

Fruit of the Vine

by Leonard Ravenhill

The secret to bearing fruit and glorifying the Father is to abide in Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to bring forth fruit in our lives.

Duration: 1:04:35

Topics: "Abiding"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a personal experience of seeing trees with red umbrellas and branches loaded with fruit. He compares this sight to the concept of death and new life in the Bible, specifically referencing John 12. The speaker then transitions to discussing John 15, which is considered one of the most profound chapters in the Bible. He highlights the repeated themes of fruit and abiding in this chapter, emphasizing the importance of remaining connected to Jesus, who is described as the vine.

Transcript

We have expressed to thee, our Father, this afternoon, our love for thy great gift in the Lord Jesus Christ. As we sang this song, O come, let us adore him. We feel again, if we could speak our praises in a thousand languages.

If we could express our gratitude in gifts, we would do the utmost that we could to, as it were, impress thee that in our hearts there is love, loyal and deep. There is a thankfulness which is not natural, it is supernatural because we recognize again that in the mercy of God we have passed from death unto life and from the power of Satan unto God. We thank you that we know in whom we have believed and we are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day.

Lord, earlier we were expressing our gratitude and Again, we think of how the sun shines into the diamond which is colourless and it reveals the beauty and the majesty of the sun. But the sun also illuminates the ruby and the emerald, the sapphire and other gems. And so Lord, we recognize it's not by the colour of our skin that makes no difference, it's not our social standing that makes no difference.

There is only one Christ, one Lord, one Spirit. And we thank you that that Spirit coming to dwell in our hearts makes us one in Jesus Christ. We do not have to seek unity, we are told to keep the unity.

Because if we are dwelt in Christ, then we are in each other, we are indwelt in each other. We are united with each other in the bond which is above every bond. We thank you again for your holy word, this

marvellous mine of wealth which we shall never, never, never be able to explore as long as we live.

It is indeed so profound. We thank you that it meets the point of our need. In days when we need comfort, it's there.

In days when we need strength, it brings that strength. In days when we need light, there is light through this word, the lamp for our feet, the light for our path. We thank you Lord that you have likened us even to eagles.

And the Apostle says that we should live in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We've been so long of the earth earthy that we don't desire to be in it, we desire to be in it but not of it. And Lord we thank you that we can soar into the heavenlies, into that rarefied atmosphere of glory and of majesty and of beauty and of revelation.

Because you touched our eyes we are no longer blind, we can see where once we could not see. We can hear where once we were deaf. We can feel where once we had no understanding.

We bless you again for the going forth of your word today. We cannot imagine every circumstance but we thank you for those who tread the burning deserts. For those who go shooting down dangerous rapids to communicate to isolated people.

For those who cross the blizzards away there in the north of Canada these days in the terrible weather. And we thank you for the zeal of some of those missionaries that we have met there. Who for month after month see nothing but a white barren wilderness.

They have no creature comforts, they hardly have the right food. And yet they press on because they have received the call from thee. We thank you for those who translate the word with all its puzzling problems and its challenges.

We thank you for those who gave us this word. Down the ages they, many of them gave their lives in order to bring it to us and we thank you. We thank you again for your selection that you took a herdsman like the herdsman of Tikor.

That's all he called himself but he became a man of profit. We thank you for taking fishermen as well as King David. We thank you for taking men who were deemed by the world ignorant as well as Solomon in all his wisdom.

We thank you for giving us the inside story of men who were great sinners who became great saints. Men who were great failures who became great successes by your divine power. Men who lost many battles but finally won the greatest of all battles.

Men who renounced everything and took up the cross and followed the Lamb with us wherever he went. Give us we pray thee the grace of endurance. Give us we pray again eyes to see and strength to do your holy will.

Bless this word and fold it to our hearts today we ask in Jesus name. Alright today we're going to look at the gospel by, recorded by John. In a very familiar chapter with a mixture of old thoughts and new thoughts.

John chapter 15 which is probably the best known chapter in the whole of this wonderful book. That is the book of John. I think so often when I'm looking at a chapter or a commentary on chapters that how many men say of different chapters in the Bible this is the most profound chapter in the whole Bible.

