

# A Fruit-Bearing Life

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Preacher: Pastor Tim Feathers

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. It's a pleasure to be with you all here this morning.

! It's a pleasure to be with you all here this morning. Before we left, I had several members of our church ask where we were going to be this weekend, and I said, we're going down to Parker, Colorado to preach to a congregation down there.

And they said, well, why are you going down there? Do you know the pastor? I said, no, never met him before. Oh, do you know somebody in church? No, never met any of them before. They go, well, why are you going down there?

I said, they need somebody to come preach. I'm going to go down and help the brothers out. And they go, yeah, but how do you even know about these people? I said, oh, I said, they're getting ready to join the association we've just become a part of.

And this is one of the blessings of being part of an association of churches, that we can come alongside one another, we can support one another, and bless one another's ministries through helping the brothers out like this.

[ 1 : 04 ] So it is a pleasure to be here. Tanya and I arrived last night, spent the evening with the Gladdings. I kind of got somewhat familiar with the church through that. And then this morning found out I had met some of you before at last year's GA, but I met so many new people there I didn't remember it.

So it is a blessing for us to be here. I had a unique experience already this morning in the discussion about today's passage.

As I was just listening to everyone discuss it, I found myself being encouraged by the passage. I'm about ready to preach to people, hoping to encourage them with it.

And I haven't even preached it yet. So it made me look, it made me all the more eager to bring this message to you today. So I also have to bring greetings from the people at Trinity Bible Church. And we are looking forward to a closer association with you through this association of churches and getting to know all of you. So if you would open your Bibles to John chapter 15.

[ 2 : 08 ] And we're going to be reading verses 1 through 8 here. This is a very familiar illustration that Jesus uses, one that's very well known.

Sometimes when we come to a familiar ground like that, familiarity sometimes can impede our ability to understand it. So let us come to this looking at it afresh this morning.

John chapter 15 verses 1 through 8. This is Jesus speaking. 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 bears fruit, he prunes it that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.

[ 3 : 14 ] He who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you. By this is my father glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Let me ask you, if you knew your death was imminent, what would you want to say to those closest to you?

I mean, typically we don't know when our time is going to come. But occasionally, in God's providence, we do.

You get that diagnosis of the deadly disease that there's nothing they can do to treat it and there's weeks to live or months to live. And if you were in that position, what would you want to say to those closest to you?

[ 4 : 38 ] You know, would you want to express your love for them? Would you want to give them words of encouragement? Would you want to provide them words of guidance? Would you want to exhort them in any way?

Is there any important things or truths you'd want to remind them of? And what we have to realize is that in the section in which our passage lies, that's exactly what is happening.

John 13 through John 17 is Jesus' last discourse with his disciples, those closest to him. This very evening he will be betrayed.

Within 24 hours he will be in the grave. And so these are the things that he wants to speak to them to equip them for their apostolic ministry.

This is the capstone to three years of discipleship. In this discourse, in these five chapters from John 13 to John 17.

[ 5 : 49 ] And what we see here is he begins with laying a foundation of humility by washing their feet. Then he provides them with sustaining grace in the establishment of the Lord's Supper.

And then he shows them the means by which they will accomplish their apostolic is love. But love in a way that they never understood it before. You see, under the law, love was, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

And they are still to love in that way. But he's now giving them command of a new love, a new kind of love, oriented towards the brethren. That they are to love the brethren like he has loved them.

He then goes on to exhort them to believe in him, that he and the Father are one. And to exhort them to do the works that he has done.

He gives them the encouragement that he's sending them a helper, the Holy Spirit. He's giving them encouragement in that he goes to prepare a place for them and will come for them.

[ 7 : 03 ] And then we come to this passage in John 15. And right in the absolute center of this discourse is our passage today.

And in this, he's calling them to abide in him as he abides in them and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father. And then he's going to go on and promise them the coming of the Holy Spirit.

He's going to forewarn them that he will die and be resurrected so this isn't some surprise to them. And then in John 17, he wraps it up by praying for them.

And we also have to see he's praying for us as well. Because he prays for all those who will believe in him through their word. And what we see here are these intertwining themes of humility and faith and love and grace and abiding in Christ and depending upon the Spirit and prayer and bearing fruit to the glory of God.

