

The Fruit of Abiding

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[0:00] Turn over to John chapter 15 this morning, John chapter 15, as we're going to continue looking! You know, the fruit of abiding this morning. You know, as we see here as Jesus in John 15 is preparing! His disciples for what was to come. You know, the path ahead of them was not going to be an easy one.

There's going to be difficulties, there's going to be challenges, and they're going to be tempted to turn away. And Jesus is encouraging them, reminding them that it is essential that you abide. To abide, you know, and that's the same thing for us today. You know, life can get busy, it can get chaotic.

Things can happen. Situations arise, things inside your control, you know, the results of your choices. Sometimes there's things that happen that are outside your choices, have nothing to do. But, you know, it doesn't matter. And what Jesus is telling them, hey, no matter what, abide. Stick to the one who saved you, you know. And we understand he wanted that connection, that continued connection to abide in him, you know. The same as they'd done from the beginning. You know, we saw last week as they decided to dwell with him, you know, to be with him, and to be where he is, and to walk alongside with him. And we see today this emphasis, though, is going to shift a little bit because he's going to shift in a way as abiding to the fruit that abiding reveals, you know. Because what we, how we abide, how we abide affects what's produced. How a branch is attached to the vine affects what it produces. And we understand that picture, it's very important. And Jesus answers that important question about fruit, and he turns to the results, and he tells us, once again, as we've been looking at where a branch stays, a branch bears, you know. What a branch is attached to directly impacts what it bears. That's essential in what is happening here. And the next verses here reveal for us what that bearing looks like. Because this is key for every believer needs to understand the fruit that

Jesus is promising when we abide. Because abiding is not easy, you know. Abiding isn't just sitting, doing nothing. Abiding takes effort. Abiding takes intention. Abiding takes priority. You know, because one thing in life, you know, there's a lot of things that abide for your priorities.

What Jesus is telling his disciples, there's going to be a lot of competing things, but if you want what I'm offering, you must prioritize abiding. To put the abiding above everything else. It might be good things. That you're saying, well, I can do this, or I can do that, but Jesus says, no guys, those things may be good and may be needful, but the most important thing is to abide. To stay here with him, to abide, to be attached to the vine. And so let's look at this this morning as Jesus continues here. If you found John 15 in your Bible this morning, let's stand together in reading of the Word of God. And we're going to read verses 7 through 11. And so we're going to do a little responsive reading this morning, so we'll see how you guys do. So we're going to get you involved here, okay? And we're going to make sure everybody's on the same page. All right? And so how that works is one of us will read together verse 7. I'll read verse 8. You guys will read verse 9.

[4:09] I'll read verse 10, and then we'll read verse 11 together. And so that's how it's going to work through. So now together means together, okay? Now one thing I've learned, I did teens for years, and you ever tell the teens to be together, be like... So we need the effort of unifying and doing this together, okay? And so everybody can understand what's being said. We're not speaking in tongues around here. Not the crazy charismatic time. We might have a few tongues around here every now and then when we get somebody that knows some other language, but that's the right version. Well, let's get back on track here. Let's get back to abiding, amen? So let's read together.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning. Lord, we're just thankful for the reality of who you are and what you've done for us. Lord, I pray just with the work in each heart, each life here today, Lord, that they might understand the importance of abiding, that each of us needs to constantly abide. Nobody rises above this need and this instruction. Lord, each of us must stick to you through the trials and challenges of life. Lord, as we just trust you not only for salvation, but for the very fruit that brings joy in this life with the many disappointments and challenges.

And Lord, we pray just with work in a mighty way. Lord, we just give you all the praise and glory and honor. In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. You know, throughout this passage, Jesus is emphasizing the significance of abiding in the vine. The vine is what provides the means for what is produced. You know, if you separate a branch from the vine, it produces nothing. Matter of fact, it does exactly the opposite. It withers away. You know, we witness that here all the time.

