

# I Am the True Vine

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Young folk, a lot of cars today have sat-navs, something within the car or something that you can add to it, which will tell you how to get where you want to go.

For instance, if you want to get somewhere, all you have to do is type in the postcode of where you're going. Every house, you all have a postcode, and that's a postman, obviously, or post-lady, people who bring your mail, will look at the postcode and it will tell them exactly where your house is.

So that's what you do, is you type in the postcode into the sat-navs, and it'll direct you to where you want to go. I don't have one, but I have borrowed on occasions where I'm not too sure where I'm going.

But often, if you don't have one, as I don't, sometimes when you go to a strange place and you're driving, and you have a map, but you're just not too sure, you often stop and ask somebody directions.

And you say, could you tell me how to get to such and such a place? But supposing we take it right here, and supposing there's somebody in the church today, somebody who wanted to go, say, for instance, to visit my mother.

[ 1 : 23 ]     My mother stays at the bottom end, 35 Matheson Road. And here's somebody who's come to see her, and this person's in the church here. And not too sure how to get there.

So ask somebody sitting beside them, they'll say, I would like to get down to the bottom of Matheson Road. How do I get there? And the person would say, well, when you go out of the church, do you have a car?

Yes. Where is it? It's in the car park. Well, when you go out, go along Kennel Street till you come to the first junction. Then turn right. That'll take you up Church Street.

Then you pass through one, two, till you come to the third junction. The first junction when you go up is Keith Street, and the next is Lewis Street. Then you come to the third, and there are traffic lights there.

That takes you on to Matheson Road, and you turn left. So you've got all this in your head. That's the instructions. But when you go out, you maybe then say, oh, if you're like me, I say, was it right or left I was supposed to turn?

[ 2 : 28 ]     And then you go up and say, was it the second junction or the third junction? Can't quite remember. But you know what would be best of all? If you turned to the person, or this visitor turned to the person beside and said, do you know how to get to Matheson Road?

I need to get to 35 Matheson Road. Oh, I stay just beside there. I'll come with you in the car. Wouldn't that be great? Because here's the person sitting beside you in the car, and the person will say, right, here we go.

We turn here, and we go up here, and we do it right to the very place. And you know, in a sense, that's what it's like with Jesus. The Bible tells us how to get to heaven.

We read the Bible, and it tells us because that's where we want to go when we leave this world. Everybody in here today, I believe, wants to go to heaven.

And the Bible tells us how to get to heaven. But you know, the best thing that we could do is to ask the person who gave us the Bible, Jesus, not to come into the car with us, but to come into our life with us.

- [ 3 : 41 ] And he is going to, he's the only one who knows the way to heaven. Nobody else does. Because he came down from heaven. He did everything his father asked him to do for us. He's gone back to heaven. And he says, look, I'll come. I'll come in with you. And I'll journey all the way through life, all your days, wherever you are, in school, at home, all the different things you do. I'll be with you all the time. And I will take you every step of the way to heaven with me. Can you think of anything better? And that's what Jesus offers to us.

So that's why we need to go to Jesus, who is the only one who knows the way to heaven, who is the only way to heaven. Jesus said that.

- [ 4 : 39 ] He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. So I would ask all of you to ask Jesus, Lord, come into my life and lead me home to heaven.

We're going to sing again now from Psalm 80. And this is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm number 80, from the Scottish Psalter. Eto'o.

And the tune is Colesill. I'm going to sing from verse 14 to the end, Psalm number 80. From verse 14, that's on page 334.

Verse 14. O God of hosts, we thee beseech, return now unto thine. Look down from heaven in love. Behold, and visit this thy vine.

This vineyard, which thine own right hand hath planted us among, and that same branch, which for thyself thou hast made to be strong. Burnt up it is with flaming fire.

- [ 5 : 45 ] It also is cut down. They utterly are perished when, as thy face doth frown. O let thy hand be still upon the man of thy right hand, the son of man whom for thyself thou madest strong to stand.

So henceforth we will not go back, nor turn from thee at all. O do thou quicken us, and we upon thy name will call. Turn us again, Lord God of hosts, and upon us vows safe to make thy countenance to shine, and so we shall be safe.

Psalm 80, verses 14 to the end. The tune is cool, so O God of hosts. O God of hosts, Behold, and visit this thy vine.

