

Fruitbearing

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[0 : 0 0] Well, hello and welcome. Thank you so much for joining me. My name is Pastor Tyler Lawrence. I am the worship and tech pastor here at First Christian Church, and I've been here at FCC now since February of 2023. What's amazing is that even though that doesn't sound like a very long time, because I've found such an amazing home here at FCC, I feel like I've been here forever, and not in a bad way. I just feel like I've been a part of this family, and I feel like I've been so welcomed. And so I want to welcome you, in case we haven't met, to this new series. More on that here in just a minute or two. But I wanted to also say thank you to Pastor Ray for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today, to even kick off this whole new series, which by the way is something I've actually never done before. I've preached a number of times here at FCC, but I haven't kicked off a whole new sermon. So I'm pretty excited about that. So buckle up your seat belts. Hopefully it won't be too bumpy of a ride. Oh, and one more thing. I always forget in these situations to talk about my wife and my family, what many people would call the better half, right?

And so I wanted to take just a second to introduce myself. Like I said, my name is Tyler. My wife and I, Caitlin have been married for just over nine years now. We have three beautiful children who are also very ornery. I believe they get that from their mother's side. And like I said, we've been here in Greensburg. We've loved it since February of 2023. If you ask Pastor Ray, it turns out that my time here has passed a little bit closer to dog years for him. So he said it's been 15 years that I've been here, which I think is just really wild. All right. So today we want to go ahead and jump right in to our topic of discussion. We're starting a whole new series. But first, what I want to do is tell you a story. Now, the story is about a happy couple. They've been married for 61 years, and they've shared everything with each other. They've never kept a single secret from one another, except for one. You see, the wife, she actually has a small secret in the form of a shoebox that she keeps in her cupboard. And she's told her husband to please respect my boundaries. Do not touch that shoebox. And so he never has opened it. For years, life has gone on. And whenever his curiosity is piqued, he might open up the cabinet door, look at the shoebox and wander, but then quickly disregard his curiosity in order to move on with something else. Now, one day, unfortunately, the wife in this happy couple, she got sick and she received the news that she would most likely not be able to recover. So the lady did not want to keep the secret from her husband anymore.

So she asked the husband to go to get the box out of her cupboard. When she, when the husband rather brought the box to her, she asked him to open the box. The husband opened this box and found two crocheted dolls and a stack of money worth about \$95,000. Wow. The husband then curiously stared at the contents of the box and back to his wife, back to the dolls, back to the wife, back to the cash and back to his wife. Until finally, he got up the nerve and he asked her, well, honey, what's, what, what is this? What, what, what's in this box? And she said, well, when you and I were to be married, my grandmother told me that there was a secret to happy marriage, which was to avoid arguments whenever you could. And if I ever got angry with you, she directed me to go crochet a doll and to pray for you and to pray for our marriage. Well, the old man, he was relieved and happy. In fact, he kind of let out a bit of a chuckle and he thought to himself, two crocheted dolls, that's it? That means his wife has only been angry with him twice during their entire 61 years of marriage. It's pretty amazing. So he said, well, dear, that explains the dolls, but what about the money that came in the box? Where did it come from? And she said, oh, well, that's from the money that I made from selling all of the other dolls over the last 61 years. Well, welcome to this new series called Secret, where each week we're going to look into an aspect of Christian living that answers questions like, what am I? Who am I? And why am I here? They're all very important questions. Now, these secrets are not exactly secrets that you might keep from one another, and they're

certainly not secrets that the people within the church have tried to keep from each other. Instead, think of these secrets a bit more like keys. Each week, we're going to answer a question or we're going to answer an aspect of living in Christ, being an actual Christian. And we're actually going to be using a book called Abide. This book, Abide, was written by Warren Wiersbe originally in 1977, and a large portion of this series is actually going to be based on that book. So if you would like to pick up a copy of that, once again, that is called Abide by Warren Wiersbe, W-I-E-R-S-B-E. You can get it on Amazon, and if you have Prime, you can get it to you practically the next day. So each week, we're going to unpack a different part of our faith walk and answer some questions along the way with what Warren calls in his book, he calls them secrets.

