

# (John 15 #2) Abiding and Fruitfulness

by Ed Miller

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ to bear fruit and grow spiritually, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit and the dangers of self-reliance.*

**Duration:** 59:30

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 31:25, John 15:2-7

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

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses an illustration of a person learning to dive to explain the Christian life. He compares Christ to the environment in which the diver must learn to live. The preacher shares a personal story of his son's initial dislike for diving due to not understanding how to use his diving apparatus properly. However, once his son learned how to breathe underwater, he began to enjoy diving. The preacher relates this to the importance of Christians learning to 'breathe' in Christ and draw from Him in order to grow and bear fruit. The sermon is based on John 15:1-16, where Jesus teaches about the importance of remaining connected to Him, the true vine, in order to bear fruit.

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## Transcript

I'm not going to be in trouble, but just so that I'll know, are there any here tonight that were not here last night? Okay, a couple. Okay then, I'll try to, in the review, give enough capsule so you know what I'm talking about. As we come to the study of God's Word, there is a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable, and that principle is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit.

The one who inspired this book is the only one who can unveil Christ in this book and feed Him to our spirits. All of the scholarship in the world is not going to get you to the heart of God, only the Holy Spirit. That is not saying don't study.

I pray that you'll study. The greater the scholarship, the clearer the principle. The clearer the principle, the more precious the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But if you study only the human side, the Bible says you will become proud because knowledge puffs up. We need the Lord to show Himself. There's a verse in Jeremiah chapter 31, 25.

Let me quote it, and then we'll go to prayer. Jeremiah 31, 25, I satisfy the weary ones, and I refresh everyone who languishes. Anybody like that here tonight? Let's bow.

Our Heavenly Father, once again we come, knowing it is not possible for us to work up some attitude of childlikeness and helpless dependence. But we come, Lord, trusting Thee for the miracle of obedience. We come confessing that we need Your light, Your illumination.

Give us the light of the knowledge of God in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ. Show us, Him, that we might be changed from one degree of glory to another. We thank You in advance that You're going to meet with us tonight.

We know it's on Your heart to communicate Yourself. We ask, Lord, that no human instrument would be in the way. We pray that You'd use our meditations and our thoughts.

And I pray that You'd save us all from futility. We ask, we claim it in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Turn, please, in your Bibles to the Gospel of John and chapter 15. Very familiar passage. We're meditating on that wonderful passage and asking the Lord to grace us by revealing Himself and the burdens that are on His heart.

We are meeting three times. We met last night. Tonight, Lord willing, tomorrow morning.

And, basically, what we've done with this passage, again, I'll say it right up front, I don't intend, I don't expect to give you anything new. You've been in this passage. You've basked in it.

You've seen the Lord in this passage. But I find the great privilege in proclaiming again the great verities that are in this passage, just to announce them to you. And I pray in a fresh way.

Last night, we looked together at the truth, I am the true vine. What did Jesus mean when He called Himself the true vine? Tonight, I'd like us to focus on the truth that by abiding in the true vine, we are enabled to bear fruit unto God. And that's what we're going to look at tonight.

And then, Lord willing, tomorrow we want to take the first and the last part of this passage. My Father is the husbandman. What is that great revelation of God? What does it mean to prune the fruitful branch? What is it that comes from God, that is fruit from God, that He shuts down, that He cuts off? We need to see that.

And that's where we are, and that's what we'll be looking at. I'm going to ask what we did last night, if we don't mind doing that again. I think it's important to get the text before our hearts.

It's only 16 verses. So if several of you please, as you feel inclined, stand up, read loudly so everyone can hear. Read a few verses, and someone else read chapter 15, 1 through 16.

Remain clean, because remain in me, and I will remain in you. A man remains in me, and I in him. We will bear much fruit.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away. If such branches are picked, you remain in me, and my words remain in you.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you. This is my family, this is my family. You are my friend if you do whatsoever I command you.

Servants. For the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth. I have made known to you.

