

The Joy-Filled Fruitful Life

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Preacher: Walt Alexander

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.

These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

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

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

[1 : 31] For all that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you.

This is the Word of God. Amen. Amen. You know, there are few things more unexciting and un insightful than post-game interviews.

In just over 100 days, it will be football time again in Tennessee, and we'll have to endure a whole season of these post-game interviews.

One author captures well what we all feel when we watch these interviews 30 seconds after the game concludes. There are few things in life as unenlightening as a post-game interview.

Don't get me wrong, they're not all bad. But in general, you don't expect to hear original insights surface 30 seconds after the game has ended.

[2 : 43] What you expect is a whole lot of talk about how we never gave up, how we always believed in ourselves, how we gave 110%, and how these kids deserve all the credit in the whole world.

Really? All of it? The whole world? No credit left for anyone else? He continues, Part of the problem is that these interviews usually ask inane questions like, You caught the pass at midfield, slipped past the safety, and then sprinted to the pylon.

Take us through your thoughts. Largely due to the nature of these interviews, meaningless phrases abound. When a team loses, you hear things like, We just didn't get the job done.

Go figure. They made the big plays, and we didn't. We needed this reality check in order to keep us on track with what we're trying to do.

What are you trying to do? Lose or win? And when a team wins, you hear that we gave 110%. We never gave up, as the other team must have, given up somewhere along the way.

[3 : 56] We stuck to our game plan. Everything worked itself out. Unfortunately, when it comes to growing in Christ, meaningless phrases abound there, too.

Phrases like, Let go and let God. Stop trying and start trusting. Keep believing the promise. Give it up to God.

All of those things may be true enough, but what do they mean? Is Christianity just a matter of handing things over to God? Is that all it is?

Just transferring things back into His grip? Is it a matter of passively trusting? Is the key, or is the key to the Christian life just thinking the right things?

If we just believe the right things, if we just hold to the right things, everything else in our lives will fall into place. We can be led to believe. Last week, we studied these first eight verses in John chapter 15.

[4 : 59] We studied this wonderful metaphor, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I am, he it is that bears much fruit. On the one hand, it's an incredibly profound metaphor. No one lives the Christian life unless they're united to Christ. Unless He comes and lives in us, as we talked about.

Unless we are in Him and brought to new life. But even though it's wonderful, it's also quite perplexing of a metaphor. The phrase abide or remain occurs ten times in this section. But what does it mean? What does it mean to abide? When we use the word abide, we usually use it in different ways.

Maybe accepting without opposition. I abide by the traffic laws or pay the fine when I don't. Or we use it as if we're waiting for our turn.

[5 : 58] We abide by the long wait at this restaurant because we love the barbecue. Is that what abiding in Christ is? Abide with me.

Is it passively trusting, enduring, waiting? Or does it include actions? What does it mean to abide or remain in Christ?

How do we remain in Him? You know, there's numerous parallels between verses 1 through 8 and 9 through 16, which is our text this morning.

There's a continued emphasis upon bearing fruit. That's the goal of the Christian life. Continued emphasis on bearing fruit. There's also this continued emphasis upon belonging to Jesus, on obedience and on the power of prayer.

It seems to me that verses 9 through 16 are Jesus' commentary on verses 1 through 8. It seems that Jesus is telling us what it means to abide in these verses.

[7 : 06] In many ways, Jesus kind of sheds or gets rid of the abstract of the metaphor, I'm the vine, you're the branches, and turns to concrete action in these verses.

Commands about how to remain in Him and bear much fruit. But in a word where we're going, the only way to live a fruitful life is to remain devoted to Christ and His commands.

The only way to live a fruitful life is to remain devoted to Christ and His commands. We're going to break this out in three points. First one, as beloved children, obey His commands.

Jesus continues this theme of remaining in Him by calling us to obey. Look at verse 9. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Abide in my love. Jesus is clearly continuing that theme of abiding. Abide in my love. He continues, verse 10.