I guess it's because they're suddenly overwhelmed with its majesty and with its beauty and with its greatness. Dr. Kaufman made a statement about the gospel as it's recorded by John and he said this. That John was the Plato of the New Testament.

The unique thing about the gospel of John to me is this that 92% of what he writes, he writes. He doesn't borrow it from Matthew, Mark and Luke. The other three they copy, they change and they borrow from each other but John does not do this.

Again John gives us 92% of fresh material. He introduces us to fresh characters like Nicodemus, the woman at the well and so forth. I sometimes think it could be argued that the whole book is condensed into the first verse of the first chapter.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Now there are three profound statements we could spend a year over actually. Here's the first, in the beginning was the Word.

The Word was with God. The Word was God. So in the beginning you have Eternity.

In the beginning Eternity, the Word was with God, Equality. The Word was God, Deity. Now there you've got three profound words.

He was with God in Eternity. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, Equality. And the Word was God, Deity.

If you were to count you would discover that in this wonderful book of John, he uses the name of his father. In this one book alone it is recorded 124 times. You see Matthew sets forth the Lord Jesus Christ as a King and Mark as a Servant and Luke as the Son of Man.

If you want to know the prayer life of Jesus, read the account of Luke. Because in every circumstance, every crisis in the life of Jesus, he emphasizes the fact that Jesus prayed. The others say that Jesus of course was in the water and the Spirit descended as a dove.

But John says he was praying when the Spirit descended. The other evangelists say that Jesus died on a cross of course, but Luke says it was while he was dying he was praying, Father forgive them. Luke says it was after Jesus spent a night in prayer he chose his 12 disciples.

Luke says that even while he was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration, he was praying. Because you see Luke shows us the humanity of the Lord Jesus, he is leaning hard upon his Father. But John shows us the Deity, he shows us that Jesus Christ is indeed very God of very God and he speaks so much here of his Father.

Now the best background to John 15 in my judgment is in Ezekiel 15. You needn't look at it, but in Ezekiel 15 it begins like this and it says well, what shall we use the vine for? Well the obvious answer is the vine is used in our judgment for one thing, you don't buy furniture made of the vine. You may say handles are put on different tools or at least put on knives and sometimes you see a nice handle, it has the horn of a buck on it.

Later you see some other precious things, sometimes used to be in the older days the good knives had ivory handles. Now they have some plastic stuff that looks pretty good except it soon perishes. But you never find handles that are made of the wood of the vine.

It says in the 15th of Ezekiel there that if you take a curly piece of wood of a vine you can't even use it to hang a peg on. It's good for nothing except to produce fruit. Now I would think the logic of this statement of Jesus, I am the true vine and my Father is the husband, would be this.

I am the vine but you are the grapes, is not the logical conclusion. But he doesn't say I am the vine and you are the grapes, why did he use the figure of the vine? Talking with Philip the other day about translations and he said one man had translated this into one language in Africa and because they'd never seen a vine he put I am the coffee tree. It doesn't bear out at all, the man was angry with the other man, he said that makes no sense.

Well the people here have never seen a coffee tree, I've never seen a seraphim. But I'm glad they're mentioned in the word of God. There are lots of things I haven't seen in the scriptures but the Spirit is able to make it known and particularly in these days when you can give so many visual portrayals of the vine.

Why did Jesus say I am the vine? I don't know. Except away here in the Old Testament again and again he speaks of Israel as being as a vine. I planted thee a noble vine, you'll be degenerated.

It says there in the Isaiah 5 that the Lord planted a vineyard and the grapes became wild. People have suggested because this is immediately before Jesus was going into the crisis of his life. You see again John is incomparable in the things he says.

Do you remember in the 47th chapter of Ezekiel it talks about a river, a man with a measuring line. He says I walked in the river and the water came to my ankles. He measured a thousand cubits and the water came to my knees.

He measured another thousand cubits and the water came to my thighs. He measured another thousand and there were waters to swim in. Now if you think of that picture at least it helps me.

When you come into the Gospel of John when you get to chapter 14 and measure a thousand cubits to 15 it's deeper. 16 is deeper still, 17 is deeper still and at the end you come to of course to the death of the Lord Jesus and his resurrection. This is one of the most profound things and I can understand why some people say that this is one of the most profound books in the whole of the Word of God.

