

Christ's Fruitful Branches

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[0 : 00] Today the scripture reading is taken from John chapter 15 verses 1 to 17. I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it may bear more fruit.

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine.

Neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him he it is that bears much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered thrown into the fire and burnt.

[1 : 08] If you abide in me and my words abide in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

As the father has loved me so so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love.

Just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.

This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this. That someone lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants. For the servant does not know what his master is doing.

[2 : 14] But I have called you friends for all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you. You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.

So that whatever you ask the father in my name he may give it to you. These things I command you so that you will love one another. Here ends the scripture reading.

Well good morning. Good morning. Yeah so my name is Josh and it's a joy to be with you all this morning and to get to know Kingdom Life Church over the past year or so.

I'm encouraged by your faithfulness to the Lord, your faithfulness to his word and I'm privileged to be here with you all. So before we jump into our passage, let's pray.

Father I thank you for this time. Father we thank you that you gave us your word to guide us into all truth. Lord we thank you for your goodness and mercy to give us this time to worship you.

[3 : 25] Father I pray for the Bahamas and Kingdom Life Church and across the world for that matter Lord that we would bear good fruit abiding in the vine.

Abiding in your son Jesus. Lord I pray for this time now that you would guard me from error that anything that's from you would go into our hearts and minds that we'd be conformed to the image of your son Jesus.

Lord we trust you for all this and we pray that we would glorify you in this time. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. So I want us all to consider something.

I want us to consider how many things had to come together this morning to make a worship gathering like this happen. Obviously many of you sitting here played a part in making this worship gathering possible.

So but how many things pianos microphones lights tires on your car signs on the street cups of coffee. How many things had to come together to make a time of worship like this possible.

[4 : 27] One that I was thinking of is actually this projector. This projector is very important. It put words on the screen for us to worship. It gave us verses to remember.

Very important things. And at some point this projector was designed. It was made. It was made up of a lot of different parts. It was carefully constructed. And it came here to fulfill its purpose. Now I want you to imagine a brand new projector coming here for delivery. It's a very expensive one. It comes and it arrives in a box. You open it. You take out the packing slip, the styrofoam. You even fix it to the mount up there with brackets. You plug it in and you press the power button and nothing happens. Maybe you press it 10 times, maybe 100 times and nothing happens. The projector is not getting power. I want you to imagine that a projector comes and it's just not receiving power. It's lifeless. It doesn't receive words from the computer.

[5 : 30] It doesn't put words up on the screen. Without its life source, without electricity, the projector couldn't fulfill its purpose. It's not useful at all. And so we wouldn't use it.

You would probably discard it because it's not fulfilling the thing it was purchased for. So our passage today in John chapter 15 gives us another illustration of this, but it's infinitely better because it comes from the Lord Jesus himself.

Jesus is with his disciples and he describes not electronic equipment, but he describes more timeless examples of a vine dresser and a vine branches and fruit.

He's teaching his followers about how men and women don't and actually can't bear fruit apart from him. This theme of fruitfulness is actually all over the Bible.

In the Old Testament, in the book of Hosea, God says when his people had turned to idols, God says to them, What have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you.

[6 : 30] I am like an evergreen cypress. From me comes your fruit. During his earthly ministry, Jesus said that no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit.

So we come to John chapter 15 this morning and it's on the heels of the Last Supper before Jesus and his disciples leave for the Garden of Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus has been teaching his followers and they're starting to understand and put together that he is the Christ.

This comes right before Jesus lays down his life for our sins on the cross. And on this night, Jesus has washed his disciples feet. He has told them about how they would abandon him the next day. And yet he encourages them for their hearts not to be troubled. And then this brings us right here to John chapter 15. And our text answers important questions like, What's my purpose?

Or what's our purpose? What was I made for? What does God want from me? And how do I find joy in life? So the big idea of our passage this morning of John chapter 15 verses 1 to 17 is this.

[7 : 41] Abide in the true vine, Jesus. And then we get three ways of how we do that. First way, we see the big picture. That's verses 1 to 7.

Second, know your purpose. That's verses 8 to 11. And then third, bear good fruit. Verses 12 to 17. Now as we go along, I want you to keep your Bibles open because the authority this morning is not at all with me or my ideas.

It's with God's word. So let's jump in. Let's look at verse 1. To understand what it means to abide in Jesus and what we must believe and then how we're supposed to live, we need to get a clear understanding of what the big picture is.