[6:51] You know, every time a storm blows through my neighborhood, the ash trees shed. When that branch is separated from the tree, it doesn't take long and the leaves wither up. The same is true with our Christian walk with God. If you're not abiding, you're going to wither. And if you're withering, you're not producing fruit. Because I want you to understand, as we look at this this morning, Jesus wanted you to have fruit. And part of that fruit is joy. To have a joy in the midst of trials, struggles, things that seem overwhelming, things that seem like we can't deal with this today, we can still abide and he will provide what is needed. You know, I want you to see this morning the importance of having the right thing flowing through your life. Because that is what produces the right fruit. Because when you do not abide, you will still be filled with something. You know, the problem today is we have a lot of believers who are filled with things that are not what God tells us to abide in. It's not they're absorbing things that are counter to the things of God.

You know, I want you to understand this picture because this picture isn't just for you, it's for me, it's for every believer. He's telling the disciples, the 11 that are there with him, and he says, guys, there's going to be some things and you're going to have to abide.

He gives them an intentional direction. He says, I cannot control your abiding. Abiding, you do. Because abiding has to do with the priorities that we have.

Of where we place those things in our life, you know. Our body and our mind is kind of like a sponge. You know what? A sponge is filled up by whatever it absorbs.

And what Jesus is saying, you need to make sure you're being filled with the right things. Even after salvation, many times believers get distracted and put secondary things of the world or things that they may think is good as a priority and say, no, Lord, what you want is the priority because being abiding in you is what's going to produce what I'm desiring to be fulfilled with these other things that are empty.

[9:22] He wants us to see and to understand those things because it's important to know the very important things that flows from abiding. Because what flows in is what comes out. And we're going to see here this morning that the first thing that he shows us is abiding gives us power to your requests.

It's a powerful prayer life. In other words, God's listening. Look what it tells us in verse 7. It says, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. Now notice here, he gives some explanation. He says, if you abide in me and my word in you. That's a key. Because oftentimes people think, well, I'm saved. I asked Christ to save me. So everything's good and I can go do what I want to do. You know what? That's not what Jesus said. We're not talking about your security and salvation. We're talking about what fruits you're producing. I believe there's a lot of Christians who have some sour grapes because what's being produced in their life is counter to what God wants because God doesn't want sourness and bitterness and anger and resentment.

He wants joy and peace. And we wonder why we miss it. Well, the reality is, is because his words don't abide in us. So I want you to understand, why did Jesus say that? Because the Bible makes it clear that when his word abides in us, it changes how we think, how we perceive, how we understand the world around us. If you put the wrong things in, you're going to get the wrong things out.

[11:13] Because when you think wrong, the problem is this. When you think wrong, you ask wrong. You know, you see this picture played out as you get older, you start having grandkids.

Because you know what grandkids do? They come over to grandma and papa's house and they ask for all the things they shouldn't have. And mom and dads are sitting there looking at them going, and they're waiting to see if you're the parent that they grew up with or the one that monitors their grandchildren. Those two are not necessarily the same. But I want you to understand what you, that connection impacts what you get. How you ask and what you ask for is important. Look over to Romans chapter 12 for a moment. Romans chapter 12 in verse 2 tells us this, and it says, be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove that which is good and acceptable and perfect will of God. You know, I want you to see here that how you think impacts how you pray. Because it's easy to answer the request when it's in alignment with what's needed. You know, I think a lot of times we ask for things we ask amiss. Because we need to understand the word of God needs to be locked into our mind. Look over to Colossians chapter 3 in verse 16 tells us, let the word of God dwell richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.

But notice this, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. You know what? If you lack wisdom, the place to start is the word of God, because then God has the things in you that's going to help the Holy Spirit to guide you, because those two connect, they're interseparable. You cannot separate the word of God from the spirit of God. That's a whole other lesson that people need to know today. Well, the spirit told me, well, if it doesn't measure up with this, it didn't, the spirit didn't tell you. It might have been a spirit to tell you that, but it isn't the spirit. Those are two different things. And we need to understand this reason in the Old Testament, Psalm 119 verse 11 says, thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

It changes how we think. It changes our priorities. It changes everything about us. Notice the order. The word does not first change the answer. It changes the asker. When you're lined with God in your thinking, it changes what you ask for because it changes your priorities. It changes what is needed.

We find what you feed your mind upon becomes what your heart desires. And what your heart desires because is what your mouth asks for. The man who reads what God wills begins to want what God wills.

[14:17] And you're praying according to his will. That's the promise of verse 7. It's not a blank check. It's a verse of unity. To say, God, I can give that to you because it's in alignment with what needs to be.