And all of these are essential to the Christian life. All of these are essential for us to live a fruitful life to the glory of God. But because today we're going to be taking a very narrow look at one little piece of this, it's possible we could miss out on all of these rich themes that are interwoven in this larger discourse.

[ 8 : 38 ] For instance, we're not going to delve into making the connection between abiding in Christ, love, and our obedience. And yet it's all here.

So I just wanted to lay that broader foundation of this context because it forms a very rich tapestry for us.

And we're going to be diving into that and looking at one very narrow piece. And part of the thing that encouraged me this morning in listening to your discussion was hearing some of you pick up on these broader themes and pull them into the discussion.

So we are going to be looking at this narrow focus of bearing fruit in the Christian life.

And let me start right out by saying our context here is not bearing fruit as the instrumental cause of our salvation, our sanctification, our perseverance, or our glorification.

[ 9 : 44 ] The instrumental cause for all of that is the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. I will say that repeatedly before I'm done today. But what we have to do understand is the fruit we bear in life is the manifested evidence of a soul united to Christ enjoying the benefits of redemption that Christ has purchased for us.

See, it's only by His empowering grace that we can live a life of faithful fruit bearing that glorifies God, honors our Lord Jesus Christ, edifies our brethren, is a testimony to the lost, and constitutes a

life of blessing for redeemed sinners.

And so we're going to look at it today under three headings. Those three headings are in your handout. We're going to see in verses one through three God's design. In verses four and five we're going to see our dependence upon Christ.

And in verses six through eight I just labeled it our discipleship to keep with my dealliteration. It's not really a good title but you'll see when we get there. So first, this divine design in verses one through three.

Now, let me start by saying this illustration of a vineyard Jesus is using to make His point absolutely highlights God's creative and redemptive design that His image bearers are to bear fruit to the glory of His name.

[ 11 : 21 ] This is from Genesis to Revelation. In Genesis 1.28, God's creation command was for Adam as mankind's federal head to be fruitful and multiply and exercise dominion over the earth.

Adam was to bear fruit by extending the Garden of Eden to cover the whole earth and to fill creation with God's worshipers. Adam fell into sin.

Adam failed to fulfill God's design for him. And Adam was cast out of God's presence. But you see, this was also God's design for Israel as the corporate Adam.

We read that in Psalm 80 this morning. The people of God who are there described as a vine taken from Egypt and planted in the promised land.

And yet God speaking through the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 2 verse 21 says, Yet I planted you a choice vine, a completely faithful seed.

[ 12 : 29 ] How then have you turned yourself before me into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine? See, Israel too failed as well.

They failed to bear fruit to the glory of God. And they were taken away into exile. And yet in Isaiah 27 verses 2 through 6, God does proclaim that a day will come when Israel will take root and blossom and fill the whole earth with fruit.

And we have the fulfillment of that now in John 15 verse 1. Because now comes Messiah saying, I am the true vine.

First, he is asserting his deity as the divine son by invoking the divine I am. And he is proclaiming that as the divine son, he is this choice vine sent forth by his father, planted in his humanity.

And the father is the vine dresser who cares for him, who is nurturing him in his human growth so that he grew in stature before God and man. Nurturing him by pouring out his spirit upon his humanity, equipping him for his redemptive work as our mediator and our redeemer, and that he would do all the father's will.

[ 13 : 59 ] And now the time has come. The time is at hand for him to glorify the father in his sacrificial atoning death and his glorious resurrection.

You see, Jesus has bore the fruit that Adam and Israel failed to bear. Jesus has fulfilled the covenant of works, bearing the fruit of righteousness in his own personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience to the law of God.

And he will now fulfill God's creative and redemptive purposes in his death and resurrection that all those who are united to him by faith in the new birth may bear the fruit of righteousness in him.

And within this fruit-bearing design, we also see a divine discrimination in verse 2. He says, Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away.

And every branch that bear fruits, he prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. So you see, there's two kinds of branches. And each of these branches is treated very differently.

[ 15 : 13 ] And so we have to ask, Who are these branches that do and don't bear fruit? It gets a little tricky because Jesus describes both of them as being in him.