He hath not chosen me, but I have chosen you. And ordained to you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain. That whatever he shall ask, he may give it you.

Thank you. Thank you. Last evening, I set before your hearts this amazing statement of our Lord Jesus.

I am the true vine. And just for the sake of review, I suggested at least two things that I think God must have intended. When he said that, first of all, when he said, I am the true vine, he meant, I am the vine, you are not the vine.

I'm the true vine, not you. Don't try to be the vine, because then you will not be able to produce. In the sense that I'm the source of life, and you're not the source of life.

You see, Israel had that mindset. God had instructed them that they were the vine, and they didn't understand what he meant by that. And so when Jesus said this, it was quite a jolt to their thinking.

I am the true vine. It's a very subtle thing, I think, that the enemy tries to do to our thinking. We read a verse like John 15, 5, Without me ye can do nothing.

And we think, well, that means before we're saved, before we trust the Lord, it's not possible to do anything. But if you read the context, he's not talking about before you come to know the Lord. He's talking about those who are abiding in the vine, united to the vine.

And for those who are in Christ, without me ye can do nothing. Even for Christians. I remember when I was wrestling through some of these great truths of God, and how puzzled I was.

And I remember I used to think this, that in my legalistic days, I worked my head off in order to earn favor with God. And I thought if I worked hard enough and was involved enough, I would earn blessing, and I'd work for it. And then I thought that God finally turned the light on, and I had this idea.

I can't earn anything by doing something for God. I've got to do it because I love Him. I've got to do it out of gratitude for all that He's done for me.

Do you realize, brothers and sisters in Christ, that I don't have any more ability to perform out of love and out of gratitude than I had when I tried to earn my way and tried to do something to appease God? Now, let's say that there were a weight. See, some of you are pretty husky, so I've got to make it big. A thousand pounds.

Two thousand pounds. And God said, if you don't lift two thousand pounds, you can't go to heaven. How many of you would try to lift it? How many of you would succeed? What if God said, all right, you know too much.

You can't lift that to go to heaven. Lift it just because you love me. Lift it because I've done so much for you, and your heart is so full of gratitude.

Just do it out of gratitude. Do it out of love. Could you do it? It still weighs a thousand pounds or two thousand pounds, and we are no more able to perform out of love and gratitude than we are able to perform in order to minister and earn some kind of favor with God.

Nobody bears fruit in any other way than by abiding in the vine. And that's what we're going to look at tonight. So that was the first thing we saw, that Christ, the true vine, is He's the vine, you're not the vine.

And the second thing is that Christ is the true vine in the sense that He created the vine to picture something, and He's the reality of all that was pictured by the vine. I won't go through all that again, but take a concordance. Trace vine, branch, grape, cluster, wine through the scriptures and see all that it pictures.

Christ is the fullness of that. We suggested that God created organic life, all of life and all of environment, and life draws from environment, and God made that to be a picture every place you look. I'm the true vine.

I am your element. I am your environment. I am your very existence.

We looked at that yesterday. All right, that brings us then to our second topic, and may God grace us, abiding in Christ in order to bring forth fruit. It's not possible to read the chapter that we just read or that portion of it and not see the emphasis on fruit and on abiding.

Notice, please, in verse 2, there's fruit, more fruit. Verse 5, there's much fruit. Verse 16, that your fruit should remain.

It's God's will that every Christian here bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit, remaining fruit. To the glory of God. You see, the grapevine was God's perfect selection for fruit because the grape, the single grape, is a fruit.

But the grape is in a cluster of grapes, and that's the fruit. And every branch has several clusters of grapes, and every vine has branches. And that's God's most prolific picture of fruit, the vine.

The grape, and the cluster, and the branches, and the clusters on the branches, and fill up in the whole vine. It's God's will that we be productive. Glance at verse 4. Abide.

Abide in me, and I in you. Verse 5, he who abides in me. Verse 6, if anyone does not abide in me.

Verse 7, if you abide in me, and my words abide in you. This chapter talks about fruit. This chapter talks about abiding.