Verse 1, I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser. So Jesus gives his followers an important illustration of particular roles in the universe.

Verse 1 tells us that God the Father is the vine dresser. He's the one who manages, designs, orchestrates the big picture. Jesus says that he is the vine.

[8 : 46] He's the source of life, the foundation. In verse 2, we see that humans are represented as branches. So this is an important concept to understand.

So important that Jesus actually repeats it here and there throughout our text. In verse 5, it literally reemphasizes that Jesus is the vine and humans are the branches. So we want to recognize the roles here.

Who does what? God the Father designs, orchestrates, prunes, and even removes branches. Jesus is the vine, the source of life, the foundation.

And apart from him, we can bear no good fruit. And then branches in this teaching represent humans or humanity. But not only that, we see that there are two different types of branches. The first type we can call fruitless branches. Verse 2, every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. He describes them again in verse 6.

[9 : 45] If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. So who are these branches that bear no

fruit?

One interpretation is that these are Christians. And that's reasoned by the fact that in the passage it says that they're in him. But they are those that don't bear fruit in their life and they don't receive discipline in some form because of their lack of good works for the kingdom.

The other interpretation is that these fruitless branches are those who were created by God like every human. And they're around Christian community. Yet, they aren't abiding in Jesus at all. They don't know him. This, I think, is the correct interpretation because of how these branches are described. This became a bit more clear to me when I read a book by theologian Herman Bobbing. He argued that the evil branches that are on the vine, but there are places like 2 Timothy 3.5 where it says that in the last days of the world, which the Bible says that we're living in right now, there will be those who have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power.

[10:57] So what does that mean? Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Or to be on a vine and not bearing fruit. Well, one way you might have heard this described is what we would call nominal Christianity.

Nominal referring to Christian in name only. There are those who attend church, even identify themselves as Christians, and maybe even they read their Bibles. And yet, they don't know Jesus or trust him or bear any good fruit in his name.

And our passage actually tells us what the future is for fruitless branches. For those who don't know and abide in Jesus himself. They're taken away. They wither. They're gathered and they're thrown into fire and burned.

Their fate is eternity apart from God and his goodness. Now, the truth is, this was bad news for all of us. Every single person in this room, me included and foremost, we have been unfaithful and disobeyed God.

We were designed to be in a trusting, dependent relationship with him. But in Genesis chapter 3, we read about how our first representatives, Adam and Eve, sinned against God by disobeying him and not trusting him.

[12:15] As their descendants were by nature rebellious against God, naturally. And sin has reigned over us. Every single one of us have sinned against a holy and perfect God.

And we deserve his punishment. But there's such good news in the Bible for us. There's such good news even in our passage for us. According to John chapter 15, there are those who abide in Jesus.

We see in verse 3 that Jesus tells his followers that they are already clean because of the word that he has spoken to them. And that word is the good news of the gospel.

It's the good news that God stepped down from heaven, stepped into earth, into our pain and suffering, and rescued us from being destroyed from his wrath. Now, how did he do that?

Jesus lived a life that we were called to live without sin. He took the punishment that we deserve by dying on a cross at the hands of men. Some theologians call this the great exchange where Jesus takes our sin upon himself and he gives us his righteousness.

[13:20] If we're united to him, we get his perfect resume. And then Jesus rose from the grave on the third day into eternal life, into a future that he secured for us of forgiveness, joy, and peace with our God.

By being united to him, we're declared not guilty. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And if we do that, Jesus also doesn't leave us alone.

He gives us each other, brothers and sisters. But also, if you're sitting here wondering, okay, this passage talked about the vine dresser, God the Father. It talked about the vine, Jesus the Son.

Where's the Holy Spirit in this passage? Well, it actually came right before this in John chapter 14. Jesus promises his followers the Holy Spirit who will be in them and dwell in them forever.

Yet there will be those who do not receive him. So wherever you are this morning, whatever you're walking into this room with, whatever you've been through this week or this month or in your life, my invitation for you is that if you have not yet received Jesus by faith, wait no more.

[14:31] Receive him with empty hands of faith and eternal life, abiding in him. And don't abide in anyone or anything else but Jesus himself.

So for those that are in Christ, for those of you in this room that know Jesus, and for those who are considering knowing Jesus, our passage describes fruitful branches.

Let's pick up in verse 2. Every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine.

Neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing. So, those who are in Jesus bear fruit.