Things are correct. It's used for the right reason and the right purpose. You know, people think today that they treat God like a magical charm. I believe in God and I should just be able to ask anything. Lord, just give me everything I need.

No, we say need, but you know what we usually mean? Give me what I want. You know, most of the time is this. If we got what we wanted, we'd be in a lot worse shape. Because how many times you find out what you want isn't what you really needed?

Or didn't satisfy what you thought it was going to satisfy? We can possess...we have a country today of people who possess more stuff and more things than any other people of any time. We possess things that kings of old would have said, man, I would have wanted that. And we just fill it in the storage locker.

[15:32] Because we found out, yeah, we have it, but it didn't do what I thought it was going to do. Because it's out of order. You know, look over into 1 John for a moment.

1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5 and verse 14 says, And this is the confidence that we have in Him. If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.

And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him. You know, John here is writing late in life, describing those moments, that dynamic that Jesus taught them even here.

You know, He understood what the Old Testament told us in Psalm 37. He says, Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

You know, I know a lot of people quote that verse, God ought to give me the desires of my heart. No, first your desires need to be aligned with His desires, and that's because the Word of God changes your desires. It changes your priorities.

[16 : 35] You know, we live in a life that's really guided by priorities. I've lived long enough to understand one thing.

What you put as a priority, you will get accomplished. People will go to far ends to reach what they desire. They will put forth and sacrifice all sorts of things to get what they desire.

We have mothers and fathers today that say, I want to have this, this, and this. I need to have a big house, and I've got to have all the best things. So they'll sacrifice their children on the altar of work to try to produce all these things.

Then they wonder, Lord, why didn't you just take care of my family? It's like God saying, you didn't abide. You didn't do what you needed to do. You had a wrong priority, a wrong desire in your heart that went contrary to what's going to benefit you.

That what's going to produce the fruit in your life that's going to impact other people. The Word of God guards the motive. So we don't ask amiss.

[17 : 41] You know, think about what James 4 tells us. James says this, he says, You ask and you receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your lusts.

You know what? I don't think anybody in this room is exempt from asking God for something to consume. No different than that grandchild asks the grandparent for something to consume.

And you're looking at it and say, yes, we could, but that's not what's best. You want it just to appease yourself in the moment. Instead of looking to say what is needful in the moment.

I want you to understand this is the picture. The branch that separates from the vine is never going to get because it's not having the right priorities.

The first fruit of a branch that stays is a prayer life that has power in it because the branch was never the point of the vineyard. Because when we understand that point is what produces, but the point is this, because look at the next dynamic here in verse 8 with me this morning.

[18 : 56] It says this, because in my, herein is my father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Because abiding in the vine doesn't bring glory to us, it brings glory to God.

Abiding glorifies God. You know what? Asking amiss wants to glorify us. Asking correctly glorifies God. It's important.

For us to grab a hold of because there's going to be times in your life. I want you to understand that once Jesus is talking to here, the disciples, when you read the New Testament, there were some of them had some big struggles.

They were not always abiding the way they ought to abide. And God had to bring them back in line.

The husbandman had to clean the fruit, had to clean the branch so it might produce fruit.

And we understand that principle that is to bring glory to the Father. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. Now remember, we talked about this at the beginning.

[20 : 08] The husbandman is responsible for the growth and receives the credit for the harvest. Put this in practical terms. Have you ever seen somebody to say, well, let's glorify the corn plant that produced.

What do we do? If you have a farmer that overproduces something, who gets glorified? The farmer, the husbandman. You know what? When fruit is produced in your life, it glorifies the husbandman, God.

If fruit doesn't get praised, the one who produced it that was sweet and savory and provided what was needed is the one who gets glorified. Our emphasis ought to be to glorify God.

He is the one that gets that. Look over to 1 Corinthians for a moment because sometimes even amongst believers you get this dynamic of competition. You know, I want you to understand.

Notice what Paul tells the church at Corinth here in chapter 3 in verse 6. It says, I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

[21 : 15] So then neither is he that planteth anything and neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. What's he telling them? He says, hey guys, it's all about the Father.

It's all about God, not about you. It's all about the designer and giver of life and not the consumer of life.

