me, I'll go back, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their wrong doings against them, and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

[22:59] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. God the Father, he, made him Jesus Christ the Son, who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

How do we become that righteousness? We trust him. We acknowledge that what he did at Calvary was sufficient. We trust that, we acknowledge that, and he becomes Lord and Savior of our lives. These disciples had been placed, as Jesus said, in me, verse 2, the vine. And then Jesus says that every branch, every individual person in me is to produce fruit.

Is that what it says? Not really. Be good Bereans. Pay attention to words.

The believer is to do what? Produce fruit? No. We are to remain in him. And as we remain in him, connected in union with Christ, the natural thing that happens to us is we produce fruit.
[24 : 35] fruit. The command, he never gives us command to produce fruit. Galatians 5 is the fruit of whom?

The spirit, not the fruit of Scott. Scott doesn't do anything. Matter of fact, Philippians chapter 2, 12 and 13 says, okay, see if I can do this from memory.
work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to work according to his good pleasure. Okay, who's working?
Me? God's working. Oh, but it says, Scott, work out your own salvation. Yeah. Again, pay attention. The work that I do, that verb is in the passive tense.
the same word of God's work is in the active, in the original, which means what?
[25 : 40] God is actively working in you and you are to passively allow it. Can we reject the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to transform us into the, absolutely we can.

I did for 20 years. I trusted Jesus when I was eight years old. I remember doing it, kneeling at the bed with my mom after some Sunday night service.
I remember asking Jesus to go at eight. From eight to 28, five years into my marriage to my wife, there wasn't a whole lot of fruit, and don't ask Jim about it.
Okay? He witnessed it. I was not who I am today. And my sweet wife was patient for five years before the Lord Jesus got a hold of me.
When I finally said to him, listen, I've tried it my way and it's not working. me. And I'll be honest with you, everything I touched turned up. Mother's a good word for it.
[26 : 58] I won't use it here. It was disastrous. Our relationships, my work world, and we were pregnant with a little girl.

And I knew, I knew I was going to ruin that little girl's life if I didn't change. we had already lost one child.
Heidi had a miscarriage about 20, 18 to 20 weeks in. And I thought, you know, Satan does a good job on your mind, man. When you're not walking with the Lord and he's got the hounds of heaven after you, man, I thought for sure we lost that little boy because of me.
And when we got pregnant again, I was scared to death. And I finally said, okay, Lord, enough. Let's do it your way.
At 28. Ephesians 4 says we can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. How?
[28 : 09] By living self-reliant, doing it our way, not acknowledging that he's the head and we're just part of his body and he has desires for us that's best for us and we've got to let go of what we think is best for us.

How did I get off on that? Okay. I know, I know. Verse 4, remain in me. That's what we're commanded to do.
Remain in me and I in you, just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.
I've got those words, neither can you underlined in my Bible. He emphatically drives home the point that his disciples, it would be impossible for them to do anything if they didn't completely submit and rely on him to do it through them.
Verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches. He says it again, the one who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
[29 : 27] You notice verse 1, every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he, what does your Bible say?

What's that? Takes away. You know what that actually means literally? He lifts up. He lifts up.
It should be producing, it's not, and so the gardener goes to work with that. Because he's committed for that branch to bear fruit.
If you don't see any fruit in your life, be patient. The Lord's at work. The Lord's at work. apart from me you can do nothing.
We can be in Christ and be unproductive. Our position is secure, because that's God's job. But our production is also his job.
[30 : 44] Now, two questions. If you're a thinking person, you're probably asking me, what is the fruit? And how do I remain?

If you get a chance this afternoon, read Isaiah 5, 1 to 5. Jehovah is the beloved one in that passage, and Israel is the vine.

Let me just read it. Let me sing for Jehovah a song of Jehovah about his vineyard. His vineyard is Israel. Jehovah had a vineyard on a fertile hill.

He dug it all around, cleared it of stones, planted within it the choicest vine, and he built a tower in the middle of it, and also carved out a wine vat. He then expected it to produce grapes, but it produced only worthless ones.

And now you inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there for I to do with my vineyard than I have not done? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes, did it produce worthless ones?