And the great teaching, the great principle of this chapter is this. The essential condition for all fruit bearing is abiding in Jesus Christ. That is the essential condition, abiding in Christ.

Since that's true, tonight, Lord willing, we'll touch on what does it mean to abide, and what does it mean that abiding leads to fruit that is much more and remains. Let me tell you, right up front, two things we're not going to look at tonight, because if I were in your place, I would expect to hear these two things. And so, you're not going to hear them.

And so you're going to say, hey, what's that guy doing? How come he doesn't mention this and this? Sort of building it up, you know, come back tomorrow. We're not going to look at the definition of fruit tonight. You need it.

I need it. We need to see it. We're going to see it tomorrow.

You don't need to know what it is. So what we're going to look at tonight is abide in Christ to bring forth fruit, whatever that is. Okay, that's how we're going to look.

You don't need to know what it is tonight. I want you to know that whatever it is, and I think we all might have different ideas what it is, what is fruit. We might have our own idea.

It's okay. Whatever it is, you can't get it unless you abide in Christ. And then the second thing, and it might sound disappointing, but it's not really because it'll be suggested, and if you don't get it, you're deaf.

I'm not going to tell you tonight how to abide in Christ. I'm going to give the fact of it. I'm going to describe it, and when I'm done, you'll know how.

But I'm not going to tell you how, because that's also part of it. Until you see pruning, you won't really understand the simplicity of how to abide. So we're going to see fruit, whatever it is, and we're going to see abide, but not tell you how.

We'll look at the fact of abide, and I think it'll all come together, Lord willing, as we go through it. What's included in the great truth? Abiding in Jesus Christ. And last night, for the sake of those that like logical connection, what does it mean? Christ is divine, at least these two things.

What does it mean to abide in Christ? I'd like to set before your heart at least these two things. It's not possible to have abide if you leave one of these out. There might be more than this, but at least these two things.

Now look again, if you would, at verse 4 and 5. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit.

Apart from me ye can do nothing. That expression at the end, apart from me ye can do nothing, implies, and this is our principle, to abide implies a distrust of self. You see where that is? Without me ye can do nothing.

And those that have learned to abide have accepted God's revelation that there is nothing in them that can add to this process of fruit bearing. It's acknowledging that I'm nothing, there can be no growth, no production, no fruit if I'm the source of that. Now you say, that's self-evident.

I don't know how many Christians you know. It's not self-evident. We can hear it a thousand times, like, boy, I believe that, and then go out and try to be the cause of our own effect.

And try to go out and do it on our own. We can say, there's no fruit without Jesus. You know, Satan is clever.

In case you didn't know it, he doesn't like you. He hates you with a passion. It's not that he hates you.

If somebody wants to hurt me, touch my kid. Touch my grandchild. And they got me.

He hates Jesus. So he goes after his kids. Because that's the way he can hurt the Lord, see.

And if all it said was, abide, if you abide in me, you'll bear fruit. Satan, he can't deceive you with that. That's too clear.

That's too simple, and he can't deceive you. So what he does, is he takes your focus off that. No fruit without Jesus.

Christians would be doing great, man. They'd be having victory all the time. So what he does, is he takes the intermediate step.

He says, yes, of course, there's no fruit without Jesus. But there's a step in between called growth. Ever hear that? Growth.

You gotta grow. And if you're gonna bear fruit, you gotta learn to grow in the Lord. Now, are you involved in all those things that lead to growth? And so he gets us off target by putting our eyes on growth.

Just abide in Jesus, you'll bear fruit. But to grow, you better study. You better pray.

You better get involved in this program. You better deny yourself. You better get stewardship.

You better get your priorities in order. You better understand the principles of discipleship. You better, better, better do this and that and the whole thing.

I have six children, as you know. Six wonderful children. We gave many laws and rules through the years.

You know, like Galatians, to keep them in protective custody until grace came. And so they had many rules, but of all the rules that we ever gave our children, Lillian and I never told them to grow. We never did.