[8 : 09] You will abide in my love. Just as I kept the Father's hand, and abide in His love. And so this theme of abiding continues, but He discontinues the use of this metaphor.

He no longer talks about abiding in the vine, and then shifts to abide in my love. It's as if the metaphor of the vine and the branches are unable to capture all that is behind this metaphor.

The great love of God that is behind our relationship with Jesus Christ. And so Jesus says, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now John will later write that God is love. What an incredible statement. He's saying God in His personal unchanging character is love.

That means God is and always has been love. And that phrase means nothing if we're talking about a God who lived alone before anything was made.

[9 : 18] But it can be rightly said about our God, because our God is one God in three persons. And therefore, love is at the core of who He is. That's what Jesus means later in John 17 when He says, Father, You love me before the foundation of the world.

He's given us a window into before anything that was made was made. There was this relationship between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. A relationship filled with love.

Jonathan Edwards has a fabulous sermon that you could Google this afternoon and find it. Heaven is a world of love. Just a meditation on the love between the Father, Son, and the Spirit.

And that to which we're invited into. But it's not as if the Father just loved Jesus back then. And again and again throughout this gospel, John makes clear the Father loves Jesus now.

He's put all things into His hand and loves Him for laying down His life. Loves Him for calling all those whom the Father has given to Him.

[10 : 24] But how does the Father love Him? What's the nature of this love? You know, John 3.16 says, What does it mean that God loved the world?

Did He love the world because it's so big? You know, this is the God of endless galaxies. Did He love the world so big? Did He love it because it's so beautiful? Surely in that verse, The wonder is, The wonder is, He loved the world and gave His Son because it is so bad. So lost. So sinful.

He loves the world out of pity and compassion. But that is not the way He loves Jesus Christ.

There's no pity and compassion. The Father loves Him with delight.

At Jesus' baptism, the Father said, This is my Son with whom I am well pleased. And John's telling us, That's the way Jesus loves you. As the Father has loved me, So have I loved you.

[11 : 28] Though Jesus does love us out of pity and compassion, Though He does hate to see us helpless and harassed By the enemy within and the enemy of our souls, It's not pity and compassion that's behind it all.

It takes pity and compassion to move all the sin That is in our life out of the way of His love for us. But it's not pity and compassion where it ends. It ends in delight. And so He says, Remain in my love.

As the Father delighted to love me, So I delight to love you. Remain in my love. Notice He's saying, Do not remain in your love for me, As great as that is. He's saying, Remain in my love to you.

Charles Ross says on these verses, It's not abide in the exercise of love to me, Although that is a most important duty in itself. But it is abide under the influence of my love to you.

It is as if He had said, Abide under the sweet smiles of my love to you. But He continues and tells us how we're to remain in it.

[12 : 34] Look in verse 10. If you keep my commandments, You will abide in my love. So abide in my love. But how do you do that? If you keep my commandments, You will abide in my love, Just as I kept my Father's commandments, And abide in His love.

I love the tension in these verses. Even though the love of Christ is great, And undeserved, And filled with delight, We do not remain in His love, By merely being an object of it.

The love of Christ is not like a wave, That comes upon you, And carries you all the way home. We do not remain in His love, By letting go, And letting God, Or stopping trusting, Or stopping trying, And starting trusting.

Remaining in the love of God, Requires effort. Requires obedience. We remain in the love of God, The same way Jesus remained in His Father's love, By obeying.

Just as I have kept my Father's commandments, And abide in His love, So you abide in mine. And we know this example of Jesus Christ, Again and again, He says and reminds us of His submission, And obedience to the Father.

[13 : 49] If you think about this, The second person, The Trinity, And yet the accent of His ministry, Is on how He's come to exalt the Father, And obey Him. He says, Earlier in John 14, Jesus says, If you love me, You will keep my commandments, Indicating that obedience, Is evidence of love.

So if you say you love Jesus Christ, And do not obey, Then you do not love Him, Is what John 14 said. But here He's saying, If you keep my commandments, You will remain in my love.