And you can almost think of these secrets kind of like zooming in on a map. Like what you saw on the video, if you were able to watch this video, if you're listening on the radio, it would kind of be like seeing the United States from a global perspective. And then you zoom in to Indiana, and then you zoom in to Greensburg, and then you zoom in again on Broadway Street, and then you zoom in for a fifth and final time onto 425 North Broadway Street, which is where we are here at First Christian Church of Greensburg, Indiana. And so we're going to take five weeks to continuously zoom in on these aspects of living the Christian life, of abiding in him. Pastor Ray is going to talk more about that next week. So if you have your Bible, if you'd like to look at that now, you can go ahead and begin to bring up the section of scripture we're going to be covering, which is John chapter 15.

[6 : 45] The book of John is pretty far through your Bible. It's definitely greater than three quarters of the way. You can cheat off a neighbor. You can look at the table of contents. You can just flip through and guess until you find it, whatever you need to do. But we're going to be covering John chapter 15.

And during this sermon series, rather, we're going to be covering the first 17 verses of 27 within this chapter. Now to give you some context, chapter 15 happens after Jesus, of course, has been born. He's grown up. He's now considered a man in Jewish culture. And now he has established his ministry here on earth. So he's done a number of things, right? A lot already. For instance, he's fed the 5,000. He took meager rations and made 5,000 plus people full. He's raised Lazarus from the dead. But this chapter 15 is before the arrest. It's before the phony conviction. It's before the crucifixion. And it's before my favorite part, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So hopefully you're at John chapter 15 at this point. And I want to go ahead and read for you verses 1 through 8. And then we'll jump down and talk about verse 16 as well.

John chapter 15, verse 1. Jesus says this. He says, I am the true vine and my father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit.

[8 : 17] While every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me as I also remain in you.

No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that's thrown away and withers. Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. This is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. Verse 16.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And so that whatever you ask in my name, the father will give to you. Let's pray.

Father, we pray today that as we read your word, as we discuss these secrets, help what we read, what we discuss, to pierce through all of the distractions and that we would not just be hearers of this word, but doers also. Father, we ask that you would get us out of the way and that we would come to know you in a deeper way. Get me out of the way as I present the words only that you give to me to say. And it's in your name we pray. Amen.

[10 : 02] All right. So today we're going to be focusing on verses 2, 8, and 16, of which we already read. So if you want to write those out into some notes that you have, by the way, you can get on the YouVersion Bible app, and then you can actually sign in or find events through our church, First Christian Church Greensburg, and get these fill in the blanks. So if you're taking notes, verses 2, 8, and 16 are what we're going to be focusing on today, and you can go back through and read those. By the way, speaking of reading, we recommended this book earlier, and I just want to let you know

that you do not need this book in order to get something out of this sermon series. But Warren does explain some things maybe a little differently than myself or Ray. And so it might be good to pick up a copy and read this for some further study. Okay, let's continue on here. So let me give you some more facts about this section of scripture. The word the, which is the most used word in the English language, is used five times in the New International Version, or the NIV, which is what we just read it out of.

The word fruit, by comparison, is used nine times. I got to make sure I'm holding up the right number of fingers. Nine times fruit is used, or fruit bearing. This shows a very clear emphasis. Whenever you read the Bible and it repeats something over and over, it is showing emphasis. And so there's this clear emphasis on bearing fruit. And so that actually leads us to the first secret of our series, along with the first fill in the blank, which is the secret of living is fruit bearing. The secret of living is fruit bearing. Now, I mentioned to you earlier, this whole idea of a map or a globe, we're starting at the most broad secret. It's kind of like saying, okay, so you're alive. Now what? Right? And what do we mean when we say alive? Because we're all alive, right? Well, here's the thing. You can be alive and be living, but that doesn't necessarily mean that you are living for Christ. It might mean that you're just living for yourself and that you're bearing fruit of yourself, of your own kingdom.