Look down from heaven without me all, and lift it this by vine.

This failure, which thine own right hand Thou planted us upon, Thou that sin branch, which for thyself Thou hast made to be strong.

- [ 7 : 32 ] Thou hast made to be strong. Burned down it is with many fire, It also is cut down.

They utterly are perished, When thou type they shall cry.

O let thy hand be still upon, The man of thy right hand, Laat saan of man, The man of thy hand be still, The man of thy hand be strong to stand.

So henceforth we will not go back, Nor turn from thee at all.

O Lord, to the land we will not stand, Turn from thee upon thy name we will call.

- [ 9 : 12 ] Turn us again, Lord God of hosts, And upon us I say, To make thy countenance to shine, And so we shall be saved.

Let's turn to read God's word, First in Matthew's gospel, Then in John's gospel, Matthew chapter 3, And we'll sing the, We won't, We'll read the first 10 verses.

I'm sorry, the first 12 verses. John chapter, Matthew chapter 3, And then John chapter 15. First of all, Matthew chapter 3.

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight.

Now John wore a garment of camel's hair, And a leather belt round his waist, And his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him.

[ 10 : 51 ] And they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, Confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, He said to them, You brood of vipers, Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, Therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance.

But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

His winnowing fork is in his hand, And he will clear his threshing floor, And gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

[ 12 : 02 ] Then we turn to John's Gospel, John chapter 15. And we read the first eight verses.

And this is what we look at after we sing. I am the true vine, and my father is the vine dresser.

Every branch of mine 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 a 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.

[ 13 : 05 ] 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. 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. Amen.

And may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. I am going to sing from Sing Psalms, Psalm number 65. Psalm number 65, from Sing Psalms, Verses 1 to 7.

In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows we'll pay. To you all people will come near.

You hear us when we pray. When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, You pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

[ 14 : 16 ] How blessed are those you choose and bring within your courts of grace. We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place.

And so on. To the end of verse 7, 5 stanzas, Psalm 65, the Tunis Moravia. In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows we'll pay.

To you all people will come near. You hear us when we pray.

When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, You pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place. We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place.

[ 16 : 09 ] We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place. We're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place. You are filled with blessings in your home, in your most holy place. You are filled with blessings in your heart.

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Jesus says there, I am the true vine, and my Father is a vine dresser. Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit.

Now this is a continuation, but it is the second part of Jesus' teaching prior to us going to the cross.

There has been a break, we saw, at the end of chapter 14, where Jesus talks about how the ruler of this world is coming. That, of course, was Satan, but he has no claim on me.

[ 18 : 07 ] And then he says, rise, let us go from here. And while there's a difference, there's a little, there's a difference slant in the teaching now, it is still a very strong link to all that has gone before.

And Jesus is moving to a certain extent from being very personal, and it's very personal here, but moving out more into the whole work of mission.

Because Jesus is showing us, as he goes through his teaching to the disciples, that when a person comes to faith, or a group of people come to faith in Jesus Christ, it is not so that they will just gather into a little huddle and remain in a state of just inward togetherness and content and say, well, that's it, everybody else is out there, this is us here, and let everybody else get on with it.

Jesus is saying, no, that every believer has a responsibility to engage with the world. And that's what the chapter moves on eventually into, is the challenge that the Christian church and individual believers face as they meet the world in all its different ways.

But to begin with, Jesus is homing in here on our own relationship. And really the chapter is divided into, you could almost say into three sections, where there is our own relationship to Jesus, one of abiding in him, then our relationship to one another, which is loving one another, and then our relationship to the world, which is engaging with a hostile world.

[ 19 : 50 ] So Jesus is kind of dealing with all these things. Now, at the very beginning, Jesus again makes one of his last of his great I am statements.

You know how throughout John's Gospel he has made different statements, like I am the good shepherd, I am the door, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And here he says, I am the true vine.

And that's interesting because the vine was one of the great symbols of Israel. Over the porch in the temple, there was a great golden vine there.

In fact, during the revolt of 68, 70 AD, when there was this Jewish revolt against Rome, and they printed, or not printed, but made coins at that time, it was a symbol of the vine that was on the coin.

Because the vine was very much part of Israel's identity before God. In Psalm 80, which we sang, she was looked on as the vine that came out of Egypt.

