

# Abide in Me

by Anton Bosch

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ to bear fruit and live a fruitful Christian life.*

**Duration:** 50:40

**Scripture:** John 15:1-8, John 15:16, Romans 1:18, Romans 6:6, Ephesians 1:4

**Topics:** "Abiding In Christ", "Spiritual Fruitfulness"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of abiding in Christ and bearing fruit as highlighted in John 15. It emphasizes the need for believers to remain connected to Jesus, allowing His word to guide their lives and produce lasting fruit that glorifies God. The message challenges individuals to assess where they stand in terms of bearing fruit and encourages a deeper commitment to abiding in Christ for spiritual vitality and impact.

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## Transcript

Please turn with me to the Gospel of John, Chapter 15, and I want to speak with you about a very familiar passage. And the problem in speaking on familiar passages, which is something I love to do, is that people tend to switch off even before you begin because they say, well, I know that. And I'm sure that you know this passage off by heart probably because you've heard it so many times.

So I pray that it would be a little bit fresh this evening. And even if it isn't, that the Spirit will remind you again of those things that we know. Peter says that to remind you of the same things again is not tedious, but it is necessary.

And so we need to be reminded again and again of those basics that maybe we understand, but that we may have forgotten. So let's go back to John, let's go to John, Chapter 15, and I'm going to read the first eight verses. I am the true vine, and my father is the vinedresser.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that bears fruit he prunes, 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, and as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, 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 bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they

gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burnt.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you. By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples. So Jesus speaks here about the vine, but I want to just begin to deal with the principle of abiding in him, and then we'll start going through this text.

This idea of abiding in him is a central part of the gospel. It appears all over the New Testament. You'll find it in Ephesians and in Colossians and in many other passages, and in fact in the first session I'm not going to do that because I mismanaged my time very badly in the first one.

I believe that there's no time limit in the second session, so we'll keep going until we're done. But I'm not going to go to Ephesians, but you can go through Ephesians, especially chapters two and three, and the same with Colossians, and underline every place where you find the words, in him, in Christ, in whom. Those three ideas, obviously the same principle.

In him, in him we have been chosen. In him we are redeemed. In him we have everything that we have.

And so everything is connected to our being in him. The very basis of our salvation is on the basis of the fact that we were in him. Romans chapter six speaks about the fact, and we missed the point in Romans six, because Romans six uses the word baptism, which comes because of the translation problem.

It should never have been baptism, it should have been immersed, and so Romans chapter six says that we were immersed in him, in his death. We were in him, we were put into him when he died. And that's why Paul says that I am crucified with Christ.

So how did I come to be crucified with Christ? Did that happen forty years ago, or fifty years ago, or ten years ago, when you got saved? No, that happened two thousand years ago. In God's all-knowingness and in God's all-power, his omnipotence, he was able to foresee us and he was able to put us into Jesus so that when Jesus died, according to Romans six and other scriptures, we died also. So that when he rose again, we rose with him.

And in that process, and there's a lot of technical detail connected to that, in that process we died to ourselves, but we also died to the law, so that we might be resurrected in him to live this new life. We were married to the law before, we are set free from that law so that we might be able to be raised to live this new life in the Lord Jesus. So our whole salvation begins in Christ.

In fact, the book of Ephesians speaks about the fact that we were chosen in him before the foundation of the earth. Now, that will boggle your mind, but somehow we were chosen before the foundation of the earth. And I'm not a Calvinist, by the way, but we were chosen, it says so, I believe the scriptures.

But here's the thing, he didn't choose us on our own merits. He didn't choose us because he thought that we were nice people. He chose us because we happened to be in Christ.

It was Christ that he chose. But when he chose Christ, we came with Christ as it were. And I know I'm stretching it a little bit, but you get the principle.

And so this idea of abiding in him, well, the process of being saved, I'm saved as I'm in him. And of course, that's the whole issue, the whole principle of water baptism is water baptism illustrates this principle that

we are placed in him, that we are buried with him, that we rise with him to walk in newness of life. But now this has far more implications than just the theology.

And this has to do now with how I get to live my life. So let's go to the passage. I am the true vine, Jesus says.