What we're talking about is Christian life or the life of Christ. So you're alive. Now what? So how do you get this life? This may be totally new to you. Your head might be spinning thinking, okay, well, what is this Christian life or what's he talking about with this fruit bearing? We're going to get into more about the fruit bearing here in just a second. But even for those of us who are in Christ, this is a terrific reminder of the gospel. And so I want to present this to you for you today. The Christian life or receiving this Christian life, stepping into this Christian life means this, recognizing your sin. It means recognizing you're imperfect, recognizing your need for Christ because he's the only one who can help us, recognizing God's love for you. Like Romans 5.8 where it says, God showed his love for us in this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It's such a crazy topic. There's a hip-hop artist named Shai Lin. He's a Christian hip-hop artist who says it like this, can you truly understand fallen or imperfect man's dilemma? See, only a human can substitute for human lives, but only God can take the wrath of God and survive. See, the humanly unsolvable obstacle with God, all is plausible. Nothing is impossible. I think that's so neat. So then what? Well, the next thing that you would do or the next way or next step rather in living this Christian life is then confessing your belief in him, calling out for him and receiving the free gift that he offers, and then doing something with it, Matthew 28, 19, and 20, which is widely known as the Great Commission, Jesus actually goes out and he says, therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. What happens after they're made into disciples? Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And so this looks like recognizing your need, recognizing the love, recognizing that you need to call out to him, and then you do something with it, you get baptized, right? And then you teach them to obey everything I've commanded you, and surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age, which is verse 20 of Matthew 19.

So that is what this Christian life is. That's the life that Jesus gives us. He gives us his perfection in exchange for our brokenness and our sin. It's beautiful, really, that all we need to do is accept this free gift, get baptized, and then do something with it. And that secret of living, of life in Christ is fruit bearing. So what is fruits? When we talk about Christian fruits, we're not talking about apples and oranges and pears and so on and so forth. No, we're talking about an external evidence of an internal work. Fruits are just outward showings of something that's happening or has happened inside. And so this is where I want to make this as practical as possible for all of us today. There are five fruits of the life in Christ. And so these are going to be your fill in the blanks as we go. And so I want to talk about these five specifically. There are more ways to tell that something's happened inside of a person, but these are five definite fruits of a life in Christ. Number one, be a disciple maker.

[16:13] Another way you could say that is to win souls for him. What does that mean to win souls? Well, did you hear back in Matthew where Jesus says, go and make disciples? That's what he's talking about.

Be a disciple maker. With each one of these fruits, I want to give you a really, really practical way to apply this to your life. So be a disciple maker. Well, how do you do that? Be the type of person who can't wait to help someone know Jesus. That means you need to be prepared and studied, but also

trusting that God is going to work through your imperfection to help draw people back to himself. Be a disciple maker. Here's another fruit. Be a person who is set apart. You know, if you hear somebody say, oh, he's so holy, you might think of a monk in some far away monastery where he separated himself completely from society. What Warren Wiersbe talks about when he talks about this being set apart is he calls it practical holiness in real, in reality, in the real world. How do you set yourself apart?