[ 21 : 02 ] Right throughout, in Jeremiah and in Isaiah and the different prophecies, we find great emphasis towards the vineyard and towards the vine. But we know, as we sang in Psalm 80, that the vine was burnt up.

Burnt up with flaming fire. Burnt up with flaming fire. And that was a picture of God's judgment coming upon Israel. Because she didn't do what she was supposed to do. She was to be a light to the nations.

Rather than being a light to the nations, and showing to all the nations round about, the folly of the idolatry and the practices that they were involved in, so that they would focus, the nations could come to see, through the God of Israel, that he was the living and through God.

But we find the history of Israel is one of where they actually, rather than being separate in the sense of their worship being separate before God, we find that they begin to join in with the nations.

And they begin to engage in all the idolatry. And in fact, sometimes the history of Israel is a very, very sad one. There's a downward spiral. And sometimes they become even worse than the nations round about.

[ 22 : 18 ] And that's why God's judgment eventually came upon them. But Jesus is here saying, Now, I, yes, Israel of old was a vine, but I am the true vine.

I am the real vine. I am the one who has been sent by God, because God, we see here, is the vine dresser. And it is in and through Jesus Christ that we receive everything.

Because just as the vine goes up and all the branches come out of the vine, we know that the branches will only bear fruit according to the amount of what they receive through the vine, all the nourishment and all the goodness that comes up through the vine and goes out into the branches, and then in turn bear the clusters of grapes and so on.

So it is only as we are united to Jesus, and as we receive from him, that we will actually bear fruit within our lives.

And this is one of the things, one of the themes that we find not only here, but right throughout the Bible, the importance of bearing fruit. Because this is the one thing that the Lord is looking for from our lives.

[ 23 : 43 ] Bearing fruit to his glory. Every Christian ought to be bearing fruit. And if they're not, it's a very serious and a very solemn thing, because Jesus shows us in this chapter the seriousness of not bearing fruit.

And that's what he says, that every branch of mine that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And that is talking, of course, of the church at large.

That everyone within the church who is not bearing fruit, he takes away. And I find that a very, very solemn thing, and maybe people will say, well, I thought that once a person came to faith in Jesus Christ, that was it, that they were safe.

Well, that is true. Once a person is safe in Jesus Christ, they are safer than any other person can possibly be in anything in this world. But that doesn't mean that every single person within the church all over this world is united to Jesus Christ.

In the time of Jesus, many of the Pharisees, and let us remember outwardly, they were exceptional people. Their righteousness was quite extraordinary.

[ 25 : 00 ] Of course, it was self-righteousness. If you wanted to see how somebody should live in a, you'd almost say, in a spotless manner. You looked at the Pharisees.

In fact, as the Pharisees looked at Jesus, they thought that his lifestyle was awful. Because he went and he would sit with publicans and with sinners. He ate and he drank and he involved and engaged and he touched people and moved with people and he went into area society they wouldn't even doubt, they wouldn't even tolerate.

And so they looked at Jesus as somebody who was completely wrong. So you see, you can have an outward righteousness that can look the part, but inwardly it's all wrong.

And it's a life that's not bearing fruit. It's fruit. That's what God is looking for. Now, of course, everybody doesn't bear fruit at the same level.

Every believer isn't growing at the same pace. Every believer doesn't achieve the same things in the kingdom. Jesus makes that very clear.

[ 26 : 12 ] For instance, in the parable of the sower, he said, some of you will bear fruit a hundredfold. In other words, these are the Christians who are, they're Christians apart.

And we know people like that who just, who just live for the Lord. Everything they do, there's a, there's like a burning passion and zeal. They are caught up with the kingdom.

And everybody knows this is an exceptional Christian. That's a hundredfold Christians. But everybody's not going to be like that. And Jesus says that. He said, some will bring, bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

He said, some sixtyfold. And there are some thirtyfold. You and I know that it's, it's, it's true with, in the natural world, that sometimes you'll have a great crop out of potatoes, for instance, and different things.

Sometimes a poor crop. Sometimes one person will say one year, well I had a, I had a bumper crop this year. Next year they may say, I was really, really poor.

[ 27 : 20 ] And in a sentence like that, often in the Christian life, some years we might be a hundredfold. Some years we might be sixtyfold. Some years thirtyfold.