Now it could be of course that Jesus was going, he was going on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. He would pass by the beautiful gate of the Temple, a bronze gate about 70 feet high. I often wonder if they'll ever rediscover it.

Gates 70 feet high made with cunning. Just as these days we see people take well Spanish designs, the old Spanish gates you see with beautiful leaves in and plants and all kinds of things worked in. But in the beautiful gate of the Temple, that bronze gate worth I guess in our money a million or more dollars.

He gave us a picture of the vine because it was a favorite picture of Israel. Others say that he gave us the picture because they were passing through the vineyards. But why he gave it doesn't matter too much as far as I'm concerned.

What matters is that the Lord Jesus here says that I am the vine and ye are the branches. Now if you read the chapter carefully you'll discover that right through it he repeats words over and over again. He mentions for instance fruit eight times.

He mentions in the word abiding nine times. He mentions his father in this one chapter ten times. Now I think very often as you find a chapter in the New Testament you find a parallel chapter in the Old Testament.

Because in the Old Testament you may remember the 90th Psalm says what? He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Now we're living in a day when everything is boisterous. Now I've got nothing against boisterous believers but I'm as equally interested in the silent saints as the boisterous believers.

You see everything is dynamic about the Holy Ghost but wait a minute. He isn't always portrayed like the upper room in fire and in rushing mighty wind, he is portrayed as oil. He is portrayed as the most gentle, beautiful of birds, never as an eagle.

He is portrayed as a dove. The dove that has no gall bladder, it has no bitterness. The dove that is the most faithful of all the birds in the world.

The dove that is the most easily offended. The dove that won't go near anything that's deadly. Do you remember that when the window was opened there in the ark and the man of God let the raven out.

I wish it hadn't been a raven but it was. And he let that raven out, it didn't come back. Why? Because the raven is a carnivorous bird.

It's like the crow. It's like some of the scavengers you see on the road. You know when somebody knocks something down, even an armadillo, the birds swoop on it and as you come up they fly away.

You'll never find a dove on the carcass. Immediately the window was let go, out of the ark, immediately it was let out of the ark. Everything was floating around.

Bodies of people, elephants. It's a smorgasbord, take what you want. Eat a bit of the lion, eat a bit of something else.

No sir, the raven stayed out, he never went back to the ark. The dove did. Noah was busy looking around at the animals, seeing they were all alright.

Nothing died in the ark, remember, it was the time of the millennium surely. How did the lamb lay down with the lion? How did he feed them all that time? Two of a kind? Little boy said to his mother, were there only two fleas, the monkeys must have been miserable. Well I don't know how many fleas went in, but there were lots of sevens in pairs of sevens, some just in twos.

But everything in the ark, it's nature changed when it was there in the ark. When he opened the window, as soon as it was released back into the world, that raven saw what was naturally it's desire and it ate the flesh. Immediately the beautiful dove went round and he's going to settle, he's getting tired, he's going to settle.

Oh no, I won't settle, I wouldn't soil my feet, it stinks. And his energy is going out and so he goes back to the ark. He would not settle on anything that was dead or smelly, it's of the world, it's of the earth, earthy,

it's corruptible.

And the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with corruption, except to bring conviction and a revelation of what can be. So the beautiful bird went back. And then finally, you remember, he released it, the third day was it, and the bird went out and it saw that a beautiful, beautiful vegetation coming up, green leaves and you know, the olive branch, a symbol of peace.

And it came back with a little thing in its beak and immediately he took it in and he knew the flood had subsided. So the Spirit is likened again to a dove, not to a lion. Sure he's like a rushing mighty wind, but he's like oil.

Maybe one reason why, why the, there's not much written about the fruit of the Spirit. I look on my shelves, I guess I have about 20 different books from John Owen back in 1500 to some written last year on the Holy Spirit. But they're nearly all on gifts and ministries and miracles and stuff, there's very little that I can find on the fruit of the Spirit.

And actually this is the proof, Jesus did not say buy their gifts as precious as they are, he said buy their fruits ye shall know them. Not even buy their suits, buy their fruits, ye shall know them. Now fruit of course doesn't shout, it doesn't strut, but it's very attractive.