[31 : 59] That's a good question. Verse 6, I will lay it waste. It will not be pruned nor hoed, but briars and thorns will come up.

I will also command the clouds not to rain on it. Verse 7, for the vineyard of the Lord of armies is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his delightful plant.

Now watch. So he waited for justice. There's the fruit God was looking for. He waited for justice, but behold, there was blood shed for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.

God wants justice in our lives. He wants to see righteousness. And yet he said about Israel, I looked at my vineyard, I wanted to see the reproductions of my life, Christlikeness, I didn't find it. And so back in John 15, Jesus is saying the father is looking for fruit from his work. There are branches that don't produce,!

[33 : 15] And he's going to lift them up. Again, because of the vine, fruit will be produced.

Christ, so the question for me is how do I remain? Remaining in Christ or abiding in Christ is synonymous, I think, with what Paul said in Ephesians 5.18, to be filled with the Spirit.

Submitting to, walking in the power, under the control of the Holy Spirit, it's that idea that theologians refer to as the exchanged life. I exchange my life for his.

I exchange the energy of the flesh for the work of the Spirit in my life. So when my wife says something that triggers me, I don't know why I'm even bothering with this.

I'm not even doing it. When she does something that triggers me, and I normally would get frustrated and angry with her, what do I do?

[34 : 21] Lord, my wife doesn't have a bit of malice in any bone of her body.

She loves me, she wants what's best for me. She may be saying this, I'm going to respond like you would respond with kindness and gentleness.

When I say something that triggers her, she responds by forgiving me before I even ask. That's how we are to live.

When my neighbor, my co-worker, a brother or sister in Christ, says, does something that offends me, I choose not to be offended.

I forgive it. Why? Because that's the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, goodness, and self-control.

[35 : 33] Filled with the Spirit, conforming us to the replica of himself is his idea. Verse 2 is where we see the gardener. Notice that he does something, and I already mentioned this.

every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. That's not the idea. The idea is he lifts up, he raises up. Why does he do that?

End of verse 2, that every branch that bears fruit would bear even more fruit. to? I've been through Leavenworth and Wenatchee enough to see those beautiful apple trees in the fall and the winter, and those poor things look like sticks, right?

What are they doing to the apple trees? They're pruning them. Why do they prune them? So that in the spring and summer the fruit will come.

Yeah. But what happens when they're snipped? They lose all vitality. They look dead.

[36 : 58] What the Spirit of God I think is telling us here is that being in Christ, yes, we're secure. absolutely secure.

But as he prunes us, we may feel a little different, maybe even attacked.

Have you ever read 2 Corinthians 4, 3, 4, and 5, 6, where Paul enumerates all the things he went through? I'll be honest, I'd be a little discouraged after about the third beating.

And yet he goes to Philippi, he gets beaten, he gets thrown in the inner prison, he's in stocks, and what does he sing? He sings the hallelujah chorus. Well, maybe not the hallelujah chorus, but he's

singing in the jail.

How? Paul's been pruned. He's been pruned. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes for one purpose, that it may bear more fruit.

[38:17] the branches, verse 6. If anyone, any branch, does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned.

There's a lot of they's there, we need to identify who they are. Unfortunately, this verse out of John 15 is used as a proof text for the reality that you may lose your salvation if you don't remain. And the scene of being gathered and thrown into the fire for some believers is a picture of judgment, the judgment of hell. Let me be a little technical here so we can make sure we understand what the Lord is communicating here.

Notice that Jesus refers to someone who habitually does not remain in me. Which means what? They were connected with him.

Okay? But they choose not to remain which means they willfully knowingly live independently of the Lord.

[39:46] Not submitting to the Spirit of God at all. They follow Jesus, they believed in Jesus, they claimed him as the Savior, but they choose to live as though he wasn't their Lord and Savior.

Y'all with me there? Now, the Father has already stepped in in verse 2 with a branch that doesn't bear fruit and he raises it up. But now it says that the branch that doesn't remain in me, the Father is going to step in and do something with that branch.

And it says he throws it aside and it dries up. The original actually has in mind the idea is he casts it forth as a branch.

emphasizing the singular. So we have the branch that's not producing, it's set aside and it dries up. I take this to mean, because remember where we started, this is addressed to followers of Jesus. This is a reference to divine discipline.