Obedience is how, The way we stay in it. Obedience does not earn His love, Nor does obedience snatch love, Out of His unloving hand. Rather, Obedience is the path, Of those who love Him.

Obedience is the path, Of staying in His love. You don't get this right, You can't read parts of our Bible. If you go read Psalm 19, He talks about how much He longs, To walk in the way of God's commands, Because He loves Him with all His heart.

There's nothing He wants more. So how do others know, We love God if we don't obey Him? How do they know, That God loves us, If we do not obey Him?

[15 : 21] The great controversy, Therefore, For every human being, This side of Adam, Is will your will, Will it be your will, Or His?

Your desires, Or His? Your kingdom, Or His? Now our culture says, The courageous are those, Who throw off or strain, Who don't let anyone tell them, What is true for them, But there's no courage in that, There's no greatness, You know, They used the word magnanimous, There's no magnanimous of spirit, In that, There's no man under, No great man found in that, The truly courageous are those, Who continue to trust God, Even though they don't understand, Who continue to give, Even though bills keep coming in, Who continue to keep His commands, Even though it brings opposition, Disfavor, Who continue to resist the flesh, Even though it doesn't feel right, Who continue to submit their dreams, And desires to God, In his old book, William Gurnall

says, It requires more prowess, And greatness of spirit,
 To obey God faithfully, Than to command an army of men, Because your heart is quite an army, To be a Christian, Than to be a captain, Requires more prowess, And greatness of spirit, To obey God faithfully, Than to command an army of men, To be a Christian, Than a captain, So he's calling us, To obedience as the path, Wonderfully though, Obedience is not just the path, Of staying in his love, It's the path of joy, Look at verse 11, These things I've spoken to you, That my joy may be in you, Your joy may be full, He's given us, He said, I give you my peace, Remain in my love, And now, Come, Enjoy my joy, He has said, It is my food and drink, To do the will of him who sent me, It's as basic a thing, As there is, Like eating and drinking, But now he says,
 It is my joy, So deep is his desire, To please the father, That he says, It's what he wants most, And what brings him, The greatest joy, Any person who's been a Christian, For some length of time, Knows there's no peace, Or satisfaction, Like obeying God, There's no peace, Or satisfaction, Like obeying God, Like confessing your sin, Repenting, Refusing to slander, Giving away your money, There's no peace like it, If I had a word for the graduate, There's no peace, Like obeying God, There's no joy like it, Trust me, I've tried so many different joys, And there's no joy like it, And any person, Who's been a Christian, For some length of time, Know there's nothing, There's nothing more miserable, Than seasons where we hold back, From fully obeying God, There's nothing more miserable, Than hiding secret sins,
 There's nothing more miserable, Than a deceitful life, Than pet sins, Than a hidden life, You know, Kim and I will, Get in a conflict, Around the house, I tell people that, We fight, You know, If you're one of these couples, That don't have arguments, We can't relate to you, Like, We fight it out, You know, Often I'll follow that, And say, That just means, We're loud, Proud sinners, No, No, No rewards for that, But, Inevitably, We'll get in a conflict, I've been a Christian, For 23 years, Been married for 17, And yet, Times, When I know I need, To repent of my sin, To my wife, And I want to hold on it, You know, I don't want to be, The first one to go, No, She was more guilty, Than this one, You know, And there's, There's, There's no joy in it,
 [19 : 35] Like, It's completely, Miserable, And sometimes, I kind of just circle the drain, And it's crazy, But that's the way it is, There's nothing more miserable, Than refusing to obey God, But what we must see here, Is Jesus is not, After your dutiful obedience, He's after your satisfaction, And joy, He wants you to have, The best life possible, Not by fulfilling, All of your dreams, But by showing you, The path of joy, One of my favorite movies, Is The Fugitive, Harrison Ford plays, Now it's an old movie, But Harrison Ford plays, Dr. Richard Kimball, Who's accused of killing his wife, He's wrongly convicted, And sent to prison, He escapes, Through this, Train wreck, And bus wreck, Sets out to prove, He didn't do it, For much of the movie, He's a fugitive on the run, He's hunted, By this ruthless, Police officer, Named Samuel Gerard, Played by Tommy Lee Jones, While running,
 He keeps trying, To find out, Who killed his wife, And lead Gerard, And his, Police forces, To his clues, Near the end of the movie, There's a moment, Him and Gerard, Meet up a couple times, And then he flees again, But there's a moment, Where Gerard, Shouts across the room, Where Kimball is hiding, I believe you, I know you didn't, Kill your wife, And there's this rush, Of joy and relief, On his face, Because he realizes, He's learned from his clues, But he also realizes, The cop that's after him, Is not a bad cop, He's a good one, I think there's a similar thing, Going on here, The heart of the father, Is calling us to obey, And he's good, His heart is good, What he wants, Is your best good, Obedience is not the path, To joyless drudgery, Or grinding slavery,
 But to soul satisfying joy, Point two, As friends love one another, As friends love one another, Jesus continues this theme, Of remaining in him, By calling us to love one another, The previous verses, Leave us wondering, What commandments were called to obey, And now Jesus makes this clear, Look in verse 12, This, So keep my commandments, This is my commandment, That you love one another, As I have loved you, So my peace, My love, My joy, My commandment, There's nothing new, We've already seen this command, In the upper room, Love one another, The law says, Love your neighbor as yourself, Jesus said, The two great commandments, Are love the Lord your God, With all your heart, Soul, Mind, And strength, And love your neighbor as yourself, But Jesus presents this command, In a striking way here, If we were asked, What commandment must we obey,
 We might say, Have no other gods, Before the Lord your God, Or love the Lord your God, With all your heart, Soul, Mind, And strength, But why does Jesus say, His commandment, Is to love one another, Is he discounting the others, And accenting this one, I think, He's gathering all those other