Now, we did sarcastically. Grow up! You know, like that. But I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about to grow. There is no command to grow. And there's no counsel that you can give anyone on how to grow.

If it's true that there's no fruit without abiding in Jesus, then, saints, there is no growth without abiding in Jesus. The growth that leads to fruit comes the same way the fruit comes. You can say this, except I abide in you and you abide in me, you will not grow.

You cannot grow. Except you abide in me, you can't come to the end of growth, which is fruit. It's so important that we understand this.

That's why when Jesus was trying to teach his fretting disciples about growth, he said, Matthew 6, 28. Remember Matthew 6, 28? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. He didn't say that they grow.

He didn't say consider the lilies that they grow. He didn't say consider the lilies that they're beautiful. He said, take a look at the lily, how it grows.

And in case you didn't get it, he says, without toil, without spinning. Don't answer. How are you growing? Say, some of us are spinning.

How are you growing? Have you learned what it means to abide in Christ? Because if I'm going to bring forth fruit, then I've got to abide in Christ in such a way that I grow without toil and without spinning like the lily grows. Have you looked into God's lily manual on how to grow? How to grow? He tells us how to grow by studying the lily. Any growth in your life or any growth in my life that in any way can be traced back to toil or spinning is unreal.

It will be cut off. It will wither. It will die, be bound in bundles, and burned up.

May God help us as we look at some of these things. Very few Christians, I fear, have learned to grow as the lily grows. Such a precious picture, that is.

Very few churches have learned to grow as the lily grows. Let me describe for you, because the enemy is subtle, let me describe for you the growth that is not growth, the growth that passes for growth but is not growth. You see, there is an enlargement.

There is an increase. There is an expansion that we call growth. And it's not really growth.

Things can get bigger without growing. You say, give me an example. I'll give you an example.

An icicle, that grows. As that thing freezes and unfreezes and gets lost, we used to pop them off the house and sword fight with them, and they'd get pretty big. That's called accretion.

When one thing is piled on top of another thing and another thing, gradual external additions. When dead things come together and cling, and they begin to grow and grow. We're in Newport, as you know, or at least on the island there, and we've got growing sand dunes.

They don't grow like the lily. Growing sand, the sand blows up and they get bigger and bigger. Wow, how that has grown.

Yeah, it grew, all right. By accretion. You ever see a crystal? Lillian and I, some time ago, went to Washington, D.C., went through the museum there.

Oh, what a place that is. The science museum. She went into this, she's into archaeology and Egypt and all that kind of stuff, relics.

It doesn't turn me on, that part. But she was in there, you know, and I went in to see the rocks. And I went in to see the crystal, and some of those are pretty beautiful.

And they grow. I mean, you know, as death piles on, death, it gets bigger and bigger. And beautiful.

Some of those crystals, you know, they're polished, and they're looking so beautiful. It's death. Coral.

Isn't coral beautiful? So many different colors. You know what coral is? It's nothing more than the skeletons of these little sea creatures. They have lived and they have died and they've crystallized and they've grown into this beautiful coral and these great reefs.

I was a coral Christian. I know coral Christians. I know coral assemblies.

What a terrible thing. Is this thing called growth? When it gets bigger and bigger, but it is not growth. It's not like the lily grows.

Or not to grow like the icicle grows. Or the sand dune grows. Or the crystal grows.

Or the coral grows. Or the reef grows. I fear coral Christians.

Because it looks so good. You can polish that crystal up and wear it on a chain and make that thing as beautiful. And there's a lot of people that have death.

Piled on death. And they call it growth. Adding pews.

And adding buildings. And adding people. And adding stations.

And adding resources. And adding meetings. And adding programs.

And piling this on. And piling that on. And we're getting big.

Whoa, what a place they're growing. Are they growing? Or is it accretion? Except you abide in the vine. You cannot grow.

And you cannot bear fruit. All of this expansion that is not growth dishonors the Lord. It might look good.