Sometimes a Christian will go through his or her whole life. and there'll be thirtyfold Christians. The important thing is there is still fruit.

And these are Christians who are, they're content maybe with a little zeal, a little love, a little faith. They just, they trundle along.

But they love the Lord. They've maybe never done any great exploits for the Lord. But they still, they love the Lord in their own quiet way. But as we say, there are others who are six, but the important thing is that there is fruit.

If there is no fruit, it's there that we meet the solemn warning. Because Jesus said, every branch of mine that does not bear fruit, he takes away.

[ 28 : 26 ] And when you go through the history of the church, you find that this is the very thing that happened right at the very beginning. The first two born into this world, Cain and Abel, both of them worshipped God.

Both of them sacrificed to God. God accepted one sacrifice, Abel's, but he didn't accept Cain's. Because Cain came in the wrong way, with the wrong sacrifice.

He came his own way. He came the way without blood. God accepted Abel, who came by the appointed way, with the blood, but not Cain.

Then you look at Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. The grandson of Abraham, who had received all the great promises.

And then you think of Jacob, because Jacob had a twin brother. And what does God say of Jacob and his twin brother Esau? An amazing thing.

[ 29 : 26 ] Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. I find that amazing. And then you go to, as we've been looking on Sunday evenings with Ivor, the establishing of the kingdom in Israel.

There were two kings. There was Saul and then there was David. Both of them confessed God. Both of them sacrificed and worshipped God.

And yet we find that one goes into a downward spiral, so that at the end of his days we find him not consulting the Lord, but consulting a witch. He had plummeted so low.

That's where Saul arrived. Then you look at the disciples. You come into the New Testament and you see Jesus chose twelve disciples. And then you think of that night just before Jesus is betrayed and they're all there in the upper room together.

And you find one of them, Judas. He leaves the intimacy of the room. Maybe he cast a last glance at John who was lying against Jesus.

[ 30 : 34 ] And Judas goes out into the dark to sell Jesus and to betray him with a kiss. And so you see right throughout the history of the church there are those who were, looked like they were branches, but they didn't bear fruit.

And this is a solemn thing the Lord says that he will take them away. It's very solemn that. And you see a branch can only be a branch if it's united to Jesus.

If you went outside and you went up to the castle grounds and you saw I know just now the leaves are all fading and such like but there was a beautiful smallish tree and there was this beautiful branch full of lovely foliage and you'd say oh what a shame how on earth did that come off?

And you go home and you get a hammer and some nails and say well I'm going to put that branch back. It belongs to that tree. It's a shame it's there. And you try to hammer that in and of course you can hammer it back in but it'll never work again because it's not tied in to the source of life.

And that's how it is in the church unless we are tied in to the source of life. As we're saying to the young people we can read all about Jesus but unless Jesus comes right in unless we come to really know him unless he comes to live within us then we're not going in the right direction.

[ 32 : 05 ] We can appear to be we can be doing all the right things outwardly but unless we have this personal union relationship with Jesus then we're dead.

but Jesus then shows us something else because he shows us that those that's what he says every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it might bear more fruit.

Now again we know that sometimes you'll see and maybe if you don't know much I'm not much of a gardener but you know it's one of the amazing things I find is when you see people with maybe a beautiful garden and beautiful bushes and there they are they're cutting away maybe this time of year they're cutting away the bush and cutting it down and cutting it back and cutting plants back and you're saying cutting rose bushes trimming them right down as one of this you're saying what are you doing and you think to yourself that's that see that beautiful rose bush that they had and then you look at that they've cut it right down you say are you trying to kill it or what but of course we know that this is what you have to do and they have to be pruned they have to be cut back in order for them to grow that's the way it works the Lord is saying the very same thing to ourselves you know when we when the Lord sees fruit in our lives he says

I want more I want more fruit and so the Lord is going to prune his people he's going to cut his people back he's going to cut his people now that's not straight away you say to yourself oh is that not going to be sore well often it will be because the Lord he breaks us in order that we will grow and a lot of the growth in the kingdom is we grow down we grow down we grow up in the Lord but down in the shelves and the Lord often has to press on us and push on us and there are many many things he has to do in order that we will be the people he wants us to be in this world as we're looking at Wednesday night back there Moses it took 40 years for the Lord to prepare Moses to be the man he wanted him to be 40 years that's how long the Lord had to prune and cut away and break and mold