commands, Under this heading, Because love for God, Is proven by how we relate to others, Love for God, Is unbreakably tied, To how we love, And relate to others, To put it another way, Love for God is verified, Or unverified, By how we love others, The acid test, Of our love for God, Is in how we love, Others love one another, The reason is apparent, Love for God is unseen, Anyone can say he loves God, Right?

But love for others, Is seen, Felt, And known, To say we love God, Is easy, It's cheap, Who will argue with you, Who really knows, But to love others, Is hard, As one old poem, Puts it, To live above, With those you love, Undiluted glory, To live below, With those you know, Quite another story, A way better test, A way better test, A way better test, Of our love for God, Than our worship playlist, Is how we treat, Our difficult neighbor, Or our spouse, Our children, Love for God, Love for God, Love for God, Is seen, In these things, But Jesus is also wanting us, To see that, Abiding in him, Is not about a you and Jesus moment, It's not about a close your eyes,

[24 : 37] And sway back and forth, Not a mystical moment, Abiding and remaining in him, Is a corporate moment, He says, I am the vine, And you, All of you, Are the branches, What does it mean, Being connected to him, Has a lot more to do, Than just you and him, As Paul puts it later, You are members of one another, There's one body, With many members, Just like there's one vine, With many branches, So what he's saying, The love the Father, Shows the world, And the death and resurrection of Jesus, Results in a people, Called out of the world, To love one another, I think that's what's going on, And he's calling them, To the primacy, Of this shared life together, So they're going to go out, Into the world, They're going to face down, All sorts of opposition, But what they're building, Is something they're building together, As a display of love, To the world, As such, Jesus is calling us, To continually reorient our lives, From revolving around ourselves,

No one's going to tell you, To ask permission, To please yourself this week, You will not find that, On the news, To follow your heart, You won't find that, But to reorient your life, Around others, Will be very difficult, To find in the headline, But that's what he's doing, That's what he's calling us to, Carl Trueman helpfully says, My special destiny, As a believer, Is to be a part of the church, It is the church, That is the big player, In God's wider plan, Not me, How do you read your Bible?