But it's not growth. And if you don't cut it off, He will. He has to.

What does it mean to abide in the Lord? To grow as the lily grows? First of all, it implies this distrust of self. It acknowledges that apart from Jesus Christ, I am nothing and I have nothing. I can do nothing.

I can contribute nothing. And the reality is my health hinders God. Your health, every time you help God, you've hindered.

Every time I've helped God, I've hindered. Oh, if we could only see the wonder, the simplicity of what He's trying to say here. Scholars tell us that the Greek word for abide is the word meno.

Are you familiar with that word? Probably some of you know that Greek word. And it means to stay. It means to remain.

Except you abide, except you stay, except you remain. We make everything so hard, and everything is really so simple. You say, oh, I've got to learn to abide.

Abide is so tough. That's for spiritual hotshots. The reality is when you trusted Jesus, you didn't trust yourself.

And you were abiding in the Lord. What's the word mean? Stay there. That's what it means.

Abide. Stay. Right now, you're all abiding in this room.

Every one of you. Isn't it easy? Think about it. You can abide here for another 40 minutes.

You know what the problem comes? When you stop abiding. That's work. When it's time to leave.

Now you've got to exercise. You've got to get up. You've got to get everything.

It takes work to stop abiding. Everybody talks about learn how to abide. The problem is you learn how not to abide.

It was easy to abide because God placed you in Christ Jesus. And He was your environment. He was your sufficiency.

He was everything. Stay there as you receive Christ. So walk in Him.

It never gets tougher than it was the first moment you trusted Jesus. You trusted Him and He was everything. And then you stop abiding.

That's the problem. We stop abiding. It's not hard to abide in Christ.

It's to stay where God has put you. He has placed you in Christ Jesus. Some people get this idea that, oh, you know, now we're into the deep.

I hate that deeper spiritual walk and all that kind of... It's not deep. It's not hard. It's not difficult.

Truth is simple because truth is a person. And His name is Jesus. And that's what makes it so simple.

Somebody has the idea that this idea of abiding in the Lord for fruit, well, that's for spiritual hot shots and some esoteric group of special Christian people who know Hebrew and Greek. It's for them. It's for every branch.

It's for every branch. For every Christian. It's my great joy to announce to you, you do not have to have a theological degree to abide in Jesus to grow and to bear fruit.

You do not have to know some language to abide in Christ. You don't have to have a thousand years' experience in the deep things of God to abide in Jesus Christ. You need to go back to where you were when you started.

You came to the Lord. You were helpless. You saw that you had nothing to offer God.

You saw that Jesus was everything to you. And in that moment you were abiding. Somewhere along the line, you stopped abiding.

Abiding is just coming back to that place where you recognize, without Him, I can do nothing. God has placed you in Christ. But there's a second ingredient.

Not only does it mean a distrust of self, but here's the second part, and this is really the life of it. Abiding in Christ is not only not trusting me, but it's trusting Him and drawing from Him that life that is going to produce the fruit. It's being a partaker of the divine nature.

It's being a partaker of the vine. In Andrew Murray's wonderful book, I don't know if you're familiar with Andrew Murray, but he has so much that is profitable. And in his book on Abiding in Christ, he makes this comment, The branch is such only by the Creator's work, in virtue of which the life, the sap, the fullness, the fatness, the fruitfulness of the vine is communicated to every branch.

Oh, that's exactly it. In God's picture, you know, God, when He created the organic life, He just was called life. And He created life to picture life.

And it's still called life. And when you come to the Lord, He gives you life. But now life has a name.

It's not just some thing called life. Some white substance protoplasm. It's not that.

That's just a picture. That's just the illustration. The vine gives life the name of that life.

It is the Holy Spirit. That is the life that comes from us through which we grow and through which we bear fruit. It's the Holy Spirit of God.

Whether you're talking about one grape, or a cluster of grapes, or the mashing of all the grapes together in community like the church, whatever you're talking about, the Holy Spirit is the common life. One life. The

vine only has one life.