Moses till he became a real living instrument in the hand of God that he could use and so that's what the Lord is doing and he's looking for fruit what fruit well very obviously what it tells us in the Bible the fruit of the spirit and what is that well Galatians tells us love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control that's what the Lord is looking for in our lives it's not the outward display that the Pharisee may have had of being just maybe very rigid and stern and appearing it's a love it's a joy it's a peace it's a goodness it's a gentleness it's a faithfulness this is what the Lord is looking for not just on a

[ 35 : 47 ] Sunday but every day as we go about life and interact and as we do all the different things we do this is what should be at the very heart of our life and so the Lord is at work and as we said he's pruning now we often think that he does so he prunes through the troubles and the trials and the temptations yes but he also does and I believe primarily verse 3 through the word already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you and again Jesus in this high priestly prayer prays sanctify them through the truth your word is truth I believe that the main way of cleansing of purging of pruning is through the word yes it is through the difficulties of providence and the trials and temptations as well but I believe that the main work is through the word that's what

Jesus is saying sanctify them mold them into my likeness through the truth my word is truth but your word is the truth and that's what is happening and that's why it is so important for us to come under the word come under the word publicly come under the word privately it has a washing effect it not only feeds our soul it washes us and that's a danger for the believer if you find yourself neglecting the word things are going to go askew if you find yourself neglecting the word you won't be the Christian you were the neglect of the word is the most dangerous thing and Satan doesn't want us to come near the word he wants to keep us away from I don't think we realize how much good it does our soul to come to church sometimes you might come to church and say oh you know I didn't really get much today ah just pass me by being under the word did you good it did you good maybe you didn't realize it at the time but it did it has this washing this cleansing effect upon our soul it's the

Lord sees to it this is what he's doing and that's why it's so vital for us to come under the word so Jesus is saying that and you'll see the effect there's an ongoing run with regard to fruit because we see first of all there's fruit then there's more fruit and by verse five much fruit and then the Lord goes on to show us the importance of trusting in him and depending upon him because he makes this great statement where he says at the end of verse five for apart from me you can do nothing I reckon that's one of the hardest things for us to learn that's what Jesus says apart from me you can do nothing and so often we think we can and we say oh yes Lord I know that that's true apart from you we can do nothing and then we go on and we try and do it ourselves and so often we try and do things ourselves and we hit the buffers and what's not happening and we say oh what's happening and the

Lord say because you're trying to do it yourself you're trying to build the kingdom on your own strength you're trying to live the Christian life in your own strength you can't do it you're trying to fight temptation in your own strength you can't do it you're trying to read the word just on your own strength you can't do it you need me for everything and that's one of the hardest lessons for us to learn and then very briefly the Lord then makes this amazing statement in verse seven he says if you abide in me and my words abide in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you now some people grab hold of that last wee bit ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you and people will say whoa that means whatever I want God is going to do that for me and sometimes you'll find people who will turn around and say you know I have stopped believing in



God because I asked him for this and I asked him for that and he didn't give it to me but I believe that there's qualifications with what the Lord says you think of it naturally what parent in the right mind would say to their children right look ask me for whatever you want and I'll give it to you doesn't matter what it is can you think of the chaos in society if that's how life was and our heavenly father isn't going to deal with us in a in a random kind of way like that you'll notice that there are qualifications to it now in the previous chapter in chapter 14 Jesus makes a similar statement and he asks he says this in verse 13 whatever you ask in my name this I will do that the father may be glorified now notice the first qualification there whatever you ask in my name the name of Christ now the name of

[ 41 : 16 ] Christ is not just a formula that we add on at the end of our prayer where we say for Jesus sake or all in the name of Jesus the name is important the name isn't just something that identifies a person in the Bible the name refers to the character to the work of the passion so when we pray in the name of Jesus we pray for things that are in keeping with his nature and with his character so straight away that means there's loads of things we won't pray for we cannot when we find that we cannot pray for something that is contrary to his way and to his word to his will if the Lord is saying something explicitly this is you you're not to do this or this is what you're to do that means we cannot go to the Lord and pray the very opposite and ask for the very opposite to what his word is saying will happen in our lives no so that's straight away that's part of the qualification that limits a lot of what we ask and again it says here if you abide in me and my words abide in you now again at one level people say that's every