Mostly about you, Or about something bigger, That puts me, My uniqueness, My importance, My role, My definite perspective, Indefinite perspective, The problem today, Is that too many, Have the idea, That God's primary plan, Is for them, And the church is secondary, Listen, The instrument, To the realization, Of their individual significance, Now there's a lot, Loaded in that, But you get this change, Of reorientation, The special destiny, What God's doing, In the world, Is not calling, Isolated individuals, And blessing their plans, For their life, What God is doing, Is building a people, Calling a people, To himself, In the same way, That he tells us to obey, As he obeyed the father, He tells us to love, As he loved them, Look at verse 13, These are wonderful verses, Greater love, Has no one than this,

That someone laid down, His life for his friend, You are my friends, If you do what I command, No longer do I call you servants, For the servant doesn't know, What the master is doing, But I call you friends, For all that I have heard, From the father, I've made known to you, Abraham and Moses, Were called friends of God, Now Jesus says, Those who obey him, Are his friends, There's a contrast, Wonderful contrast, Between servants, And friends, A servant is someone, You would tell them, To do something for you, No explanation needed, But your friend, Is someone you would tell, What's going on in your heart, What plans, And desires you have, Early on, They were servants, Now, They are friends, Many take these verses, And marvel, That we have a friend, In Jesus Christ, What a friend we have, In Jesus, All our sins, And griefs to bear, What a privilege,

To carry everything, To God, In prayer, Surely it's true, What a privilege, We have, With a friend, In Jesus Christ, But the real marvel, Is not that we can call, Jesus friend, The marvel is that, Jesus calls us friend, No longer do I call you servants, I call you friends, In his classic novel, East of Eden, Two brothers move west, To find land and life, One of the brothers, Adam, Becomes close friends, With a great man, Named Samuel Hamilton, He's the magnanimous man, In this novel, Adam begins, Talking with Samuel, One day about a horse, Or about Samuel's horse, One afternoon, Adam says, You've had that horse forever, He's 33, Said Samuel, His teeth are worn out,

[29 : 10] I have to feed him, Warm mash with my fingers, And he has bad dreams, He shivers and cries, Sometimes in his sleep, He's about as ugly, A crow bait, As I ever saw, Adam said, I know it, I think that's why, I picked him out, When he was a colt, Do you know that I paid, Two dollars for him, 33 years ago, Everything was wrong, With him, Hooves like flapjacks, A hawk so thick, And short

and straight, There seems no joint at all, He's hammerheaded, And sway backed, He has a pinched chest, And a big behind, He has an iron mouth, And still fights the crupper, With a saddle, He feels as though, You're riding on a sled, Over a gravel pit, He can't trot, And he stumbles over his feet, When he walks, I have never in 33 years, Found one good thing about him, He even has an ugly disposition, He's selfish, And quarrelsome, And mean and obedient,

To this day, I don't dare walk behind him, Because he will surely, Take a kick at me, When I feed him mash, He tries to bite my hand, And I love him, His friend says, And you named him doxology, Which means praise, Samuel says, Surely, So ill-endowed a creature, Deserved one grand possession, That's some of what's going on here, So ill-endowed a creature, So lost, So prone to wander, So weak and frail, How many times, Will they deny him this night, And yet Jesus says, I call you friend, Not so we'd wonder, That we have a friend in Jesus, But most wonderfully, We would wonder, How in the world, Can he call us friend,

Point three, As disciples, Remember your mission, Jesus concludes, This theme of remaining in him, By calling us to remember this mission, All this talk, About them being friends of Jesus, Ones to whom, Jesus revealed his heart, And his plans, The disciples must have been tempted, To become puffed up, Like a tween, Riding in his brother's truck, They must have been tempted, To think they were hot stuff, But Jesus cuts them down to size, Right here, Look in verse 16, He says, You did not choose me, But I chose you, And appointed you, That you should go and bear fruit, Behind these verses, Are, Is the doctrine of election, There's a strong emphasis, On the divine election, In the gospel, John,