So in what way are they in him? Who are they? Now some would say the branch that is in him, not bearing fruit, is the so-called carnal Christian.

I don't even know if that term gets used anymore. That's like a 1990s term, I think. I don't hear it anymore. But what it is, is that person who professes to be a Christian, will be present in church, has no fruit in their life, lives like the world.

And many times this text was used as an argument to support that they were indeed truly saved. And the argument is, well they're saved because Jesus describes them as being in him, but they just don't have any fruit in their life.

However, if we're going to be good theologians, we have to have a good hermeneutic. And that means we need to let the scriptures interpret scripture. And in verse 5, Jesus says, he who abides in him bears much fruit.

[16:28] See, there's a presupposition here of what Jesus is saying. If you abide in Jesus, you will bear fruit. The idea of someone being in union with Christ, not bearing fruit, is absolutely foreign to scripture.

And this branch that does not bear fruit in verse 2 is described in verse 6 as anyone who does not abide in Jesus. You see, this branch that does not bear fruit is one who has never been united to Christ in a new birth, and they are merely an outward professor of religion in the visible church. You see, they appear to be in Christ. That's what's meant by they are in him, in Jesus. They appear to be. They have an outward profession.

They are in the assembly of God's people, the visible church, but they are merely an outward professor. They appear to be in Christ, but they are not.

And this branch, the vine dresser, takes away. Now, in context, this term translated takes away, it means to be carried away in judgment.

[17:46] Now, in contrast to that is the branch that does bear fruit. You see, that branch, the vine dresser prunes it so that it bears more fruit.

And this fruit-bearing branch of verse 2 is further described for us in verse 7 as those who abide in Christ. This branch is one united to Christ through the new birth and, importantly, is under the vine dresser's care.

We do have to ask, though, what is this fruit that those united to Christ are to bear? What is it? Well, I would propose to you it's the same fruit that Jesus brought forth in his humanity.

It is the fruit of righteousness. Now, it's a fruit of righteousness that he possessed in his perfect humanity, a righteousness that is native to him, but it is foreign to us as redeemed sinners.

It comes from outside us. It is imputed to us that those of us who are united to Christ, we receive this through the inner cleansing, transformation, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and that then manifests itself in the bearing of fruit in our life.

[19:06] Now, you might ask the question, what is this spiritual fruit, though? Is it some grand spiritual sacrifice?

Is it going off and being a missionary in the jungles of Africa somewhere? Is it being a martyr for the faith? Is it, you know, is it being an evangelist or preaching the gospel?

Well, you know, it most certainly could be those things. Could be. But here's what we have to understand. Fruit pleasing to God is anything, and this opens it up, anything that we do out of faith in Christ, according to his word, for the glory of the Father.

And as you consider what that is, here's what I want you to think about. The mundane of every day. Because everything you do in this life, from the moment you get out of your bed in the morning to the moment you go to bed at night, is to be done out of faith in Christ, according to his word, for the glory of the Father.

That is fruit that is pleasing to God and glorifies the Father. Think about how that applies.

[20:39] Kids, doing your schoolwork. Are you doing it trusting in Christ for the grace to strive, to learn, and study, and whatnot?

Are you doing it according to the word of God, or are you cheating on the tests? And are you doing it to see God glorified? When you go to work at your job. I mean, I was convicted of this recently. You know, struggling with getting up to go to work, and then come to realize the one thing I wasn't doing in the morning was saying, Lord, give me the grace to work today. Help me to serve my employer well.

And it's just amazing how that fundamentally changes your perspective. I mean, it didn't make the job any different. It didn't make the challenges of the job any different.

Okay? Moms, with your children at home, you know, this never-ending role you have of raising your children and nurturing them, and Tanya and Katie were talking about homeschooling last night.

[21:48] We homeschooled our children. And just what can seem to be a grind day in and day out, year in and year out over the life of the child, sometimes when they're not cooperating, and you go, I don't see the point.

Understand, persevering in faith that glorifies the Father. So, I want you to think of fruit, bearing fruit in our life and walk that glorifies God.