Now, we have a vineyard down the street from where we live. The vineyard owner is not a Christian. And so I had to go to the vineyard.

You can't study this and not go to the vineyard. So I went to the vineyard, and I knocked at the keeper's door. And I said to him, because I thought this would be the best way to open it, I said, I am a Christian, and I am studying in my Bible about a vine and the branches.

You are a vinekeeper. Can you help me? I want to know my God. I told him right out.

And so he went out. He was happy to help me. He thought I was a little strange in my slippers.

And I said, the verse that's getting me is, he said, I'm the vine, you're the branches. And he looks at me. I said, what's the matter? He said, a vine doesn't have branches.

I said, wait a minute. A vine doesn't have branches? He said, no, a vine branches. But it doesn't have branches.

I said, ooh. That's good. That's how one, that's how one divine and the branches are.

One life going through that whole thing. One divine life, one miracle life, one growing life. It's all the Holy Spirit of God.

It's important, brothers and sisters in Christ, that we understand the difference between the source of life and expressions of life. There are many expressions of life. In God's picture, He gave in Colossians, the human body.

And He gave the head. The head is Christ in Colossians 2.19. He said, holding fast the head from which the whole body receives its life. And it's held together by joints and ligaments that it might grow with a growth that is from God.

I have no life center in my hand. If need be, my hand can be amputated. And I live.

Because there's no life center here. That's an expression of life. Every member in my body has one life.

Not two. That's the church. We have one life.

It's the life of God. It's the life of the Holy Spirit. Every member sharing the same life.

Some branches are big branches. And some branches are little branches. And some branches are stubby branches.

There's not a Christian in here that has more of Jesus than another Christian. We all have the same life. And that life is Christ.

Now, my branch might be stubby and your branch might turn one way. And your branch might turn another way. And Harry Alexander's branch might twist another way.

Our branches twist all kinds of ways. One life. The Holy Spirit of God.

And just as Christ is the head of the church, He's the source of life. Christian fellowship. Did you enjoy tonight's gathering? Last night? Fellowship.

Wonderful expression of life. But it's not the source of life. Christ is the source of life.

Someone said, oh, what you need in order to grow is a good Christian fellowship. That's a good expression of life. But it's not the source of life.

We talk about family altar and quiet time and morning manna. I used to be big on that. I'm talking real big.

Getting up at 3.30, 4 o'clock. You know why? Because that was my source of life. I thought, man, if I didn't have my devotion, my day wouldn't have come in.

Something's going to go wrong through the day because I didn't have that devotion. That's a wonderful expression of life. But it's a lousy God.

It's not God. It's not Christ. Christ is the only source of life.

Quiet time is a wonderful thing. And I'm not going to tone it down. I love getting into Word.

But it's not the source of it. If you're dependent on your quiet time to stay afloat, you better ask God to dawn this on you. You've got to learn to abide in Christ.

And you can mention all those other. Christian service. Wonderful expression of life.

But it is not life. Jesus is life. Confession of sin.

Expression of life. It's not life. The ordinances that we share in.

Precious expressions of life. But they are not life. Spiritual gifts.

Wonderful expression of life. But they're not the source of life. Only Jesus is the source of life.

If you're having to depend on a Bible conference or a Bible retreat or some special meetings or something like that, you haven't learned to abide in the vine. Christ that's in me is the Christ that's in you. Is the Christ that's in us.

Every branch in me that abides in me will grow and bear fruit. Glance, if you would, just turn back to John chapter 6. There's a precious little verse here. On abiding.

Before our Lord Jesus got to this day before the cross. John 6.53. Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood. You have no life in yourselves.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. I'll raise him up on the last day. My flesh is true food.

My blood is true drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood means to drink Jesus. It means to draw from Him, to feed on Him, to devour the Lord Jesus Himself.

That's what it means. When you abide, you don't trust yourself, you just trust Him. And you just draw from Him.