And it's interesting that he doesn't say I am the vine, but he says I am the true vine. So by implication then, if there is a true vine, then there must be a false vine or an unreal vine. The reason I say that is because when we find that word true, the opposite in the New Testament of truth is false, but it is also not real.

God seeks those to worship in spirit and in truth, in reality. But anyhow, so he is the true vine. So there is a vine, which is not the true vine.

And we heard, and you're going to hear a lot more this evening about being plugged in. You wonder what that has to do with it. Well I need to be plugged into Jesus, but unfortunately we are plugged into all sorts of other things.

And it's what we, and what is the purpose of being plugged in? Well we plug into some things mainly so we can get some kind of energy. You plug something in the outlet so you can get power out of the outlet. And so the problem is that many of us are plugged in to all sorts of other things.

Some of us have double adapters that allow us to be plugged into the world and to be plugged into Christ. No, I need to be plugged into one place only. And he is the true vine.

Then further down he says we are the branches. He doesn't explain that up front in verse 1, but in verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches. So the picture is pretty clear.

He is the stump, the root, or the root stock. We are the branches that are connected to that. In this case he is speaking, using the illustration of a vine, of a grape tree, is there such a thing as a grape tree? A grape vine, a grape vine.

But in Romans he speaks about an olive tree. And he says how did we get to become part of the olive tree? Well we were not part of the tree by nature. We were wild by nature as Gentiles, but he has grafted us in, and in that process he has cut off Israel, and that is a very important concept, not just in Romans, but it is a very important concept right through the Gospels.

Remember one of the earliest messages in the book of Matthew is that the ax lies at the root of the tree. And if the tree does not bear fruit, and he is speaking about Israel in that sense, if Israel does not bear fruit, the tree is going to be chopped off. And so the branches are cut off, according to Romans, so that we as wild branches could be grafted in.

And so we are not by nature part of the tree, we are not by nature part of Christ, but we have been grafted in. Now you are going to learn a lot about agriculture and also about engineering this afternoon. What does it mean to be grafted in? Well it is a very common practice and obviously a very old practice and something that they did in Bible times already.

And that is when you take a branch from a tree and you connect it or plug it in to a different tree, into a different root stock. And so most roses are grafted in. And so what you have underneath is a bramble normally.

And the reason for that is because the bramble has a very strong root system and it is hard to kill a bramble as you may know. And so they cut the bramble off and they take a twig from another rose tree, from a good rose tree, and they graft it in. They cut a V in the little stem that is coming up and they cut the true, the thing they want to graft in, they cut it with a sharp point, they put the two together like that, they splice it and they tie it up with string or with tape and the two then begin to grow together.

The two then become fused. And this is used in fruit trees and it is used in all sorts of other applications. So it is a very real principle.

And so we have been connected and plugged into Christ, we have been grafted into him. And so because we are connected to him, we then become the branches, he becomes the root or the vine. And the purpose then he says in verse 1, I am the true vine, my father is the vine dresser, he is the one who tends the garden, verse 2, every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away.

So what is the purpose of our connection to him? Our purpose is to bear fruit. Very clear from that and from many other passages, remember I quoted from the beginning of Matthew where he speaks about that Israel if it does not bear fruit it is going to be cut out. And there are scripture after scripture after scripture and if you want to do a study on this just go through an electronic concordance or an electronic bible and look for the words fruit in the New Testament and you will come up with dozens and dozens of quotes as to the need to bear fruit.

So we must bear fruit. And this is so serious he says that if you don't bear fruit what is going to happen? Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, not just every branch, not just some, every branch that does not bear fruit he takes away. What does that mean? You figure that one out for yourself because you may not like my theology on that but you decide for yourself what that means.

And so but what it clearly is saying is the importance of bearing fruit. You see here's the thing, fruit bearing is not an optional for Christians. It is essential.

It is the very essence of who we are. And that's why I have a little bit of a problem with your, this is for the e-bulletin, where's the other one? Volunteer sign up. I have a bit of a problem with this you can tell Pastor Shane, I'm sure he'll watch the video.