It comes mainly in the mundane of everyday life. And the last thing we see about this design of God's is as we are striving in the flesh and against the flesh to bear fruit to God by faith according to His word and for His glory the whole time the vine dresser is taking care of us.

See, there's a divine care for the true branches. We see it here in verse 3. He says, you are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Now, this may seem like an awkward shift in verse 3 when Jesus says to His disciples, you are already clean.

We've been talking about grapevines and branches and vine dressers and pruning and now there's this shift to you are already clean. And you might be going, did I miss something here?

[ 23 : 20 ] Not really. Once we understand the word translated clean in verse 3 is the same word translated prune in verse 2, the connection becomes apparent.

See, when you prune a vine, you are cleaning up the dead and fruitless branches that will enable the vine to bear more fruit. Now, my wife is the farmer in the family and we actually have four grapevines at our home along our one boundary fence.

And not too long after we had them, she says to me in the fall, I'm going to go out and I'm going to prune the grapes. I'm going, well, what for? Why would you cut perfectly healthy branches off of that?

And she said, well, if you do that, they'll produce more grapes. And I'm like, okay, if you say so, I'm not the farmer here. So she goes out and does it. I come out an hour or two later and I swear there were more branches on the ground than there were still on the vine.

And my thought was, well, they're not going to make it through the winter. Next year, we had the largest harvest we'd ever had to that point. And we have to understand it is this way with believers.

[ 24 : 32 ] You see, God, by his word and his spirit, is pruning or cleaning us of remaining sin and distractions in our life.

He is cutting out those things that inhibit our fruitfulness through the ministry of the word. You see, it's the word that comes and renews our minds through which the spirit then works conviction of sin, conviction of purpose, and conviction of calling in our life.

And here's what we have to understand. He doesn't just do this individually. He does do it individually. He does do that as part of his care for each of us of individual branches.

But he's also doing this in a corporate sense. Okay? And I think he's speaking of that corporate sense here as well because this is a clear allusion to Jesus' teaching in John 13, 8 through 10 when he washed the disciples' feet.

How did Peter respond when Jesus wanted to wash his feet? He said, no, Lord, will you wash my feet? And what did Jesus say to him?

[ 25 : 45 ] Unless I wash your feet, you have no part in me. His response, well, head to toe then. Give me the entire bath. And again, Jesus' response to him was that he had already been cleansed and all he needed was to have his feet washed indicating our need for an ongoing cleansing of remaining sin in the Christian life.

And he told his disciples corporately as a group then, after washing all their feet, he says to them, you are clean, but not all of you.

He's referring to Judas. Okay, let's remember, Jesus washed Judas' feet in John 13. By the time we get to John 15, Judas has already gone out to betray Jesus.

God had removed Judas from their midst and he has been taken away to eternal judgment. Now, I want you to contrast, though, Judas to Peter.

Within a matter of hours, Peter would deny Jesus three times. Yet, Peter was not taken away into judgment. Peter was pruned by God who brought him to repentance and Jesus restored him in John 21 to fruitful apostolic ministry.

[ 27 : 17 ] You see, Judas was taken away. Peter was pruned. And this is the vine dresser at work caring for the vine and the branches. So, when Jesus here tells the disciples, you are already clean, this is true of them individually, but it's now also true of them collectively because he's removed the dead branch from their midst.

And, brothers and sisters, we have to see two things at work here. One is the providence of God. Sometimes there are those people in our midst that God just providentially removes.

And it's for the welfare and benefit of the church. But we also have to see church discipline at play here. We have to see in those two things the vine dresser at work caring for the vine and the branches the body of Christ.

This brings us now to our dependence in verses 4 and 5. Abide in me and I in you as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in a vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches, he who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. Well the first thing we have to ask is what is meant by abiding? [ 28 : 42 ] That was part of the discussion this morning and that is the question that needs to be asked. What does that mean to abide? Well the word simply means to dwell in or remain in or live in but what does that mean that I dwell in Jesus remain in Jesus or live in Jesus and what is in view here is a steadfast continuing and total dependence upon Christ.

One commentator described it this way and I think it's a great working definition of abiding he said to abide in Jesus is an ongoing exercise of faith and love.