Think about what Matthew chapter 5 tells us. Jesus telling his disciples early in his ministry, he says, Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

I want you to understand those good works are a byproduct of the fruit. They're the fruit that's produced because notice not just any works. Good works.

You can be busy and not about good things. It's not about the work. It's about the good works that are produced. The fruit that is produced in your life. So what is that fruit?

[22:18] This is kind of the meat of the whole thing right here. It's the crop that shows in a believer's life that he's abiding. Jesus tells us that the crop is how you tell what the tree is.

You know, think about Matthew chapter 12 and verse 33. It says, Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt. For the tree is known by his fruit.

Your life is known by your fruit. Like it or not, that's a reality. Don't you understand, all of us have fallen short of producing the full crop of fruit that God wants us to produce.

You know why that is? We all fail to abide. There's times and places and dynamics in our life when we say, Lord, my will, not your will.

And when we understand that picture, it's important to know because the kind of fruit to distinguish. Let's look at what the Bible tells us here about this fruit.

[23:21] Because the kinds of fruit to distinguish, there's three dynamics that affect us as an individual. And all three grow on the same branch. Understand this picture.

The first is your character. The first kind of fruit is your character. Who you are. And what is produced in who you are.

What does the Spirit grow in you? You know, take a look over to Galatians chapter 5 for a moment. Down in verse 22.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law. Think about that for a moment. That is the fruit that ought to be produced in your life.

[24:22] I encourage you to sit down and ask, do I see that in my life? I want you to understand, well, I have this or that. I want you to understand this is a group package. It's not something you get to pick and choose.

Well, I'm patient, so I'm good. No, if the other things aren't present, there's a problem. We can fake any one of them, but you know what? All these together is really hard to fake.

It reveals what is in your life. We're not going to take time this morning to break this down. I encourage you to take time to look and to think and to pray on each of those things. Lord, do I produce this fruit in my life?

If not, you can ask the other question, why not? Important question for every believer to ask. Why is it not there? If that's what should be there, your character, who you are, ought to change.

The Bible says you're a new creature in Christ. Character, but how about your conduct? Your character or who you are inside, your conduct is what you do outside.

[25:25] What's inside is produced outside. What your life produces. You know, the Bible says many things. Colossians 1 tells us being fruitful in every good work.

That's a conduct. It's a choice. It's a decision. It's a priority. You know, the problem today is people define good works by doing good deeds. There's a difference between a good work in Christ and good deeds that we do for others.

There may be overlap, but there's an intention problem. We need to understand the difference. It says, filled with the fruits of righteousness in Philippians chapter 1.

Fruits of righteousness means what we do is in alignment with what God has said to do. In other words, what we do and the choices we make in our life are in alignment with the Word of God.

The fruit of righteousness is not my fruit. It's His fruit produced when we follow and abide in the vine. The fruit of righteousness means you do what you ought to do.

[26:37] You make a decision based, is this pleasing to the Father? Is this pleasing to my Savior? Or is it pleasing to myself? You know, there's nobody in this room exempt from it. Because life's going to push you to the point you're going to make a decision.

Where am I going to abide? Today we live in a generation who abides a lot more in their emotions than they do in the Savior. How you feel about something should not direct what you do about something.

Because let me tell you, there'd be a lot more people with black eyes if it was a feeling-based society. Because every time somebody makes it, because you feel something doesn't mean you should do.

Abiding in Christ changes our conduct. It's the fruit of righteousness. Not that which we feel, but that which is right to do. You know, the fruit of praise.

You know, there's a lot of talk today about praising God. You know what? The praising God isn't produced by an emotional filling of music or brought forth with a bunch of lights and all sorts of other things that people try to produce worship.

[27 : 41] I want you to understand, worship is abiding in the vine. It changes your perspective because the focus becomes God and not how I feel about it. Worship is from the heart towards God and not God being the one that's saying, God, look at me.

Look what I'm doing. Worship is saying, God, we want to look at you. Of giving. You know, Philippians chapter 4. You know, those are things about our conduct that has to do with the priority fruit in our life coming forth out of our life.

But it starts inside in your character, comes out in your conduct, and finally, it kind of shows in who you impact the converts that you've impacted for the Lord.