And my problem with this is that when you became a member you automatically became a volunteer. You don't get to choose and say I'm a non-functioning member. I'm a non-serving member.

I'm a non-fruit bearing branch. There is no such thing. He has saved us to serve.

And he has placed us in the body of Christ to bear fruit. You see we have this strange mentality which comes from this clergy, laity divide. And so it's really the pastors, they have to bear the fruit.

They have to do the work. But you know the rest of us, well we're just onlookers. We just go to the services, we pay our money, we do this a little, you know, but really it's up to the pastor.

And if the church isn't growing, whose fault is it? Oh it's the pastor. But who bears, who bears, who has the lambs? The shepherd or the sheep? I've never seen shepherds have lambs. All the shepherd does is look after the sheep and the sheep have the lambs.

So if the church isn't growing, whose fault is it? It's the sheep. I know it's a little bit oversimplified. But folks, here's the thing.

We don't get to choose whether we want to produce fruit or not. It's not an option. It's not a thing of saying well, you know, there's some people who are fruit bearing and there are others who are not.

We ought all to be fruit bearing. You see our modern idea of gardening is that, and I know there's not a lot of gardening going on here in the desert, but our idea of gardening is that you can have things in the garden for the sake of being pretty. So you have flowers and roses and all sorts of things and what's their purpose? Just to be pretty.

But in Bible times, they didn't have time and money and energy for that kind of stuff. If a tree was going to be there, it needed to serve a purpose. It needed to produce fruit.

And remember, Jesus tells another parable and he says the owner of the orchard comes to the orchard and he sees a tree and he says, I've seen this tree before. It's been here a few years and it's never borne anything. And then he says, why does it, and I don't remember the new King James, but the old King James says, why does it cumber the ground? Why does it burden the soil with its presence? Literally, why is it even there? And you remember the husbandman, picture of the Lord Jesus, pleads for mercy and he says spare it just one more year and I'll fertilize it and water it.

Maybe next year it'll bear fruit. But folk, fruit bearing is absolutely essential. It's something you don't get a choice about.

The problem is we say, well, you know, it's common for Christians not to bear fruit. And so everybody else doesn't bear fruit, so it's fine for me. Well, it really isn't.

And so every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And then every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Can you see the emphasis? It's on fruit.

Now again, you know, in our modern thinking, much of the pruning that goes on in our gardens is to make the tree look pretty, to improve its shape. But the purpose of this pruning is for one purpose only, and that is to produce more fruit. Now what is pruning all about? Well, it's simply to cut off those parts of the branch that are taking unnecessary strengths from the tree in producing leaves and growth that is not being channeled to the central purpose, to the bottom line of bearing fruit.

I'm sure you've heard that Walmart is closing a hundred and something stores, and everybody's very upset because obviously it's inconvenient for folk, and other folk are losing their jobs. But what's that all about? Why are they closing those stores? Profit. They're not contributing to the bottom line.

It's as simple as that. Walmart and every other store in town does not exist for the sake of just being there. It's there to produce profit, and if it doesn't produce profit, they're going to close the store down.

It's as simple as that. Now we accept that as far as the world is concerned, and we say, well, that's the way it is. That's what business is all about.

It's about the bottom line. Well, the kingdom of God is about the bottom line. But here the bottom line is not profit but is fruit, and everything needs to be channeled in such a way that there is not just fruit but that there is more fruit.

But you see, here we have a problem again because our modern sensibilities say that I can have my life and I can do whatever I need to do and whatever I want to do because that's my right. And so I can use my time, I can use my energy, I can use my money the way I choose to do those things. And if the pastor says, well, what are you, I mean the pastor wouldn't even dare to say, what are you doing with your time? Why are you involved in this pursuit and that pursuit? We can't dare go there, and yet this is the principle.

And you say, but those things are legitimate. They're legal. There's nothing illegal about my activities, about my sport, about my hobbies, about my pursuits, about my TV watching, about whatever it is.

It's all legitimate and there's nothing in the Bible against it. See, we become very good at the law sometimes, don't we? A little while ago I had to speak to a brother in the church about smoking pot. You can imagine where I'm going.