To abide in Jesus is an ongoing exercise of faith and love in the Christian life. You see to abide in Jesus in an ongoing exercise of faith and love in which we are clinging to Christ with our whole heart as our Lord and head and as we do that we derive life from him and grace from him and strength from him and nourishment from him and then he on his promises to abide in us as an encouragement for us to persevere in this abiding to persevere in this ongoing exercise of faith and love and when Christ is so held in our hearts he is that living principle of grace to us and he sustains us in our fruit bearing you see it is a dependent relationship we are totally and completely dependent upon Christ but this relationship was initiated by

Christ we didn't even initiate it it was initiated by Christ in the new birth that unites us to him in which he gives us life and we're maintained by the presence of his spirit dwelling in us so his abiding in us is a sure deal it's a sure thing he says I'm going to abide in you we can take him at!

his word he's going to do it so we are commanded then to live in dependence upon him maintaining the vitality of our union through this constant abiding and from that drawing grace to bear much fruit William Hendrickson in his commentary said abide in me does not constitute a condition which man must fulfill in his own power before Christ will do his part far from it it is sovereign grace from start to finish but the responsibility of abiding in Christ is placed squarely upon man's shoulders exactly where it belongs and this is an important distinction we have to make sure we have clarity on Christ is not saying hey you abide in me and then I'm going to watch for a while and when I've decided you've abided well enough then I'll come abide in you that's not what he's saying what he's saying is because

[ 31 : 47 ] I abide in you and because I will never leave you nor forsake you work from my good pleasure you now be steadfast in abiding in me so as we abide in Christ in this ongoing exercise of faith and love there's two aspects of this abiding we need to see first in verse four abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vines so neither can you unless you abide!

we need to observe we cannot bear fruit of ourselves apart from Christ as he says at the end of verse five apart from Christ we can do exactly nothing we can't bear even a tiniest little bit of fruit apart from Christ we are helpless apart from Christ the only power to bear fruit comes from what Christ imparts to us none of this ability to bear fruit is contributed by us it is all of Christ now again as Hendrickson pointed out we are responsible to bear fruit we are commanded to bear fruit but we can only do so out of Christ empowering grace you know you will hear this trite little saying in Christian circles these days well you know God won't give you anything you can't handle God won't make you responsible for something you're not able to do well

I got news for you you're not able to do anything of all the things God has called you to do all right I mean that the philosophy imbibed in that little saying is secular humanistic rationalism and it's rotten to the core okay we can't do anything I can't I can't take one little step towards doing anything God has called me to do I don't have the ability apart from Christ the ability to do it comes from him everything God calls me to do I am unable to do on my own but in Christ I am able to bear much fruit Matthew Henry says abstracted from the merit of Christ we can do nothing towards our justification and from the spirit of Christ nothing towards our sanctification without Christ we can do nothing aright nothing that will be fruit pleasing to

God or profitable to others and then we come to verse five and what we see is abiding in Christ we bear much fruit okay and I want you to notice how verse five puts it I am the vine you are the branches he who abides in me and I in him he bears much fruit you see there's this mutual reciprocal abiding taking place here Jesus is the source of life and as the mediator he brings life to us and through the Holy Spirit he sustains life in the redeemed and we bear fruit only to the degree

of our dependence upon Christ and when we abide in Christ he pours out an abundance of grace upon us to bear fruit and what I want you to notice throughout this passage is there's a progression in the text in verse 2

Jesus says every branch in me that bears fruit notice the implication Jesus is presupposing that if you are truly in him you will bear fruit he goes on to say that the vine dresser prunes that branch that it may bear more fruit and then he goes on verse 5 and says he who abides in me and I in him he bears much fruit so union with Christ will produce fruit God's pruning by his word will produce more fruit I should say by his word and his discipline and his providence will produce more fruit and an ongoing exercise of faith and love abiding in Christ produces much fruit fruit and then that brings us to our last point of this divine discipleship in verses 6 through 8 if anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away as a branch and dries up and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned if you abide in me and my words abide in you ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you by this is my father glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples well first we see this negatively described in verse 6 regarding those branches who do not produce fruit as we've already observed these are the branches in verse 2 that are taken away but looking branches they're not all withered up these are green luxuriant branches with nice large healthy leaves on them and they look to be so alive but they are fruitless see we not only have some grape vines at our house we also have some strawberries and it's been a source of aggravation with me but