There are surely not many people that do not like fruit. And Jesus says I am the vine and ye are the branches and every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. But every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.

Now he says unless you abide in the vine, look my arm must abide in my body, surely it must. If it doesn't, then I've got no power over it. If the branch abides in the vine, then the vine is going to supply that branch with life.

We're abiding in him, he is our life. You see the interpretation today which is overdone, I'm not against it except I'm against it being overdone, is the Holy Spirit is power, no no, first of all the Holy Spirit is life. The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, a combination of life and of power.

Now obviously a dead branch cannot bring forth fruit. What is this chapter actually saying? Well to me it says this, that the secret of abounding is abiding. If we abide, we'll abound.

The secret of communion is union. If we're in union with him, we'll have communion with him. If we abide in him, we'll abound in him.

Now the life is derived from where? The life is derived from, pardon me, the life is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ. If we abide in him, he says, and my words abide in you, he shall ask what you will. Now there are three things said in this chapter because this is what it's all about, it's about fruit.

In the second verse it says, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. In verse 4 he says the branch cannot beareth fruit of itself.

Back to verse 2, the promise of fruit. Into verse 8, plenty of fruit. Or, herein is my Father glorified that ye beareth much fruit.

So verse 2 is the promise of fruit. Verse 8, plenty of fruit. Verse 16, proficiency in fruit bearing.

I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. So, permanence in fruit bearing. The promise of fruit, plenty of fruit, permanence in fruit bearing.

Now, there's a beautiful picture given of this in my judgment in the prophecy of Zachariah. We don't read Zachariah too much. He is quoted so often because of one majestic verse that he gave us.

And it's quoted so many times. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts. Now lots of people looking at wonderful prophecies for it, but there it is, it's in the 4th chapter again of Zachariah.

Zachariah is the man with the visions. The marvellous revelations. And he says in verse 11, Then answered I and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side? And I answered again and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered and said, Thou knowest not what these be.

And I said, No my Lord. And he said, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Now here is a picture of the seven branch candlestick in the tabernacle of old.

You know, three branches coming up here, a centre stem, a bowl on the top, a bowl on the top of each of the three branches, seven of those beautiful golden bowls. What are these trees on either side? Well they didn't have electric light, so the only way that they could get light was to have olive trees. The only way to get the olive oil out of the tree, you go to South America, you'll see them cutting trees and rubber comes out.

You see them go to some other country and cut, go up in the northeast part of this country and you'll see them make an injection into a tree and maple syrup comes out. They made an injection into the olive tree and they put a golden pipe in it. And because there's a pumping system in that tree, you see if your ears and mine were sensitive enough, you'd hear the pumping system in a daffodil.

Because when you cut a daffodil, cut it off from the bulb and put it there in a glass of water, it actually pumps, it has a siphon system to draw that water, but our ears are not sensitive enough to hear it. Now here is the tree, the olive tree, here is an olive tree, here is a seven branch candlestick. And there's a golden pipe out of that living tree and a golden pipe out of that living tree.

And they're pumping oil continually into that central bulb as a gravity feed. Now remember again on those three branches that came up out of the candlestick, there are three almond buds on each side. Three on each of those bars that go up, you know those curved branches, there are three engraved almond buds or at least enlarged almond buds and there are three on each of the other side.

Again to me there are nine gifts of the Spirit and there are nine fruits of the Spirit. And as I've said before there are nine main feathers on the wing of a dove and nine on the other. And it doesn't try and get off the ground with one wing.

It gets off the ground with both wings. In other words there's balance in the things of the Spirit or there should be. Now the oil is pumped continually from the living tree into that receptacle and as long as the oil is poured in, the lights are going to burn continually.

Now he asked the question, who are these? Thou knowest not, he said no. Then he said these are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Well I don't see who they could be except Joshua and Zerubbabel.

One is a civic leader and the other is a religious leader. And they're standing in the holy place, they're standing by the altar. Can you imagine what would happen in governments of the day if every monarch in the world and at the head of every priesthood, if they stood in the place of authority and power in the sanctuary what would stream out of that sanctuary? You see to me it fits my picture because I want it to.