I want you to understand, look over to Romans chapter 1 for a moment. Romans chapter 1, look down at verse 13. Notice this is, Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purpose to come unto you, but let hitherto, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

You know what Paul's thing was? He says, hey, I want to see a byproduct of God's fruit, me abiding in the vine, being produced in somebody else.

[28 : 59] Because you know what? If your character is flowing with the right things, and your conduct is flowing with the right things, you know what? Your impact on other people for the Lord increases.

You know what makes a difference? There's a lot of people that are Christians today who they say Christians are hypocrites, and I say, yes, they are. Yes, we are. That doesn't mean the way it should be. We get the first part right by saying, yes, we are.

The second part is, what am I going to do about it? Because our testimony tells others that it's real. You think about that inner things that God has for us.

Love, joy, peace. How many people strive for things today are looking for those things? They do all sorts of things to try to get that in their life. They look for it in all sorts of places that get them in trouble.

They look for it in spirituality. We don't live in a religious free society. We live in a society who has turned their back on God and worshiped other things.

[30 : 00] Because people will worship something. You say, preacher, how do you? That's the way God wired us. You know, Proverbs tells us this, he that winneth souls is wise. I think one reason a lot of people don't share what God has done for them, because what God is doing in your life isn't producing the fruit that ought to be there, so you're ashamed of it, so you don't tell somebody else.

Say, preacher, ouch. Well, it's ouch for all of us. That's the reality of the fruit. When you abide, these things aren't forced, they come naturally. Because fruit is personal, relational, and eternal.

It shows in who we become, how we treat others, and what survives us. That character, that conduct, the converts, that is the crop that the Father is glorified by.

No branch bears in a vacuum. Fruit that grows out of a relationship that is where Jesus turns, because look in verse 9.

He says this. It's a relational. It's a love. He says, abiding keeps us in his love. Look here in verses 9 and 10, back in our text here this morning. It says this, As a father hath loved me, so I loved you.

[31 : 16] Continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. Even as I kept my father's commandments, and abide in his love.

It's simply this. The chain of love is this. As the father loved the son, so the son loved us. He says, continue in my love.

Continue means to remain, to endure, to stand fast, to stay in relationship. Now let me ask you a question about relationships. How do you maintain a relationship?

Priority. The relationship, whether it's your marriage, or a friendship with somebody else, is built and established, and kept on priority. Why is it there? Because you put a priority on it.

Priority makes the difference. Abiding says, the priority is going to be, that I want to be connected, to the vine. It produces a relationship, that's going to change, and impact you.

[32:18] It's a love. Love and obedience cannot be separated. You know, today I hear a lot of people, I love Jesus, but I love myself more. Hey, preacher, I don't have people. Yeah, I do. They don't say it that way, but that's what they mean.

I love Jesus, but. I love Jesus, and so I'm going to allow other things, to take priority over him. You know what? When you love somebody, when you want a relationship, you know what?

You change schedules. Do what's within your means, to make a difference, to make that connection. Same is true, that if we put our priority on the Lord, it's going to make a difference.

We're going to abide in his love. You cannot claim to love God, and disregard his word. You cannot claim to love God, and not obey what God has said.

In other words, you can't say, I love God, and I want to do my own thing. God tells us this, John 14, just before this, in the previous chapter, says, if you love me, keep my commandments.

[33:21] The theme resounds, throughout this chapter, in the chapter 14, this dynamic, of keeping his commandments, is a sign of, in other words, God, what you have said, I put as a priority.

Not how I feel about it, or somebody else thinks about it, what does your word, say you need to do? Obedience, I want you to understand, costs these men their lives.

The first one recorded was Acts chapter 12, when they killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. But James heard this night, he was standing there, he said, continue in my love, that night, and he obeyed it, all the way to the point of death.

He said, I'm going to abide in my Savior, no matter what it costs. You know what James said? That's a priority. Priority is important.

Continue ye in my love, makes a difference. Paul goes on to say, a little later in 2 Timothy, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

[34:35] faith. That's what continuing looks like. To continue in his love, is to continue in his instruction, to put priority, where priority ought to be.

Being in the Lord's house on Sunday, ought to be a priority. Everything you can about the Lord, ought to be a priority. Let's tell you this, this will be a stir, one gets to stir people up. If you're not faithful, and desire to come to church, you need to check your relationship with Jesus.