How do you practice this? Well, 2 Corinthians 7.1 says this, therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, these promises of life, by the way, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of the reverence for God. In other words, because God has saved me, I'm not going to run back to the things that got me in trouble in the first place. Be the type of person, here's the application for this, be the type of person who actively chooses a lifestyle centered on Jesus. Not including Jesus, but centered on Jesus. Where I used to go, I don't go anymore. How I used to dress, I don't dress like that anymore. How I used to talk and think and act. I don't act, talk, think. I don't do any of that. I'm a totally new person because Christ Jesus has saved me. Be the type of person who actively chooses a lifestyle centered on Jesus. All right, let's talk about the next fruit today. Be a radically generous person. Warren Wiersbe says this, one of the characteristics of the early Christians was the joyful sharing of their possessions. It was not communism, it was Christian compassion. It wasn't, I'm going to add on to this, it wasn't government, it was community. You can read that in Acts 2 44 and 45 where they made all of their belongings each other's to make sure that the gospel got further and further and further. Be the type of person who gives more than you take. In fact, in this application, I'm going to add in a way. Be the type of person who gives way more than you take. Did you hear this part in verse 16? [19:24] We read this earlier. Just for a reminder, it says, you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And then this part, and then so that whatever you ask in my name, the Father will give you. Well, you might be thinking, well, that's awesome.

As soon as I'm done listening to this sermon, I am going to go grab myself a lottery ticket. I'm going to pray and say, God, this is my desire. You're going to grant it to me. Thank you so much. This is awesome. And then get to scratching. No, that's not how that works. I'm sure each of us have probably wished that it might work like that, but that's not how it works because God's not a genie. He is a God. He is the Lord. He is the King, and He's meant to sit on the throne of your life. When your life, when you live a life that is dedicated to Him, your desires change. And instead of the perfect scratcher or immediate gratification in your life, your desires become like His. God, I want to be your hands and feet. God will absolutely bless you being the hands and feet of Christ. As long as you are living a life dedicated to Him, your desires will automatically change, and He will bless you. Be the type of person who gives way more than you take.

All right, we got to get going here. The next one that I want to talk about, the next fruit of living a life in Christ is this. Be a person of character. Be a person of character, specifically godly character. [20:57] When I talked about bearing fruit, you probably immediately thought about the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law, right?

We are meant to be people of character. We're meant to be people of godly character because of what Christ has done for us. And even though we can't do it to the same level, we aspire to be Godly attached to this vine. After all, He is divine and we are de-branches. I'm sorry, I've been waiting to use that joke all sermon. I had to express an enormous amount of self-control just to get to this point without using that divine de-branches joke. Anyway, I hope you got a kick out of it. So here's the application. Be the type of person who shows love in the face of hate. And I mean godly love. Not blind acceptance, but actual godly love. Be the type of person who shows joy in the face of adversity and peace in the face of sorrow and anxiety. Be the person who shows patience in the face of slow pace. Back in 2020, my wife and I, unfortunately, we lost a dear friend of ours. He was actually the pastor who married my wife and I. His name was Pastor Dave Fowles. And he used to say something every once in a while that really stuck with me from clear back when I was in junior high school. He said, if you're standing in the bank, you might think I have a good reason to be irritable about this line not going. I got better things to do. I got more places to be. I just want to do my business and get out of here, right? But unfortunately, what we accidentally show God when we get irritable about things like that is that, God, I can manage my time better than you can

manage my time.

Let's be the type of people who are patient in the face of slow pace. Be the type of person who shows kindness in the face of hatred and goodness in the face of nastiness and self-control in the face of selfishness. Maybe that selfishness is within you or maybe it's on the outside of you. All right, let's keep going. The last fruit that we're going to cover today, fruit number five, be a person of praise.

Be a person of praise. Revelation 5, 11 to 13, we're going to fly through this one here. He says this, Then I looked and I heard the voice of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousands times ten thousands. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice, they were saying, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise. Verse 13, Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the sea and on the sea and all that was in them saying this, To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever. Amen. What an incredible view that God gave to John. That's the type of praise that we're aiming for, friends. Be the type of person who gives all glory and all honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 13, 15 says, Through Christ, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of what? Of praise, the fruit of lips that openly profess His name. When life is great, thank you, Jesus. When life stinks, thank you, Jesus.

[24 : 42] We are going to sing on Sunday morning, There is power, power, wonder, working power in the precious blood of the Lamb. In other words, I was dead once and now I'm not. I was dead once and now I'm not.