[41:03] God will not allow in his body sickness that's caused by an individual member.

A member that chooses to live an unproductive life and at the Father's discretion, he removes that one from the body. If you read 1 Corinthians chapter 5, you'll realize there was someone in the church at Corinth that was living an immoral lifestyle and they weren't dealing with it.

And what does he say? Paul says to them, remove him, hand him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

church. It's pretty serious. He goes on to say, for those in chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians, when he's talking about the Lord's table and the desecration that was happening in Corinth of the Lord's table, not just communion but the love feast as well, that because of that church's willingness to engage in that kind of gluttony and that kind of selfishness, Paul says, that's why some of you are sickly and some have even died.

What is this passage saying here? I think it's saying something very similar to what Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 3. Paul says this, according to the grace that God has given to me, like a wise master builder, I laid a foundation, and another builder is building on it.

[42:53] Each person, each one of us, must be careful how he builds on it, the foundation. Who's the foundation? The Lord Jesus. For no one can lay a foundation other than the one that was laid, which is Christ Jesus.

Verse 12, now if anyone builds on a foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, so there's this picture of a building.

We are building something on the foundation of Jesus. It's the picture of the Christian life. And notice the materials being used. Some are subject to the flame, and some aren't.

Now if anyone builds, verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 3, if you want to look at it later. Now if anyone builds on a foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will be evaluated, not as a group, but individually.

Each one's work will become evident, for the day will show it. What day is that judgment seat of Christ? When you and I, as believers in Jesus Christ, stand before Him and have our lives evaluated by Him.

[44:18] Because, for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with what? Fire. And the fire itself will test the quality of each one's work.

In other words, those works that we do in the flesh with a selfish motive, with a prideful attitude, done independent of the Spirit of God, they will burn up.

But the work done in the power of the Spirit will endure. If anyone's work which is built on it remains, he will receive reward.

What about the work that's done in the energy of the flesh? Verse 15, if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet as through fire.

The person will not lose his salvation, he is eternally secure, but they will have no rewards in eternity. The Apostle Paul is contrasting between those who choose to remain in Christ, submitted to Christ, acknowledging His lordship over your life, willing to obey as He prompts.

[45 : 38] Why am I here today? It would be so much easier for me to get up out of my bed, walk 20 feet from the church parsonage where Heidi and I live, over to church and preach there.

I'd be done now. Why do I drive all the way here and drive all the way home after he buys me lunch? Why? Well, yeah, but the Spirit prompted me to say, hey, I'll come on this Sunday.

And I said, Jim, I'll come this Sunday. And a lot of times when the Spirit prompts, I just say yes. And I worry about what it's going to cost later.

Right? That's how we're to respond. Lord, what do you want today? I wake up in the morning, the first thing I say, Lord, this is your day.

I've got my to-do list. I've got my things that I have on my list. Interrupt that at any point. And let's... I got a phone call.

[46 : 48] Boy, I'm... It's quarter twelve. I'm just going to keep going. Okay. I promise I'll be done pretty quick. I got a phone call this week from a young man whose marriage has fallen apart.

And part of the problem is he is a Army veteran who did four tours in the Middle East. He suffers with PTSD terribly.

his wife, God bless her, is a piece of work. She's tough.

And they are explosive. He asked me, Scott, how did you ever get control of your anger issues? Because I was raised by an angry man, and my brothers and I both have had to deal with anger issues.

And I said to him, I said, well, to be honest with you, it was hard. Meyer's men tend to be a little stubborn.

[47 : 58] We're Scottish. Okay. I feel bad for the Scandinavians that are married to Scotsmans because we think things need to be done a certain way, and if it's not done a certain way, we get a little out of sorts.

Frustration is, you know, right there. Anyway, I said to him, I said, well, you know what? The word says that anger doesn't accomplish the work of the spirit.

So what I did is when I felt that, whatever it is in my throat that wants to spew out something, or my teeth, I grind my teeth, or my fists get clenched, that's a trigger for me to say, Lord, control this.