Christian because every Christian is abiding in Christ true but I believe here it is specifically for those who are living close to Jesus I believe it's like the John in the upper room remember how John was leaning it tells us leaning against Christ and it's very interesting remember when Jesus said that one of the disciples was going to betray him there was only one who asked even Peter said to John ask who is it John I would say was the person who was really abiding in Christ there there was an intimacy there was a closeness John asks Jesus and Jesus said the one that I'm going to give the soft to and of course he gave it to Judas I believe that this is the one who is living close to the Lord living in fellowship living in communion and when we if we live close to the

Lord but notice it's not just us abiding in him but his words abiding in us so that there's this real close intimate bond and as his words abide in us we know what the will of God is because we're told that if we know what his will and if we ask anything according to his will he hears us and he will answer us so there are always these qualifications to our prayer and so Jesus is giving this great encouragement but particularly yes to our own growth and development but I also believe in reference to what he's going to speak about later into the whole area of evangelism and we know that in the history of the church that the church has seen growth way beyond anything that Jesus in his lifetime in this world ever saw that's why

Jesus said you're going to do greater things than me and people say what what do you mean well just in that very thing for instance in Pentecost thousands we never read of that happening in Jesus his lifetime but thousands were converted as Peter preached and prayer is essential living close to the Lord in prayer is essential the apostle Paul the great evangelist knew the importance of prayer as Paul would go out into the marketplace and into the different places and even into different countries he would be depending upon the church back at home and he'd be saying I'm depending upon you to be praying for me Paul knew he wasn't on his own yes he was united to Jesus and he was depending upon Jesus but he was also depending he you know what he termed the people praying for him back at home the men and women who were praying for him at home co-workers that's what he called co-workers in the gospel it's not everybody who can go to the forefront not everybody who can go to the co-feet it's not everybody who has the ability to go out and evangelize but everybody has the ability to pray and that's why it's so important that there is this great link this great togetherness with those who work out in the forefront and those who are behind the scenes as

Jesus said remember how he said some are sowers and some are reapers but at the end of the day they'll all rejoice together and that's how it's going to be in glory the praying warriors the workers all rejoicing together the Lord's going to show how it's all tied in together so may we be encouraged by what Jesus is saying to us here and realize that although we may feel weak today you may say to yourself oh I feel I feel such a poor poor Christian well the first thing you have to ask yourself is do you love the Lord with a hand and heart and say I love you Lord I'm a failure I'm a mess I'm probably the poorest Christian in here in this church that's alright as long as you love the Lord where there is fruit supposing it is the tiniest little bud there's always room for more and the

[ 47 : 25 ] Lord will see to it there will be more the problem is if there is no fruit at all you make sure then that you are united to Jesus and if you are there will be fruit let us pray Lord our God we give thanks for your great word we give thanks oh Lord for the blessing of it and we pray that it will burn into our hearts that it will strengthen us in our faith and that we may go on rejoicing along the way we pray to bless the cup of tea in the hall afterwards and that you will watch over each and every one taking us to our different homes safely oh Lord do us good be with all who are in need cleanse us from our sin we pray in Jesus name amen our concluding psalm is psalm 92 this is from the Scottish Psalter psalm number 92 and the tune is amazing grace I'm going to sing from verse 12 to the end of the psalm psalm 92 and that's on page 353 verse 12 psalm 92 to show that that bright is the Lord he is a rock to me he from all unrighteousness is altogether free something beautiful about seeing an old

Christian developing developing developing I think Jacob have often said that as one of the classic examples Jacob Jacob was a believer from a young youngish age but his earlier life was very far removed from his latter life and he was somebody who developed and developed and developed and developed and may that be our prayer that the Lord spares us in old age when others fade that we will still be bringing forth fruit to his glory psalm 92 from verse 12 but like the palm tree flourishing shall be the righteous one each shall like do the cedar root that is in

Lebanon O that within the hearts of God are planted by his grace they shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place and in hold it when others stay they could still form shall bring they shall be fat and full of star and may be pur and they be pur to show the dark bright is the

Lord he is our hope to be and deep from all unrighteousness it is all together free may the grace mercy and peace of God the Father Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more Amen