Praise be to God. We're going to sing this later on in our service on Sunday, I believe in life eternal, I believe in the virgin birth, I believe in the saints communion and in your holy church. I believe in the resurrection when Jesus comes again, for I believe in the name of Jesus. Charity Gale says in her song, Thank you, Jesus, for the blood applied. She says this, Thank you, Jesus, for the blood applied.

Thank you, Jesus. It's washed me white. Thank you, Jesus. You have saved my life, brought me from the darkness into glorious light. Church, be a person of praise. That is one very clear way to see fruit in your life.

Another thing that I want to talk to you about today, in sort of the last part, is to trust the process. Trust the process. God's got a process for you.

There was once a humble cobbler. He made shoes and he worked in his shop for decades when an upscale restaurant went in beside his small and cramped establishment. But soon, delectable aromas were emanating from the restaurant's kitchen and the cobbler began to eat his lunch outside so he could enjoy the smells of the kitchen while he ate his humble bologna sandwich. After this had gone on for months, the cobbler received a bill from the restaurant for enjoyment of food. Puzzle, he went on next door and he asked the restaurant manager that he had never been here because he can't afford anything on the menu. Why did you charge me? That's when the manager said, well, I've seen you enjoying what comes out of our kitchen and you need to pay for it. The cobbler flatly refused to pay and the restaurant manager then took him to court. At the hearing, the judge asked the manager to present his complaint. And sort of snidely, the manager stood up and said, every day this man comes out of his shop, sits near our kitchen, and smells our food while eating his bologna sandwich. Clearly, we're providing an added value to his lunch and we deserve to be paid. Well, the judge then turned to the cobbler and he asked what he had to say about this situation. The cobbler, though, he didn't speak a word. Instead, he just stuck his hand in his pocket and he began to rattle around a few dimes and a quarter and what felt like might be a nickel. What's the meaning of this? This judge asked. The cobbler said, I am paying for the smell of his food with the sound of my money. That seems silly, right?

[27 : 34] You see, living a life where you don't bear fruit is kind of like trying to pay with the sound of money for the smell of food. But God has given us the actual meal and he said, it's on the house. You just got to take it. The last kind of way to look at this is that you are unique. Did you know that most of the apples in the world are actually based off of just one or two trees? It's pretty interesting. The apples that you would buy in the supermarket, that is, are grafted. They're grafted from a tree and you also have been grafted into the vine of Christ. You are a branch in that vine.

But also, did you know, if you take that same apple that fell off of this beautiful tree that's been grafted and you were to plant the seed, you would not actually get that same apple tree. You get a

totally different variety of apples. And it's because every seed has a unique code in it, unique genetic information in it. And I believe that that's a really beautiful picture of how God has created each one of us. We have been planted in our specific time with our specific parents and friends and colleagues on purpose. God has prepared the soil specifically for you and for the code that he's written into you. I want to leave you with this amazing quote from Warren Wiersbe in his book. He says, by an act of faith, yield yourself to Christ for the purpose of bearing fruit, for the purpose of fulfilling that wonderful plan that God has for you and for you alone. Let's pray.

God, thank you so much for this time that you've given us to learn more about you, to learn more about what it means to live in you, to bear fruit in you, and how that's the key. God, as we continue through this series, I just ask your special blessing on us and on all those who are listening, whether it's one person or a million people. God, we just pray that you would be dwelling in us. And it's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Hey, I just want to give you a really quick reminder. If you are someone who has made a decision to follow Christ today, or if you're someone who has faith questions, we want you to come along, or I'm kind of sorry, come to us so we can come alongside you. You can reach out to us by calling us on our phone number, which is 812-663-8488. [30 : 12] That's 812-663-8488. Or you can email me at tyler at fccgreensburg.com. You can also reach out to our lead pastor, Ray, at ray at fccgreensburg.com. Hey, thank you so much for joining us. Go and live life in Christ and bear fruit for him.