[15:29] Do good works. As it says, another way of putting it was in Matthew chapter 13, where it describes the word of God landing on the soft heart of a Christian.

And it says that seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some 60, some 30. Now, if you're wondering, what does it mean to abide in Jesus?

It might be easy to answer, how do you abide in a shelter from a storm? But what does it mean to abide in God? A pastor from my church in Pennsylvania described it this way.

He said, abiding is surrender plus faith plus time. So, surrender meaning giving your life to Christ. Faith meaning trusting him with your life and death.

And then time meaning literally just staying put. Staying put in Jesus. Or as the ESV study Bible described it, abiding in me means to continue in a daily personal relationship with Jesus.

[16:31] Characterized by trust, prayer, obedience, and joy. So, a question I want you to consider is, does that mean that you get whatever you want in life?

If we're Christians, do we get whatever we desire? No? Well, then, I want to know what we do with verse 7. If you look at verse 7 with me, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

So, what do we make of that? Well, first, I can emphasize what this passage does not mean. It does not mean that once we're followers of Jesus, we can name it and claim it.

It does not mean that we get everything that our hearts, which are still affected by sin, it doesn't mean that we get everything that we desire. It does not mean that once we're Christians, we are certainly meant to prosper in terms of health or wealth.

Okay, then, so what does it mean? What it means is that if we're abiding in Jesus and His words abide in us, we will begin to want what He wants. These things that He wants for us will begin to want more and more, and those desires will be satisfied.

[17:46] Our hearts and our desires will be conformed to God's. A healthy branch will grow in the way that a tree intends it to grow. If you were to walk out from here and you see a beautiful tree with a large branch bearing a lot of fruit, was that what the branch wanted, or is that what the tree wanted?

The answer is it's both. As we're conformed to the image of God, we start to desire more and more what He wants for us. So, furthermore, what is promised for fruitful branches for Christians?

I want you to notice in verse 2 the word that's right after the comma. Every branch that does not bear fruit, He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

So, we're promised as Christians that God the Father will prune the branches for greater and greater gospel work in our lives. We're promised to bear more fruit through the process of pruning. But pruning is difficult for anyone that has pruned hedges before or a bush. The fact that God the Father does that to us, it's painful. It's painful as we lose parts of ourself that God intends for us to lose.

[18:57] Charles Spurgeon wrote that the most fruitful, must the fruitful branch be pruned? Must the knife cut even the best and most useful? No doubt this is so, for much of the Lord's purging work is done through afflictions of one kind or another.

It is not the evil but the good who have the promise of tribulation in this life. But then the end makes more the full amends for the painful nature of the means.

If we may produce more fruit for our Lord, then we will not mind the pruning and the loss of foliage. So, if you're sitting here this morning and facing some form of suffering, I want you to be encouraged by this passage.

If you're facing family tension or lack of sleep or a difficult job situation, health challenges, the loss of a loved one, I want you to take comfort in the Lord's pruning hand.

God doesn't make mistakes. Every cut and every pull on your life is governed by God the Father. For our ultimate good, Proverbs 3 says that, My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father of the son in whom he

delights.

[20 : 17] Hebrews 12 says that, For a moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

So, if you're suffering today, trust God's pruning hand over your life. Look to the future hope that he's offering.

And now, maybe you're wondering, Okay, so what is the fruit that comes off of these branches? Maybe you're thinking, Okay, that means glorifying God, feeding the hungry, taking people into our home, being faithful to our spouses, many types of fruit.

And yes and amen. And we're going to get a little bit more into specifics in a few verses down. But for now, let's remember that the big idea of our passage is to abide in the true vine, Jesus.

And the first way we do that is remembering the big picture, or seeing the big picture. The next way in which we abide in Jesus is knowing our purpose. Now let's go to verse 8 together.

[21 : 21] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. Just as fruit in our world has many purposes, you can use fruit for nourishment, you can use it for its taste, you can make a dessert to be hospitable to someone out of fruit.

The fruit in our life has many purposes. Two of those purposes are given here in verse 8. The first one, the fruit of our lives gives glory to God the Father.

And this is actually the most important use of the fruit in our lives, our good works. When we go into the surrounding world and we praise Jesus, when we feed the hungry, when we pray for our enemies, when we don't repay evil with evil, when we do good works, it shows that we serve a God who transcends our own personal desires.

Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, to let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. God has given glory or weightiness in the world when Christians do good in his name.