You got your priority wrong. Because what we do, as we meet together as a congregation today, Jesus said that he loved. The other thing about relationship, you love what the one you love loves. Priority. But notice also, verse 11, here this morning. Things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Abiding produces joy. Joy is cheerfulness, and calm delight, not driven by circumstance. Peter puts it this way, it says, whom having not seen, ye love, in whom ye thought, though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

[35:57] I want you to take note of what Peter says. They had never seen him, the ones he's writing to. They could not see him then, and they rejoiced anyway, just as today.

We rejoice. I have not seen my Savior face to face, but one day I'm going to. I believe it's a joy that comes. That joy is there.

It's that my joy might remain in you. He's not offering you a better mood. He's offering you his own joy. The joy that carried him to the cross, for who the joy that was set before him endured the cross. It tells us in Hebrews, a branch does not manufacture that any more than it manufactures grapes. It receives it, and receives it by staying. To understand, he said full, not a trickle, not enough to get by, but full.

If your joy is thin this morning, the vine has not changed. The promise has not been withdrawn.

Something is wrong with the connection. I need to consider this morning as we just think a moment here about a few things.

[37:01] I want to give you some practical things as we conclude the message to understand. Results need to be of a test for yourself. A thin prayer life.

Does your life give little glory to God? Do you have a love that's cooling off? Have you lost joy? To understand, those aren't four problems. They're one problem. It's a name, and its name is the branch that has been drifted from the vine.

The four results, but now I have some questions for you because these four measures the output. Here is how to measure the connection. Connection is made. I'll ask you a question.

Did you spend time with the Lord today? Read the Bible. And my words abide in you. Not just read, but hear. Preachers I follow on Facebook and made a statement here this week.

It just posted up. He says, it's a horrible thing when I realize I'm reading with my eyes and not my mind. A lot of times we read with our eyes, but not our mind. Abiding means I intentionally not just read the words, but I think about, meditate on what I'm reading.

[38:14] Ask questions. Did I talk to him today? Ye shall ask what ye will. You asked Jesus for the problems that you're facing.

Did you turn them over to him? Did you do what you need to do? Thirdly is this, did I obey the last thing he told me? People God speaks to, I believe, believers, and they say, no, Lord.

I know about a lot of areas in their life because their pride takes priority over what God's word says. What I think about it takes priority about what God has said about it.

Yeses is a day of abiding. Three no answers is a branch drying out and it'll affect the fruit.

even before somebody sees it or you admit it. The fruit will be affected. This morning, four things were given.

[39:18] The promise of fruitfulness is answered prayer, glory to God, a settled love, and full of joy. If things aren't present, you need to ask yourself why. You've never been connected to the vine.

A lot of people, I think, have come and said, instead of one, two, three, repeat after me prayer, and never meant it from their heart. To please somebody else or as a fire insurance to get out of hell, how you do it makes a difference because it's the why behind it.

Do you realize that you're a sinner that needed a Savior in a moment when you call upon Him?

Have you been obedient to Him?

You know, the first step of obedience is scriptural baptism. There's some requirements for baptism. It's not just getting wet for a lot of reasons. The reason is the identity that it brings in obedience and connection with Christ and His assembly, His people.

As we assemble together, it's important to walk through life this morning, where are you? And be your own fruit inspector. This morning, I don't want you to worry about somebody's fruit beside you.

[40:29] The fruit beside you means nothing. The fruit that matters is what's produced in you.

This morning, as heads are bowed and eyes are closed, a moment to contemplate that question.

Your fruit. fruit of abiding.

There's a way to change that. That's to connect with the vine, the Savior.

I am the true vine. That's what Jesus said. What about you today? Heavenly Father, as you know each heart, each life here this morning, Lord, I pray that you would continue to work and to guide in each one.

Lord, you know the fruit. We're not hiding our fruit from you. Lord, you know the fruit that remains within each one here this morning if there's any fruit at all.

[41:35] Lord, I pray that you help us to draw close to you knowing that you are where we need to be and the rest will take care of itself because it will be the byproduct of what flows through us.

And Lord, we just turn this invitation to you this morning, Lord, and we ask it all in your precious name. Amen. As the piano plays, what about you today? Do you need to spend a little bit of time