He said it's not there. Doesn't say anything that I can't smoke pot. See, we get very good at these legal technicalities.

But the principle of pruning is that while everything may be legal, remember Paul says that all things are lawful, but not everything edifies, doesn't build up. So it may be perfectly legal, but it is not contributing to the bottom line. It's not contributing to the fruit in my life.

And if it's not helping you to bear more fruit, well then there needs to be some pruning. And guess where the pruning begins? It begins with me and with you. We have to do the pruning.

The next verse says you are already clean because of the Word. Now why does he throw that there? Because you can see that all of those verses, all eight of those verses clearly deal with the tree or the vine and with the branches abiding and bearing fruit. So why does he throw that in there? What's being clean got to do with it? Well, remember he's just spoken about the need to produce fruit.

He prunes, verse 2, the end of verse 2, he prunes that he may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you. So the pruning comes because of the Word.

And what does the Word do? The Word convicts us of those areas in our lives that are extraneous, those areas in our lives that are taking time, energy, and resources from us and preventing us from producing the fruit that we need to produce. So that's the first level of pruning. But if we don't prune ourselves then he may prune us.

That's the second level because it says every branch that bears fruit he prunes. And so we need to prune ourselves. We come to the Lord's table, remember, let every man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

So our job is to examine, but he says if we don't do that, what's the next step? He's going to judge us. So we better judge ourselves lest he judge us. But then even if he does judge us in that sense, that's a good thing because we're not going to be condemned by the world.

So it's a preemptive thing. So we need to prune ourselves. We need to allow him to prune us.

And, folks, this simply means we have to give up some stuff, and that's where I lose the congregation. We have to give up some stuff because if that stuff, whatever it is, that time, that money, that energy, whatever it is, if it is not contributing to your spiritual life and to bearing fruit in Christ, it better go because we're not

here for our own entertainment. We're here to produce fruit.

That's what Jesus says. And so he prunes. And then he says in verse 4, Now, in the tree producing fruit, have you ever seen a tree prevailing as in childbirth to produce fruit? Ever seen it? Well, the reason you haven't seen it is because it doesn't happen.

No tree prevails. No tree is to, let me push out some, let me get some fruit here. But isn't that what we do? Uh-huh.

We all, I do it too. I work so hard at trying to just produce something in my life. How does the tree produce fruit? How does the branch produce fruit? And Jesus says that here.

Because it's part of the tree. It's a natural process. If the branch is connected to the tree or to the root, the life forces, the sap that flows from the root through the stump flows into the branches, and the branches automatically bear fruit.

There's no strain. There's no labor. There's no hard work.

It just happens because of the connection to the tree. Because the branches are plugged into the tree. And here's where the analogy becomes a little bit more modern.

All over the city of Burbank now, they have charging stations for electric vehicles. And so you can stop there, and obviously the city is making some nice money out of it. You can plug your electric vehicle in and get it charged up.

And then you can go, I don't know, 200 miles or whatever you can get on a Tesla or a Volt or whatever it is. And then what happens? It runs out. The battery goes flat.

What do you have to do? Go plug in again. Charge it up again. Now that's fine for electric vehicles, and even there it's not such a great deal.

I don't want to be restricted to a 200-mile range from an electric outlet. What happens if I want to go a little further than that? Well, that's fine for electric vehicles if that's what you want to do. That doesn't work for Christians.

What am I saying? Most of us are here this evening to get plugged in, make a connection with Jesus, get recharged, get some life-giving force flowing through us. And then what happens? We unplug. We go home.

We live the rest of the week on whatever reserves we had. And guess when it runs out? Right about tomorrow morning. And I wonder why there's no spark, why there's no go, why there's no life, and why there's no fruit.

Because I'm not connected to Him. Yeah, I connect to Him once a week. I may even connect to Him once a day for 10 minutes in my prayer time and in my private devotions.

And then that's it. Now, folks, when he says abide, the word abide simply means remain in, live in, not visit occasionally, not make an occasional connection. Now, trust me, you can stick with me because I'm going to jump to another analogy.