God made all creation to illustrate that. Now do you realize this? God made the plant, the lily, the tree, the vine in such a way that its communion with the environment was the only issue. You know what I mean by that? Take the lily.

Because Jesus said, grow how the lily grows. That's how to grow. You want to learn? Study the lily.

They don't toil, they don't reap. Study the lily. They don't spend.

How does the lily grow? I'll tell you one thing. It never concerns itself with growth. That's not an issue with the lily.

It's not an issue with the tree. They don't worry about growing. They just sort of drink in the sunshine.

They put out their little leaves and photosynthesis takes place. Because God made it that way. Sucks it all and drinks it in.

And they send out their little roots into the soil. You know why? Because the Bible says, rooted and grounded in Him. He is your soil.

And He is your sunshine. And He is your dew. And He is your rain.

And He is your food. And what does the plant do? It just drinks and drinks and takes and takes and receives and takes in that nurse. It doesn't think about growing.

A tree doesn't say, oh, I wonder how many leaves I'm going to have. I wonder how many branches I'm going to have. How big they're going to be.

A plant never thinks about growing. And a plant never thinks about fruit. God made organic life.

He was so creative. He made those little leaves with their little receivers to take in the light. And He said, I think I'm going to give variety here.

I'm going to make snouts. And I'm going to make trunks. And I'm going to make claws so they can get into the bark and eat the things.

And I'm going to make proboscis and sink it in and draw it up. And God made, what does organic life do to the environment? It just drinks and takes it in and takes. You want to learn how to abide in Christ? Don't trust you.

Feed on Jesus. Feed on Christ. That's what it means to abide in Him.

And you know what's going to happen when you stop trusting you and start feeding on Jesus? You're going to grow without fretting, without anxiety, without worry. You say, well, I've got to go hunt out my environment. No, no.

Watch the lily. The environment comes to you. The environment comes to the lily.

Oh, God give us lily life. God teach us to grow like the lily grows. To just drink in and to draw from the Lord.

He's created this whole universe to teach us. The glory of a grapevine, the glory of an apple tree is an apple. The glory of a peach tree.

You with me? The peach. The glory of a fig tree is a fig. The glory of a Christian is his fruit.

What is his hope for glory? You know the verse, Colossians 127. Christ in you. The hope.

The hope of fruit. What's my hope? To grow. Say, I've got to study growth.

No, you don't have to study growth. Run far away from studying growth. Don't advise people how to grow.

Teach them how to abide in the vine. Because if they have no trust in themselves, no confidence in the flesh, and they just begin to absorb and drink in the life of the vine, they're going to grow. And they're going to produce fruit.

If God dawns that on you, do you realize how much rest is in that? If I don't have to worry about growing, that's been a big part of my life. How am I going to grow? How am I going to bear fruit? If I don't have to worry about that, and I don't have to worry about fruit, and you say, all I have to do is drink Jesus, that's all you have to do from this moment until the time you step into heaven. And then you'll start drinking Jesus when you see Him as He is.

It brings rest. It brings confidence. Let me wrap it all up by giving you the three New Testament examples of bearing fruit.

One is right here in John 15. The vine and the branches, that's how to bear fruit. The second one we've already mentioned, and it's in Colossians 2.19. The head and the body.

The third one is in Romans 7. Listen as I read Romans 7, verse 4. Wherefore, my brethren, you were made to die to the law, that through the body of Christ, that you should be married, joined to another. Married. And then it says, even to him who rose from the dead, married to Jesus.

And then it says, that we might bear fruit. That is not my example. It's the Holy Spirit's example.

You know, I get so upset now that God has begun to dawn in my heart a little bit. There's ground to be possessed. I'm not claiming I've arrived anywhere, but I've begun to see a little bit of this side.

Of the wonder of just letting the life of the Lord flow through you. And seeing gloomy Christians. I just want to shake them sometimes.

Seeing a gloomy Christian, and you know, oh, it's such a hard, you know, I'm just a pilgrim here going through this barren wilderness. Having such a hard time. But God is faithful, and he's getting me through.