[ 37 : 45 ] I'm not the farmer okay that this strawberry patch thick luscious green healthy plants they put runners out everywhere and no strawberries and that's the way it is with plants sometimes but that's also the way it is with false professors who appear to be in Jesus see they appear to have life in them but they're dead and see this is a warning to all who would outwardly profess to be Christ but are inwardly in even the slightest way still somehow depending on or trusting in your own works or your own righteousness true fruit bearing comes only from union with Christ and without the vitality that his grace brings you cannot bear fruit pleasing to

God you see like the rocky soil here for this false professor trials will come that will cause their profession to wither at some point they're going to be offended at the preaching of God's word the love of the world is going to draw them away or perhaps some scandalous sin will overtake them but what you'll see is over time the zeal for God dies out the professed love they once had of God is gone the means of grace are neglected the assembly of the saints is forsaken and the soul withers and like a green leafy fruitless branch that is taken away the false professor soon withers and dies and is cast into the fire of eternal judgment now any of you here who have been in the church for any length of time I bet you have already put a face of someone you know to that description see that one who seemed to be in

Christ they so seem to be in Christ but they're no longer with us well we then have a positive description of this discipleship in verse seven and what I want you to see here what verse seven is those who abide in Christ through the means of grace look what he says here if you abide in me and my words abide in you ask the word and prayer see when we abide in Christ when we rest in total dependence upon the finished work of Christ for life and salvation when we are united to Christ by grace through faith alone then his word abides in us see what he's telling them here is that word that cleansed us in the gospel in verse three now abides in us through the ministry of the word to do its work of inner cleansing and transformation so that we can be renewed in the inner man Romans 12 1 and 2 our minds being renewed and that leads to a transformation of our whole person from the inside out when we embrace the promises of the gospel by faith and those become the abiding principles that we hold with conviction so that we believe them and what does the text say we put on our nikes and go do it is that what the text says we believe and we go do it no the text says we believe and what do we do we ask we ask okay because we believe this we come to the throne of grace and we ask and what does it say he will do whatever you wish one of the observations in the discussions this morning was this from over in John 14 you see there's a priority of prayer in our abiding in Christ see just as we need to ask God to bring his spirit for the new birth! save us in this ongoing exercise of faith and love that we call abiding in Christ we need to ask God for the grace of the indwelling spirit so we can bear fruit we have to ask that's why I come back to just you know sometimes I just feel so stupid you know it's like oh yeah maybe I need to be asking God for the grace to do my work well and then you know a month later things are going so well at work you go wow that's really great I wonder how that happened oh that's right I asked for that okay

but we there needs to be this priority and it needs to be in the front of our minds so we need to ask him for the grace of his spirit so we can bear fruit because see here's the problem for us I know I do anyways but we have a tendency to presume upon God and we can do that a couple ways you know we can presume to do

[ 43 : 13 ] God honoring works in the power of our own strength but I think we all know that that doesn't work we know that that which is flesh is flesh and the profits nothing okay but I think where we have this tendency is we presume!