I can't. You have to. You promise when I pray your peace, right? Philippians 4. And I said that didn't happen overnight, but I developed that habit that when my hands start to go like this, I know, pray, and that peace which you can't explain guards your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.

He goes, okay, okay. I said, and you develop the habit. It doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't happen overnight. my wife, when I, when the cadence of my communication speeds up, or the volume gets a little, you know, she shuts down.

[49 : 45] So I've learned that when I feel that happening, I slow down, and I turn the volume down. and I ask the Lord to control this because this communicates what's in here.

That make sense? you and I can't control this. The Spirit of God transforms this as I remain in Him. What are the results? See if I can get... Okay, hang on. See, I could have had it on the screen for you all. There you go. What are the results of a remaining life?

First benefit is answered prayer. Jesus talks about them right here in verses 7 to 11. If you remain... Verse 7. In me, my words remain in you.

Ask whatever you wish. It'll be done for you. Lord, I don't want to be angry. I don't want to hurt my sweet wife. She is the greatest gift God ever gave me.

[51 : 08] Now, my children were a gift too, but they're temporary. You know? And I always told them that, you know, my children. I said, listen, don't make me choose between your mom and you because you'll lose every time.

She's permanent, you're temporary. And that's true. They're all gone. They all live within five minutes of us, which is wonderful, with their spouses and our 11 grandchildren, children, which are always over at my house, all the time, eating our food.

Good Lord. I bought three boxes of popsicles on Thursday because I don't eat ice cream anymore. It's not good for my cholesterol. They're gone.

I went to grab one this morning before I walked out the door. They're all gone. I got to have a conversation with my wife about that. Anyway, at summertime. Answer to prayer.

Secondly, the Father's glorified. When I pray and the Spirit, verse 8, my Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

[52 : 27] When you and I walk in the power of the Spirit, not in the flesh, in the power of the Spirit, and the Father sees the results, the production of the Spirit's fruit in my life, He's glorified.

Third, verses 9 and 10, we are motivated by love. Just as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandment, what is the greatest commandment? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, and your neighbor as yourself. What's the definition of love? It's not a feeling. When I say I love my wife, I'm not, you know, if I say I love Heidi and I love tacos, is that the same thing?

No. When I say I love my wife, love is the commitment to do what is best for her, regardless of what it costs me. That's agape.

That's God's love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in His love.

[53 : 43] When we remain in His love, when we are surrounded by it, smothered by it, when it becomes the normal outflow of our life, which is an answer to prayer, the Father's glorified.

God's love, and we are motivated to live a life that's pleasing to Him. Fourthly, and this is the big one, our joy will reach its maximum regardless of the experience.

You're praying for that gentleman who's going to give the eulogy message for his dad. I did that for all of my parents. my dad, my mom, my father-in-law, and my mother-in-law.

I was able to preach at each one of their memorials without a shred of guilt, shame, or remorse. None. Do you know why? Because I know where they are, and I know they wouldn't come back ever if they had the choice.

[54 : 57] They graduated from this life to the next with the Lord. Last Friday, I drove to Kelowna, and I spoke at my aunt's memorial.

Drove to Kelowna in the morning, did the service, drove home that night. it was an absolute privilege to give the gospel in front of my cousins and their children, and a handful.

Gladys was 95. I mean, there was only like 30 of us there. No, it wasn't even that many. 20? 20? Most of my cousin's children have never been to church.

My youngest cousin, Jennifer, has cerebral palsy. She has five children. She's on a third marriage. The first husband died of a drug overdose.

The second husband, she divorced because he was abusive. The third one also died from cancer. her three daughters, she has one son and then three daughters, have never been in church, have never heard the gospel.

[56 : 17] They live in Quebec, Canada. I had the privilege of sharing the gospel at my aunt with not a bit of sadness because I know where Annie Gladys is.

I know my grandmother Dorothy in heaven is reunited with her two sons. I know my father and my uncle are now united with their wives and I know my youngest brother Kent who I spoke at his memorial to.

He is at home united with my parents. They have all graduated from this life to the next. With joy. And again, that is not something that I figured out how to manipulate.

That is the fruit of the spirit in our lives. In spite of very difficult circumstances sometimes.