Second reason that verse 8 gives us for our good works. They prove that we're disciples of Jesus. So, I want to ask you a question, which is, if you were to leave this worship gathering this afternoon and were to have a discussion with somebody at the grocery store or maybe while you're on a walk, how long do you think it would take you to determine whether this person has lived in the Bahamas for some time?

[22 : 58] How hard would that be for you to determine? Maybe you could just up front ask them, have you lived here for a long time? But maybe you could tell by the phrases they use or when they mention where their children go to school.

Or they could say something like how they're not even interested in going in the ocean water until at least April or May. That's something I've learned in recent months. So, these qualities don't technically make someone a Bahamian.

They're marks of someone who's lived here for a while. They're marks of someone who has lived here for some time. So, this corrects a dangerous misteaching of John chapter 15 or other parts in the Bible.

Say, James chapter 2, where it says, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Now, you might hear that or you may have heard that and heard it taught that, okay, a Christian is someone who bears a lot of fruit and pleases God, and then that's why they become a Christian.

That's how they become a Christian. We get eternal life from our good works, and that is a lie. We do not become Christians from our good works.

[24 : 09] We are not good enough. We're not called to bear fruit to then be worthy of being rooted in the vine. We abide in the vine, Jesus, and then we bear good fruit.

Good deeds do not make someone a Christian. A Christian abides in Jesus, is filled with his Holy Spirit, and then goes out and bears good fruit, good works.

As Pastor John Piper has put it, the kind of faith that counts for justification or being declared not guilty from God is the kind of faith that is effective in producing love.

So, someone abiding in the vine of Jesus tends to increasingly bear good fruit and good works in the world. And this is because they experience the life-changing love of God.

Let's look back at verse 9. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

[25 : 09] Okay, so how the Father has loved Jesus, Jesus has loved his disciples. So, how has the Father, God the Father, loved his Son, Jesus?

We could probably write books on this topic alone, but here are four ways right off the bat. First way, the Father has loved Jesus by being in eternal communion with him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Eternal loving relationship. Second way, God the Father loves Jesus specifically as God the Son.

Third, God the Father is well-pleased with Jesus because of his righteousness.

And fourth, God the Father gave a plan of redemption that was successful. And these four ways actually correspond to how Jesus has loved us. First, Jesus reconciled us into an eternal loving relationship with God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

Second, he makes us children of God. We become part of God's family when we're adopted by him, by faith. Third, Jesus is pleased with us because of his righteousness, though, not ours.

[26 : 20] And fourth, Jesus came through on achieving his plan of redemption. So, as the Father has loved Jesus, Jesus loves his disciples.

When you read your Bible this week, I want you all, me included, to consider that the words you're reading can show something about humanity, about God's goodness, about his faithfulness, his character, and even how much God has passed his love onto us through his son, Jesus.

But, one thing we haven't talked about yet is obedience. What do we do with the call in our passage to obey God? We see this element of abiding in God's love being related to keeping his commandments.

Now, I already said a few minutes ago that we don't become Christians by following God's commandments. We become Christians as a gift of grace. But, there does seem to be some sort of overlapping of descriptions here.

Obedying God, following his commandments, and loving God, being in his love. we see this overlap. Jesus kept his Father's commandments and abides in his love.

[27 : 31] Now, this relates to us because once we're saved, we experience God's love and we actually want to obey commandments. In repentance and faith, once we're saved from our sin, we experience heart change.

The Bible says that through Christ's work, we're given a heart of flesh from a heart of stone. Our hearts are softened. So, love and obedience actually go hand in hand in the life of a Christian. They're not at odds. To quote Charles Spurgeon again, he said that he who cares nothing for holiness, or you could say obedience, or purity, nothing, he who cares nothing for holiness knows nothing of the love of Jesus.

If we receive salvation from Christ and abide in his love, we experience his joy and we desire to follow his commandments, knowing that they're actually for our good also.

Love for God and joy in him are going hand in hand with obedience. They're not at odds. I love how Jonathan Piper wrote a book where he reflects on Jonathan Edwards, one of his big influences, and he uses this as an example.

[28 : 41] He says, sometimes people ask, should we pursue obedience to God or joy in God? Edwards would answer, this question involves a category confusion.

It's like asking, should I pursue fruit or apples? Obedience is doing what we're told and we are told to delight ourselves in the Lord. Therefore, pursuing joy in God, joy in him, is obedience.