God by taking this grace for granted see we go yeah I know I can do nothing apart from Christ I know that I've known that for a long time I know that it's just taken for granted I need his grace and yet I don't ask for it see I'm presuming upon him I'm just taking for granted it'll be there whether I ask for it or not but we're commanded to ask for it you know brothers and sisters God doesn't need us to remind him of his promises that's there for our benefit it's to remind us of our total and utter dependence upon him and really I think this is a part of the blessings of redemption because by this act of being constant and acting it draws us closer to Christ and it keeps us more conscious of our need of him and our closeness to him and by so doing we better more clearly see the glory of God in the face of Christ see if you wish to bear fruit for the kingdom ask and it shall be done for you and what is it he'll do God doesn't do the works for you you still have to be the one going and doing them but what he does is he gives you the supply of grace that you need so you can bear fruit that your father will be glorified and this brings us to what I just call the disposition what's the end result end result verse eight God is glorified God is glorified when fruit gives testimony to God's grace at work in us fruit bearing reflects God's attributes not ours okay it reflects who God is and what God is doing it's a reflection of God's power at work in us not our own so when we produce fruit it glorifies God not us you see our fruit bearing proves we are disciples of Jesus and again let's be clear on this bearing fruit doesn't make us disciples of Jesus it manifests that we are disciples of Jesus and that we have been united to him by grace through faith alone so brothers and sisters this Christian life that we've been given to live out in this fallen and sin cursed world is an ongoing exercise of faith and love in union with Christ with the purpose to bear fruit to the glory of God you see a grape vine a grape vine is only good for one thing producing grapes that's all it does it has no other purpose likewise mankind was created to bear fruit to the glory of God God's plan from the beginning from Genesis to Revelation has been to fill the earth with his image bearers who bear much fruit and on the last day when Christ returns those image bearers who are not bearing fruit will be taken away and cast into the fire of eternal judgment and only those abiding in Christ will remain so I want to close with one last question for you what should I do if I see no fruit in my life what should I do if I see little fruit in my life or what should I do if I see malformed fruit in my life you know the grapes growing on your branch look like they're already raisins that kind of fruit now you might think you should get to work because the branch that doesn't bear fruit is thrown in the fire of eternal judgment

[ 47 : 49 ] I got to get to work I got to try harder I need my ten steps to this I got to go do these three things or whatever I'm simply going to tell you that's not the way that is not the way if there is no fruit in your life what that means is you have no life in Jesus you are not yet united to him and therefore you don't have the means to bear fruit the remedy is not work actually that's the problem working is the problem the remedy is to turn away from the sin of self righteousness and self sufficiency and turn to Christ the remedy is to call out to God and ask him to bring the new birth that will unite you to Christ in this organic vital fruit bearing!

union! Well what if I'm only seeing a little bit of fruit or that raisin fruit? Well I think based from this text we could say what that indicates then you're in need of some pruning you have some distractions in your life that need to be removed so you can bear more fruit but again here's what you have to understand you can't prune yourself furthermore you can't prune anyone else who does the pruning?

the vine dresser he does the pruning so again what do we do? same answer turn to Christ turn to Christ in repentance turn away from trying to bear fruit in your own ability or turn away from this complacency towards God that inhibits his fruit bearing because we're not seeking the grace for it ask the Lord to search you ask the Lord to know you ask the Lord to prune you this morning one of the comments made was yeah pruning that sounds painful what is I mean have you ever seen those razor sharp bypass shears you to prune something just picture that that's God at work in you cutting out that remaining sin cutting out that distraction cutting out that misplaced priority getting

that stuff out of the way it can be a hard prayer to say Lord do that because you know what's going to follow isn't going to feel good but that's what we need and we need that so he'll convict us of that remaining sin that inhibits that fruit bearing and take it out of the way so brothers and sisters my prayer for all of us should be that the

Lord would so work in us and in our midst that we and when I say we I mean we individually as a group of individuals but also we collectively as a local church your church here in Parker Colorado the church we are part of up in Powell Wyoming would bear much fruit to the move to a watching sinful world that we are in fact disciples of Jesus Christ amen let's pray our father in heaven Lord we do thank you for all that you have done for us and all that you have given for us in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ who right now stands at your right hand interceding on our behalf as his people that you have given father we thank you for that father we thank you for these reminders father we I pray that that just the promises of gospel contained in here in and and and and all that we we see here of who you are and what you've done and are doing for us in Christ would be an encouragement to our hearts Lord but father I pray also that you'd give us give us the courage to pray that prayer that you would indeed be pruning us and Lord we pray that you would be sovereignly at work in that doing that through the means of grace doing that through your word doing that through your good providence Lord and we pray father that by this you would be strengthening and building up your church Lord we pray for this church here that you would build this church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it we pray Lord that you would strengthen this church in the faith ground them in the truth Lord cause them to be steadfast and persevering in the faith and we pray Lord that as they live out the Christian life bearing fruit to the glory of your name that it would be a witness and a testimony to others that would draw your elect to hear the that!