And hearing these kind of testimonies, I say, where is grace? You don't understand. You haven't seen it. You're supposed to be in Christ, in your environment.

And they don't seem to understand it. They say it's so hard to bear fruit. A secret, folks.

That sweet, where is she? There. Lillian and I. This is confidential, but I'm going to spread it out. We're fruit bearers.

I mean, we had like six kids. And every one of them came out of a very intimate, precious, sacred, wonderful union. Tell me it's hard to bear fruit.

Got too many young people here to say too much. But I want you to get the idea, because it's not my idea, it's God's idea. And God has said it ought to be enjoyable to bear fruit unto God.

It's like the hand, when my hand lives in union with the head, and this hand lives in union with the head, and the head gives life. It's wonderful. It's when this hand thinks it has a life of its own, and it's independent, and it lives outside of the head.

When the body has one life, common life, God's life. How everything fits together. And they grow together, and they produce together.

And it's marvelous. Yesterday, last evening, I shared with you my son Daniel, the diver. I want to develop that just a little bit more.

For those that weren't here, the illustration is, Christ is our environment. Daniel has taken up diving. And so he dresses up in his fins, and his rubber suit, and his weight belt, and his mask.

And he looks so strange, because he's going to an environment where he doesn't belong. And to live in that environment, he has to take this environment with him. And so, though he's below, he lives from an environment above.

And I gave that part of the illustration yesterday. He came home from his first diving. Lillian and I were excited for him.

He doesn't get involved in too much. He's quiet. He stays on the side.

But he was excited about this. So he came home, and how did you like it? I hated it. Why did you hate it? You've spent so much money.

You're not supposed to hate it. You've got to put out \$2,000 to hate it. This is not right.

Why did you hate it? Too much pressure. Too much pressure down there. And not only that, he said, there's a button on the mask that you let water out.

I forgot to push it. And he's breathing in this water. And he said, he kept looking at his thing, because he thought it was going to run out of air.

And he's so afraid, he started to hyperventilate. And he'd come back, and he said, and they had to cut the whole class short, because he was hyperventilating. And they had to all come up.

And he said, I don't think I'm going to do it anymore. You know why? Because he didn't know how to use his apparatus. Because though he was connected, he wasn't connected, and he didn't understand his environment.

You ought to talk to him now. He loves it. He loves it.

Because he learned, guess what he learned? He learned how to breathe. I'm serious, that's all he learned. He learned how to breathe.

And now he's having fun. And he went down, and he's looking at the wreck, you know, there's a sunk ship down. And he went down, and he's telling us all about it.

We can't shut him up now. He loves it. That's the Christian life.

If you learn to breathe. If you learn to drink. If you learn to take in.

If you stop doing accretion and piling death upon death, thinking that you're growing. If you stay out of it, and just enjoy Jesus. May I tell you, then you're going to grow.

Then you're going to bear fruit, whatever it is. You're going to bear fruit unto God. That fruit is going to remain, and God's going to be glorified.

May God raise up a tribe, even from this place. May God raise up a people that put no confidence in the flesh. And that just draw from Jesus Christ.

And they will grow like the lily grows. Without toil. Without spinning.

Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like that. Oh, may God help us. The Christian life is a ball.

It's fun. I know there are those out there telling you it's not. It's a war, and it's terrible.

It is not. It's a blast. Get in on it.

I'm serious. Get in on it. Start abiding in the vine.

And you're going to live with a capital E. I have come, Jesus said, that you might have life. And that you might have it more abundantly. May we learn to abide.

Our Father, we thank you for your word, your precious word. And we pray that it would not just be precepts. But that you would indeed teach us how to grow with a growth that is from God.

Teach us how to hold fast to the head. How to drink from our Lord Jesus. How to draw life.

How to be filled with the Spirit of God. Thank you for common life. Thank you that we all have the same life.

Thank you that you've placed us in Christ. And have only commanded us to stay there. Teach us to abide.

That we might grow and bear fruit for you. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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