Jesus tells us in verse 11 why he's saying all these things. these things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.

So, in the depths of this passage, we get to life's, some of life's biggest questions, like, why do we exist? Well, this section of scripture tells us that our purpose is to give God glory and to enjoy him. Or, a few hundred years ago when the Westminster Catechism was put together, it worded it this way. Question, what is the chief end of man? Answer, man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

[29 : 54] If you're unsure of what God's plan for you is this morning, should I take this new job? Should I trade in this vehicle for that one? Should I attend this new school? That's okay. Those are important decisions and we should ask God for wisdom because he promises to give us wisdom when we come to him and ask.

But I want you to know this, that God's ultimate plan for your life is his glory and for our joy. God truly wants you to have joy and happiness in him.

One day, he'll make the joy of a Christian fulfilled for eternity when our joy is brought to completion, when he makes all things new if we're trusting in Christ alone.

The more you enjoy God and abide in Jesus and rejoice in his saving work, the more you'll want to obey his commandments, to read scripture and follow God by obeying him.

So, we abide in Jesus first by seeing the big picture, second, by knowing your purpose, and third and finally, by going and bearing good fruit.

[31 : 00] Let's look at verse 12. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

We saw that as the Father loved Jesus, he loves his disciples. Now, Jesus says that as he has loved us, we're supposed to go out and love one another.

So, as God loves, as God's love comes down to us, it's meant to bend outward to one another. So, Jesus told others of his good news of redemption.

He cared for the needy. He rebuked the self-righteous. He gave us hope. We're called to love one another the way that Jesus has loved us. Now, is that something that you can do?

Is that something we can do? Not physically laying down your life, but even just sacrificing time for someone who's in need. Someone who needs encouragement. Or maybe praying for somebody that you feel like you've prayed a hundred times for already, but not losing hope and being persistent in prayer for them.

[32 : 06] Maybe it's inviting someone into your home that feels forgotten. Or sharing an encouraging passage of scripture with someone who needs to hear it. Jesus says that there's no greater love than laying down one's life for their friends.

I want to pause on that point because it's so important. Jesus is indeed our king, our creator, our God, our master. We're his servants as we seek to honor and serve him, but it's remarkable that Jesus here calls his followers, Christians, his friends.

We're more than just servants because we know what he's doing. Jesus makes his plan known to us in the Bible. In verse 14, it says, you are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what the master is doing. But I have called you friends for all that I've heard from the Father I have made known to you.

I hope that you've experienced a leader like this somewhere in your life, whether it be in the home or at work or somewhere else in your life where you've experienced a leader who shows you their heart, who tells you how much they care about you and wants you to know the plans that they have for you.

[33 : 21] When I was in seminary, I was getting overwhelmed at one point with the amount of reading. I was feeling like I was getting in over my head with the pace of reading and I wanted to perform well and read every single page that was assigned, which was a ton of pages, a lot of reading.

And one day, I approached my professor and confessed to him that I was falling really far behind in the reading. I didn't want to fail his course and so I talked to him about how much I was struggling and as I told him this, he listened to me with a look of great concern and care and his response caught me off guard.

He empathized with me. He empathized that I wanted to be excellent in my work, but he ultimately told me why he assigned so much reading.

It wasn't so that I'd perform or read every single page. He described to me that he assigned this reading so that my study would be enriched. So that I would grow in wisdom in Christ and grow to love Jesus more and more and better serve God's people.

It wasn't measured by page count or even an exam. It was measured by faithfulness to the work. He reoriented my heart to see why he assigned so much reading and that he didn't care all that much about the percentage or my perfection in reading every single page.

[34 : 39] He cared about why I was reading. So in that moment, he wasn't just being my seminary professor. He was also being a friend. He communicated his plan clearly that I might see the goal that he had in mind for me.

Jesus says, as the creator of the universe, Jesus says to those of you that are trusting in him that you are his friend. Jesus makes his plan of redemption, his commands, the teachings of God, he makes them known to us.

It's not a secret knowledge that is tucked away somewhere, but he makes it known through the gospel. And as wise as it would be for us to choose Jesus to be our friend, it wasn't our doing. If you look at verse 16, Jesus says, you did not choose me, but I chose you. We not only bear good fruit by God's work in our life, we don't even become a fruitful branch without God choosing us. God didn't just make branches a little bit better at bearing fruit, which he does. He does prune us to be more fruitful, but a fruitful branch doesn't exist at all apart from God.