Look at John 6, 36, Which we have for you, He says, All that the father gives me, All those whom the father gives me, Will come to me, And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out, The Bible is clear, God is absolutely sovereign, In salvation, All that the father gives, He said, Will come, All those whom the father chooses, Sets apart, And determines to be saved, Will be saved, But look at the way that verse, Holds it together, God's sovereignty is never reduced, To, Reduces man to be a robot, Or a pawn, All that the father gives, Will come, All that the father gives, Will come, By personal decision, By repenting, And repentance, And faith, Turning from their sin, To Jesus Christ, But it's important, That here, And in many parts of scripture, The purpose behind discussing, Divine election in scripture, Is most often, To keep us humble, To keep us away,

There, That's Jesus' purpose, Here, Disciples have just been told, That they have special access, To Jesus' love, That they are his friends, That they have special access, To what he's doing, That's enough to puff anyone up, But Jesus reminds them, You did not choose me, I chose you, You're not my disciple, Because of something, You have done, You're my disciple, In spite of what you've done, You're not mine, Because of your good choice, But because of my, Gracious choice, I love the way, One preacher says it, That the, He says, At the gates of heaven, Say, Come to me, All you who are weary, And heavy laden, And I will give you rest, And so you just think, Yes, I'm coming, So as soon as you walk, Through heaven's doors, So you turn back, And look back at the door, And it says, By grace you've been saved, Yes, Wonderfully,

[34 : 16] The way scripture presents it, God appeals for us, To respond in faith, And repentance to Jesus Christ, But all those who come, Are those whom the Father draws, That's the way scripture, Presents it again, And again, Remember Deuteronomy 7, When he says, Do not think that I chose you, Because you're great in number, Because you are special, Because of any talents you had, I chose you way back when, When you were nothing, From one man, Came the family of the Lord, And so that's how the Lord does it, D.A. Carson says, No believer will have legitimate grounds, For claiming throughout eternity, That he made it, And his neighbor did not, Because he made a right choice, The right choice, Very challenging, Then Jesus reminds them of their mission, So election doesn't function in a vacuum, It's a part of what God's doing, In the mission of the world, With his chosen people, A royal priesthood, A holy nation, To devote themselves to his purposes,

He says, You did not choose me, I chose you, And appointed you, That you should go and bear fruit, And your fruit should abide, Being a friend to Jesus, Is not about access you have, It's not about privilege, It's not about this me and Jesus moment, Because you're called to love one another, But it's also not just about that, Being a friend of Jesus, It's about a responsibility, You've been entrusted with, To whom much is given, Much is required, As it's said of Spider-Man, With great power comes great responsibility, And wonderfully it shifts to mission, That word appoint, Is a word used for purposeful arranging, And ordaining, In the same way, God appointed Abraham, As the father of many nations, And ordained the Levites, To serve in the tabernacle, And