Sometimes. practical lessons for you and I.

First, refusing to remain results in barrenness of your soul. You will be a miserable person as a Christian if you do not submit your heart and mind to Jesus Christ and allow him to transform you into the person that he wants you to become.

[57 : 50] And I'm talking to you guys more than anyone, you young ones. Okay? I love you. You guys are paying attention. Good for you. There is a way to live life, kiddos, that is honoring to God and best for you.

Please, learn from an idiot who didn't do it the right way for 28 years. Okay? Follow Jesus. Don't worry about what anybody else says.

Okay? Your friends, classmates, whatever, they don't know what they're talking about, Jesus does. Okay? Nod if you got it. You got it.

Good. Okay. It's hopeless. Okay? The results of remaining is fruitfulness that we just talked about. Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, self-control. If we refuse to remain, if we refuse to be dependent and submitted to the Lord, we are facing the life like a scorched, barren, desert.

[59:06] I love Phoenix, but, and I love the heat, but my goodness, there's nothing growing down there. I drove over from Enumclaw this morning.

It rained all the way to Stevens Pass, and it is lush and beautiful. You know? It's not the desert. I don't want the desert as my heart.

I want the lushness. Okay? When we choose to live in dependence. Listen to this Psalm. I think, do I have this up here? I do. Psalm 1-3.

He, the one who remains in Christ, will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season.

Its leaf does not wither, and whatever he or she does prospers. We can live our Christian lives and never allow the Spirit of God to sit at the controls of our lives, and most of us have done it, and it is misery.

[60:18] It is misery. And the only reason that Christians do that is because they think they know better than their Heavenly Father what is best for their lives.

That is stupidity on steroids. I mean, how arrogant can we be to think that we know better than the one who created all this?

Remain in Christ. And the Spirit will do His work, and you will live a life of fullness that's absolutely wonderful.

I have, like I said, four wonderful children. My daughter Sonia is 40. My son Cameron turned 37 yesterday. My son Taylor is 35.

He turned 35 a week ago. And my youngest daughter, Julia, my favorite, youngest daughter, okay, whatever. They all said, no, Julia's the favorite, I guess.

[61:29] She's 32. My two younger children are firefighters. They've seen things. They've told me some of their the things they've seen, and I pray for them every day.

Because what firefighters go through, what police officers go through, what correction officers have to go through, what ER doctors and nurses have to go through, it's horrendous. Okay?

My wife and I, for whatever reason, have been invited by our children to be a part of their lives. And we get to have our grandkids all the time.

Wednesday, we're taking four of them to go camping with us, and mom and dad are staying home, because I don't particularly want mom and dad to come. Because that way I can feed them all the sugar I want, and dad won't say anything.

Right? One of the greatest joys of our life, and it's a result of the Spirit's work in both Heidi and I, is that our children want to be around us.

[62:38] That is a gift I cannot describe to you how beautiful that is. They're all fighting over where mom and dad are going to live when dad retires, because they all want us to live with them.

Matter of fact, my younger son says, hey, dad, don't worry about mom. We got her covered. She's going to stay with us. I said, what about me? Well, if mom goes before you, you're on your own.

Yeah.

That's my boy who's subbing for me right now, right? Matter of fact, he asked me a number of years ago, he said, dad, how much life insurance do you have? And I said, I got enough, Tay.

He said, well, dad, this is when we had a, before we sold our house, and I said, well, no, no, dad, I'm going to be married someday, and I'm going to need to, you know, so how much do I need, life insurance do I need?

I said, well, you've got to make sure you got all your debts paid, and you know, you want to leave enough for your mom, so she, you know, she doesn't have to work if she doesn't want to. He said, okay, okay. So how much do you got?

[63:47] And at that point, you know, I don't have this now, but at that point, you know, I said, well, I got about a million and a half on my life, and he said, oh, dude, you got to take one for the team.

That's my boy.

Greatest joy of my life, right, next to my sweet wife and my relationship with the Lord Jesus, and that is what the Lord has done for a stubborn, angry, self-reliant young man.

And if God can do that with me, he can do it with anybody. Amen? Father, we thank you.