

# More on the Most Precious Promise of Shared Life

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ to experience true spiritual fruitfulness through shared life.*

**Scripture:** John 15:4-5, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 4:13, James 4:10, 2 Peter 1:4

**Topics:** "Abiding In Christ", "Fruitful Living"

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## Description

Bob Hoekstra preaches on the importance of abiding in Christ to bear fruit in our lives, drawing parallels between grape branches needing the vine's life to produce grapes and believers needing Jesus' life to bear Christlike fruit. He emphasizes the need for humility and faith in depending on Jesus for fruitful living, highlighting that without Him, we can do nothing. Through the shared life of Jesus at work within us, we can experience true life and bring glory to God.

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## Transcript

By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature . . . Abide in Me, and I in you. 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. (2 Peter 1:4 and John 15:4-5)

This promise of shared life is so "exceedingly great and precious" that we would do well to consider it further. Being "partakers of the divine nature" (without becoming divine ourselves) is a difficult concept to grasp. The scriptures clearly invite us to live day by day through Christ sharing His life in us. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). Yet, how to walk in this truth can seem quite elusive. In His teaching on the vine and the branches, Jesus provided a wonderful physical illustration of this tremendous spiritual reality.

Jesus' visible example involves actual grapevines, grape branches, and the grapes that can potentially result. For grapes to grow, the appropriate life must be available and developing to maturity. The grape branches do not have this life in themselves. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself." In order to bear grapes, the grape branch must share in the life of the vine. "The branch cannot bear fruit . . . unless it abides in the vine." This can be irrefutably demonstrated by separating a grape branch from its vine. No

grapes can ever be produced on the branches, if the life of the vine is not flowing through the branches. The life of the vine is essential.

The spiritual application concerns Jesus as the vine and us as the branches. "I am the vine, you are the branches." For Christlike fruit to develop in us, the appropriate life must be available to us and maturing in us. We branches do not have this life in us: "neither can you [bear fruit], unless you abide in Me." This truth is lamentably demonstrated daily by Christians who live self-sufficiently, not depending upon the life that is in Jesus, the vine. "Without Me you can do nothing." Day by day Christian living is only possible by the shared life of Jesus at work through us.

Once again, we are reminded that humility and faith are the practical application for living as God intends. We must humbly depend upon Jesus for true fruitful living, just as grape branches must depend upon their vine for grapes.

Dear Lord Jesus, I thank You that I do not have to produce true life in and of myself. Teach me to live by Your shared life. I want to humbly and dependently abide in You, that You might live in and through me, for Your glory, Amen.

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