[35 : 51] God didn't just make us a little bit better. He brought us from death to life. Life itself comes from God to bear good fruit. From start to finish, from A to Z, Jesus is the source of life that we would bear fruit.

So if you're sitting here thinking, well, I want to bear more fruit in my life for God. I want to make a difference. I want to bear good gospel fruit for his kingdom and love other people. I want you to know that that is evidence of God working in you.

The fact that you have that desire to serve God faithfully is evidence that he's at work in your heart. If you're abiding in Christ alone for hope in life and in death, that's because he chose you.

He has begun a good work in you. And the Bible says in Philippians 1, he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Now, back to just the question of what exactly are those fruits in the life of a Christian.

the fruit is meant to glorify God and to love one another. But what exactly does that fruit look like? Now, some over the years, over the centuries, have called this the one another's in the Bible.

[37 : 05] In the New Testament covenant people of God, the one another's are the things that we do for and to one another as Christians. Loving one another is a comprehensive term, but I wanted to share with you a few of the one another's in the New Testament.

Romans 12 says, outdo one another in showing honor. Later, it says, live in harmony with one another. Romans 15 says, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God. Again, in Romans 15, instruct one another. Galatians 5, serve one another. Ephesians 4, bear with one another. Ephesians 4, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God and Christ forgave you.

Later in Ephesians, address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. 1

Thessalonians 5, encourage one another. Hebrews 10, consider how to stir one another up to love and good works.

1 Peter 4, show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 John 1, but if we walk in the light and he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his son, cleanses us from all sin.

[38 : 17] I could go on and on, but what does all of that sound like? What does that sound like, all the one another's in the New Testament? Well, what it should sound like is a local church or what a local church should be.

church is. A local church, and this is modified from a great definition from a pastor named Jonathan Lehman, it's a group of Christians who gather regularly in the name of Jesus to be shaped by the preaching of the gospel and the observing of the ordinances of God.

That's baptism and the Lord's Supper. So that's what a church is. So what should a church look like? Well, that's where those one another's are so helpful. They describe what the fruit of life, the life of Christians, the life of a church should look like.

A healthy, committed, local body of believers that make up a local church. The life and activity of a local body of believers look like those one another's that I mentioned in the New Testament.

And there's countless others. So a simple approach to how you can love one another starting today, if you haven't already, is belonging and truly engaging in the life of a healthy local church like Kingdom Life and helping one another glorify God and follow Jesus by following his commandments.

[39 : 43] And remember that we do not rely on ourselves for this. We have one another to help do this. And then not only that, God sends his Holy Spirit to guide and comfort us, not only that, God gives us his word to guide us.

And not only that, God hears our prayers. Let's look at verse 16 together. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

So as our hearts are conformed to God's will and his word, we can trust that God answers our prayers. The Father is the vine dresser. He will provide for our true needs if we are in Christ. So we should continually and regularly ask God the Father for help in prayer. John Calvin in writing on this chapter in the Gospel of John wrote that the apostles may not be discouraged. Christ meets them with the most valuable aid. As he has said, if the work assigned to you be so great that you are unable to fulfill the duties of your office, my Father will not forsake you for I have appointed you to be ministers of the Gospel on this condition that my Father will have his hand stretched out to assist you whenever you pray to him in my name to grant you assistance. [41 : 11] So Jesus in his teaching of his disciples here during the Last Supper says in verse 17, these things I command you so that you will love one another. If we abide in Jesus the true vine first by seeing the big picture second by knowing our purpose and third by bearing fruit we can trust and know that God is sovereign over all of that.

So I want us to conclude our time this morning by abiding in Jesus our Savior to take joy in him with our whole being. In doing so God will bear good fruit for our lives for each other and for the world around us.

He will bear good fruit by the power of his Holy Spirit to his glory. As one theologian has said before salvation is purposed by the Father it's accomplished by the Son and it's applied by the Holy Spirit. We can trust that God will bear good fruit in his people. Let's pray. Father I pray for us now that whatever comes from you and your word that you would change us that you would make us into more and more people that look like Jesus that depend on you that are filled with your Holy Spirit that we might bear good fruit Father.

Lord we do desire to bear good fruit good works good deeds in our life for your glory and also for our joy. Lord would you fill us with joy this morning and into our week that we might know more and more the true vine Jesus.

[42 : 58] Lord we give you all praise and glory and thanks for this time now in Christ's name Amen.