commissioned Joshua, To follow Moses, God is setting apart, Those who follow him, For a particular mission, Go and bear fruit, Go and bear fruit, This is the seventh and eighth time, This word bear fruit, Or fruit appears, Bear fruit, And your fruit should abide, Jesus is not gathering, Of people who passively wait on him, Pull away, Wait, In their holy huddle, Jesus is gathering, Of people that go, And bear fruit, The fruit it seems to me, In these verses, Not just to me, Other scholars, But, Well, Not that I'm, The scholars, Yes, The fruit of mission, Even though Jesus knows, He'll soon leave the world, Even though, He knows, They will face persecution, And hatred, Because of him, Even though he knows, Some of them will be killed, For their faith, He promises, As you remain in me, You will bear fruit, Their world's about to be, Completely rocked, Yet Jesus says, As they abide, Devote themselves, To the mission, They'll remain, Whatever you ask in my name, It is yours, We've seen this, Several times now, It's not a formula, Or a magic spell, Not Jesus, Turning into a genie, Through which we get, All our precious dreams, He's saying, Whatever you need, In the cause of Christ, It is yours, Whatever you need, To live for me, Whatever you need, To bear fruit, It is yours, And your fruit, Will abide, One of the more, Interesting books, I've read, In the past several years, Is a book called, The Patient Ferment, Of the early church, It asks, In the first page, This question, Why did this, Minor mystery religion, From the eastern, Mediterranean, Marginal, Despised, Discriminated against, Grow substantially, Eventually supplanting, The well-endowed, Respectable cults, That were supported, By the empire, So there were, There were religions, Supported by the empire, By the Roman empire, And it wasn't Christianity, But how did it come, To supplant them, What enabled Christianity, To be so successful, That by the fifth century, It was established, As the religion, Of the Roman empire, Now that's quite, A bold question, He says, Firstly, They grew, Because of their patience, There are no books, In the first 300 years, Of the church, About, When, To resist, Ungodly rulers, Even though they were in, The Roman empire, But there are numerous books, On patience, And endurance, There's no virtue, Talked about more, In the first 300 years, Of the church, Than the virtue of patience, Remain, Under, Persecution, But ultimately, He argues, They grew, Because of their, Christ-like behavior, They grew, [39 : 24] Because of their fruit, Interestingly, The early church, Wouldn't have had, A mission committee, A mission committee, Or an outreach team, In many ways, They're so worried, About being snuffed out, By the Roman rulers, That outreach, Wasn't a part of it, But what, How did they attract people, They attract people, By their lives, By their compelling lives, And their fruit, Abides, What, What abides, Of Cyrus the great, Or Alexander the great, What abides, Of Julius Caesar, Marcus Aurelius, Or Genghis Khan, Or Queen Elizabeth the second, Or Napoleon, What abides, Not much, But what abides, Of these disciples, Is right for you today, Their fruit abides, Their fruit, Remains, The only way, To live a fruitful life, Is to remain devoted, To Christ, And his, Commands, This is what God, Wants us to throw, Our lives into,

And there's nothing like it, There's no joy, Like it, J. Campbell White, Says, Most men are not satisfied, With the permanent output, Of their lives, Listen, Nothing can wholly, Satisfy the life of Christ, Within his followers, That's what we've been talking about, The life of Christ, Within his followers, Except the adoption, Of Christ's purposes, Toward the world, He came to redeem, Fame, Pleasure, And riches, Are but husk, And ashes, In contrast, With the boundless, And abiding joy, Of working with God, For the fulfillment, Of his eternal plans, The men, Who are putting everything, Into Christ's undertaking, Are getting out of it, Its sweetest, And most priceless, Rewards, Every church, Is presented, With an opportunity, To throw everything, Into, Christ's purposes, In the world, Doesn't mean, Everybody needs to go, Into full-time ministry, Or, Be a full-time missionary, Or anything like that, But it does mean,

You've got to adopt, A missionary mindset, All of your life, Is mission, All of your life, Is focused on this goal, Of bearing fruit, For Jesus Christ, Of proclaiming, His purposes, In the world, May God help us, Father in heaven, Cast ourselves, On to you, And pray for grace, And help, Lord, Thank you for these, Precious words, And this reminder, Of how to live, How to abide in you, How to bear fruit, In you, Oh Lord, We need your help, We pray that you come, By your spirit, Strengthen our weak knees, Strengthen our weak faith, Direct our hearts, Into your steadfastness, Sustain us, By your spirit, We pray for fruit, God, We pray for the Holy Spirit, To come, Produce fruit in our lives, As we devote ourselves, To your commands, As we love, One another, And remember the mission, To which you've called us, Send us out, Into the harvest, We pray, Armed with your spirit, And with

faith, We ask these things, In Jesus name, Amen, You've been listening, To a message, Given by
Walt Alexander, Lead pastor, Of Trinity Grace Church, In Athens, Tennessee, For more
information, About Trinity Grace, Please visit us, At TrinityGraceAthens.com