You remember that there were lampstands, there was a lampstand with seven branches in the tabernacle. And one of the jobs that the priests had was to top those lamps up with oil every day because the oil would run out. It would be consumed as it's burnt, and they'd have to put new oil in.

But then one of the prophets sees this wonderful picture of the lampstand and two olive trees. I know there's a lot of more deeper meaning to it than what I'm giving you this afternoon, but I want to just extract this from it. And what happens between those olive trees and the lampstand? Can you remember? They're pipes connecting the olive trees to the lampstand.

So the lampstand is plugged in and receives a constant supply of oil from the two trees next door. No need for the priest to come and fill it up all the time. No need for the pastor to recharge me every week.

And obviously we're not saying that there's no need for the church. We understand the need for the church and for leadership and teaching and all of those things. But, folks, the bottom line is that if the only spiritual vitality you're getting is from your pastor every week, you're living a pretty miserable Christian life.

You need to get plugged in not to Pastor Shane or to me or to anyone else. You need to get plugged in to Jesus. And you need to find Him as the source of your life and of your energy and of your power and of everything else that you need.

Abide in me. Because if you don't abide in me, you can do nothing. But the problem is that we are so self-assured.

And we say, well, Lord, thank you for the meeting. It was a good time, and I thank you for your blessing and for your presence and for the moving of your spirit. I'm out of here.

I can do it. Frankie style. What do I mean by that? My way.

Thank God for the old timers. I can do it my way. I can live my life.

I can make my decisions. I can bear fruit. And so there I go out into the world to my job on Monday morning, and I'm desperately trying to be something.

But there's no spark. There's no life. There's no reality to it.

It's me trying to be something, trying to do something. Instead of being connected to him and abiding in him, and as I abide in him, it just happens. As I abide in him, I find that I'm resistant to sin.

I know that some of us struggle with some issues, even in the meetings. We have thoughts about what we're going to have for supper and maybe even worse things. But generally, we're not particularly tempted.

I don't see anyone tempted right now to pull out a gun and shoot his neighbor unless I'm getting under your skin. Why? Oh, we're in the presence of the Lord. We wouldn't dream of doing something, you know, sort of gross sin right here in the presence of the Lord.

So how do we get away with it tomorrow or on Monday? By pulling the plug, by disconnecting. And so I cut myself off from him. Sometimes, most of the time, it's probably involuntary, but most of the time it's just, you know, I don't think, and I get busy, and when I see again.

You remember the time when Jesus' parents went to worship at the temple for the feast, and they go three days down the road, and they say, where's Jesus? Oh, we forgot him. He's back there. Isn't that the way some of us live, most of us live? And when do we look for him? When we get into trouble, when something goes wrong.

Oh, now I need the Lord. Where's the Lord? Where you left him last time? There used to be a sign up on the freeway on the 5 in Burbank that somehow it's been taken off. And I don't remember exactly what it said, but it was something to the effect that the Lord hasn't gone away.

He's exactly where you left him last time. See, he doesn't leave. It's we who leave.

He doesn't forsake us. It's us who forsake him, because we think we can do it, or we just forget, or whatever it is. But without me, you can do nothing.

And, folk, if we can just learn, and I don't remember. I know there was a guy, Brother Lawrence, who wrote a book, Practicing the Presence of God. And I don't even remember the thesis of the book, whether it was good or bad.

Forgive me if it wasn't a good book. So many of them are not good. But just that title, Practicing the Presence of God, has always gripped my imagination.

And I guess I should read the book. I think I did read it a long time ago. Practicing the Presence of God.

Simply living in his presence all the time. Remember in the tabernacle in the Old Testament, sorry, before the tabernacle was built even, they took Moses' tent and they pitched it outside of the camp. And that was a temporary place where Moses could go and meet with God.

And it says that Moses would go there every day, and he would speak with God. And when he would do that, the people in the camp would stand at their tent doors, and they would watch Moses as he would go there and speak with God. But there was a young man, read it for yourself this afternoon and you'll be blessed by it.

There was a young man, and he went into that tent, and he never left. He says, I want to live in the presence of God. I want to live in the presence of God.

Abide in me, abide in me, because without me you can do nothing. Verse 6, if anyone does not abide in me, and again I'm leaving this to you to interpret for yourself. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burnt.

Verse 7, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire shall be done for you. So abiding in him is the flip side of that, is his word abiding in me. Now we understand there are scriptures that speak about the fact that he is in us, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

So he is in us, we're in him. We understand that. Same way as you take a cup, you fill it up with water, and you take that cup that's filled with water, and you dunk it into a bucket that's filled with water, so the water's in the cup and the cup's in the water.

So that's the picture. But here he is saying the flip side to abiding in him is his word abiding in us. And here's the reason why we sever the connection, because we don't want his word to abide in us.

And I know you say, well, preacher, I love God's word. I want his word inside of me. Well, that's true for all of us, I'm sure, until that word asks me to do something against my will.

Then what do I do? Out with his word. Is that a biblical concept? Yes, it is. Romans chapter 1 speaks about the fact that the wrath of God, and we misinterpret Romans 1, and I'm going to get sidetracked, but I'm going to get to this point.

Romans 1 does not deal with homosexuality and all these other things that goes on in the world. That is not what God is angry about. Read Romans 1 carefully.

And I'm not saying homosexuality and all those sins, I think 27 sins that he lists there, none of them are okay. But that's not what God's angry about. They are a consequence, and they are a sign of God's wrath.

What is it that God is angry about in Romans 1? The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who do what? Who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Suppressing the truth means holding the truth under. So the truth of God's word says to me, do this.

And I say, uh-uh. And what do I do? I unplug. I disconnect because I don't want that word.

So the word may tell me something I must do or something I mustn't do. And the moment I don't like it, I push that down in my conscience, into my subconscious, somewhere out somewhere far away because I don't want to be plagued with that nagging thought of the requirements of God's word in my life. The moment I do that, I'm not abiding in him because he cannot tolerate that kind of disobedience.

And so if I'm going to abide in him, I must allow his word to abide in me and to produce the fruit that it wants to produce in me. And I don't get to choose and say, I don't want to produce this fruit, but I want to produce that fruit. But I must allow his word free reign to convict me, to speak to me, to direct me, to change me because it's through his word that the whole process happens.

All right. Now, if you abide in me, my words abide in you. You will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you.

Now, here's a verse which is misused by prosperity preachers and others saying you can ask God whatever because there it is. It says so. You can ask what you want and he'll do it.

What's the problem with that idea? It leaves out one of the biggest and most important words in the whole of the Bible, if. If. It is one of the biggest words.

Just like the word but changes everything. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, then you can ask whatever you want. Is that true? Of course it's true.

It's the word of God. Really? I can ask whatever I want? Yeah, I can as long as I'm abiding in him and his words abiding in me. Why? Because when I'm abiding in him and his word abides in me, his will becomes my will.

And you think he wants to do his will? You think he wants to give me and do for me and do in me and through me whatever it is that he wants to do? Of course he wants to do. And so what am I going to ask for? I'm not going to ask for something contrary to his will because I'm abiding in him and his word is abiding in me. And so what am I going to ask for? I'm going to ask for exactly what is his will.

And guess what? He's going to do his will in me and through me. He wants to do it. But instead what happens is that our prayer life becomes a time of wrestling and struggling with God because I'm trying to convince God to do what I want him to do.

You know, my will be done in heaven as it is done here on earth. No, your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The purpose of prayer is not to get God to do what I want him to do.

It's for me to get my will in line with his will and then it's easy. And you say, well, what about my rights? Well, guess what? If you abide in me, my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you. By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit.

Folk, we often believe that we glorify God and we worship God through the worship at the beginning of the service. And yes, that may be a part of our worship. But that is not all of worship.

We worship God, we glorify him through the preaching of his word. Right now we're glorifying him. I trust that you're glorifying him by the way that you're listening and receiving the word.

But more than that, we glorify him as we go out of here and the way that we live our lives and with the way we produce fruit. And remember that the point of glorifying him is that he, and please understand the way I'm saying this, he doesn't really need to be glorified here. Because he is glorified here.

Where does he need to be glorified? In the world. Because they blaspheme him. That's where his glory needs to be established.

That's where he needs to be glorified. How do we glorify him in the world? By bearing fruit. What dishonors him in the world? Christians who do not bear fruit.

Christians who do not bear fruit. I don't want to be a Christian. I know a Christian.

You know what he does. You know what she does. You know how he treats his wife.

And the list goes on and on and on. Folks, the world has heard preaching over and over and over. They need to see the real deal.

And, you know, if there's a tree and it's producing beautiful, the most luscious peaches, you don't need an advertising campaign. There's a farm near Acton and every year in the autumn, if I happen to come this way, I stop by that farm and we buy some peaches. We go out of our way because they're really good.

And if the fruit in your life is really good, people are going to be drawn to that. They're going to be attracted to that. And he is going to be glorified.

And then the last thing that he says, and I'm not done yet, but the last thing that he says in this passage is, By this my father is glorified, verse 8, that you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples. So how am I a disciple? How am I a Christian? How am I a believer? Whatever language you want to use. I am a believer, a disciple, a Christian by producing fruit.

Now just think about that. Oh no, but I'm a Christian because I prayed the sinner's prayer. I'm a Christian because I believe.

Now I understand the theology. I understand that we're saved by faith. I understand all of that.

But what is Jesus saying here when he says, If you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples. Just figure that one out. And I'm going to leave that with you.

So let me close then by saying that there are a whole bunch of categories here in this audience this evening. And each one of us fit into one of those categories. And I'm assuming that we're all Christians, and that may be a wrong assumption to make.

If you're not a Christian, if you're not connected, plugged in, saved, born again, whatever language, you better do that. But I'm speaking primarily to believers. And as believers, we all fit into one of these categories.

The first is those who do not bear fruit. Let me go through the text very quickly again. Verse 2, every branch in me who does not bear fruit, is there fruit in your life? Is there fruit to your life? Or is your life barren? Or is it producing fruit, but the fruit doesn't come to maturity? The book of Jude speaks about those trees that throw down or throw or abort their fruit.

And when a tree is in nature, when a tree is stressed because of drought or some other reason, when the tree is stressed, what it often does is it throws off the fruit. The fruit are aborted. They don't come to fruition.

And he speaks there also about clouds that are without water. They have the promise of rain, but there's no rain. Trees that have the promise of fruit, but there is no fruit.

There's nothing more frustrating for me as a shepherd to watch people, nurture them, work with them, and they just begin to show some life, some sign of a blossom or a bud or some sign of some fruit. And then it all disappears. No fruit.

But then there are those who produce more fruit. Verse 2, every branch that does not bear fruit, those that bear fruit, he proves that they may produce more fruit. So maybe you're in that category, and I pray that all of us would be in that category.

So no fruit, fruit, more fruit. But then in verse 8 he says, By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit. So no fruit, fruit, more fruit, and much fruit.

So where do you fit in? And only you can answer that question. Now there's a final one, and it's not in those eight verses, but it's further down in the text in verse 16. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.

Notice again the emphasis. I've appointed you. And we say, oh, well, that's the 12 disciples.

No, he's speaking to every Christian. He's speaking to every believer. I've appointed you.

I've ordained you. I've given you a job to produce fruit, that you bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. So no fruit, fruit, more fruit, much fruit, and fruit that remains.

You see, sometimes you buy fruit, and it looks pretty good, but you leave it on the shelf for a few days, and it goes rotten. So in the end you still have nothing. But the fruit that we need is a fruit that will last, that will last through eternity, particularly that it will make it on that judgment day when Christians are, when we are judged for our works, and when he tests every man's work.

You remember? Some of it is consumed because it's wood, hay, and stubble, but some of it stands the test because it's gold, silver, and precious stones. This is the fruit that remains. It will stand the test of time.

Preachers build churches, big churches. Some of them build them very, very quickly, and some of those churches come crashing down just as quickly. It's not about speed.

It's not about instant results. It's about fruit that remains, that lasts to eternity. So where are you this evening? No fruit? Maybe a little more fruit? Or maybe you're very fruitful.

Then the question is, will the fruit remain? Amen. Thanks, Matt.

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