I see there the two trees, they're pumping oil continually into the bowl, the bowl feeds each of those other bowls and the candles are burning. There's a constant supply because they're abiding. What are the two trees? Well I could say one is the tree of Calvary, the power of Calvary.

The other is the tree of the resurrection, we must have both. He atoned for our sins by his death but we are saved by his life, by his resurrection power. Flowing into us continually.

And while we abide, we abound. The apostle was continually deciding that people may abound in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so Jesus says, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will.

Now you could say, well it says there, there are two golden pipes, what are they? I don't know, I'll make a suggestion, they're trust and obey, there's no other way. It doesn't matter how smart we are, how old we are, how much we know, we've got to trust, we've got to obey, there is no other way. And while we trust and obey, there is a constant inflow of the life of God.

Now one of the things that puzzled me for so long about this wonderful psalm, pardon me, this wonderful scripture was this, Jesus here is saying I am the true vine. He has already said in this epistle that he is the, he is the true light. He's already said that he is the true bread that cometh from heaven.

You'll find in the very first chapter, it says in him was life and the light was the light of men, he is the true light. You see Jesus claimed all through his life, that he and he alone is the true revelation of God the Father. Well some people said one day to him, you may remember, well show us the Father, you talk about the Father, show us the Father.

And Jesus said, have I been so long with you? He that has seen me has seen the Father. All the glories of the Godhead were in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. All the majesty, all the beauty, all the authority.

Because he was very God of very God. Equal with the Father in glory and in majesty and in eternity. I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman.

And every branch that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now again I say we're not hearing too much about the fruits of the Spirit these days.

We're hearing less about fruits unto holiness in the 6th chapter of the book of Romans. I nearly call it the gospel of Romans, which it really is too. We're hearing less about the bringing forth fruit, meat for repentance as John Baptist said.

I was talking with a dear brother that's here this afternoon and he was saying that the Lord has been showing him the beauty of repentance. Some things that he's had to straighten out. Some apologies he's had to make.

Some things that were not easy. But what release has come in his spirit because he has obeyed God. Sure there is no bypass, there is no detour.

I get very weary of people who are forever talking about the power of the Holy Ghost and they haven't even the common decency to go face somebody over a situation. They call and write a letter or phone. You don't need any courage to talk over a phone or write a letter.

But you go to a man and see, even if you're in the right sometimes you get butterflies. Why? Because you've got a nervous system. Not because you're wrong.

Maybe it's part of the shame and the humiliation that I was so foolish to do that thing and now I have to go and undo the thing that I did in my folly, in my pride, in my anger, in my temper, in my resentment. And very often we wonder why people don't go in grace. Because we refuse to go back.

Remember the man in the scripture came and Jesus talking to him and he says, Well Lord, look I'll tell you what, if I've not got things straight, I'll go back and pay that man fourfold what I've done wrong. I'm so eager to get things straightened out. Now if there's going to be fruit, meat for repentance, we'll have fruit unto holiness and then we'll have abiding fruit.

Every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it. Oh, that's a thing we thought we'd get by with. I thought he purged the branch that wasn't healthy.

Here it says he purges the branch that is healthy. Why? Well, what is fruit? Well, a fruit is a sign of life. A dictionary rendering for fruit is offspring.

It says that we have our fruit in the works of unrighteousness. Now look, if you've got an unrighteous root in your life, you'll have unrighteous fruit in your life. Because the scripture says we bear root downward before we bear fruit upward.

Now in the epistles of the Hebrews it says, Listen, let's take care, take care, lest any root of bitterness come in you. He's writing to believers. Oh, the root of bitterness.

Boy, that can be fruitful very quickly, can't it? It's got lots of forms. It's got bitterness. It's got backbiting.

It's got scorn. It's a cancer in the breast. John Wesley said that the greatest difficulty in his church in his day was the backbiting amongst believers.

They're the obstruction. There is a root of bitterness. And if you don't yank it out, it'll make your life hard.

You can keep up a pretense, but there is a cancer inside. And there is no growth in grace or in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. You'll feed the cancer.

I heard a doctor say once, there are certain types of cancer anyhow, that when a person is feeding, they do not feed themselves. I think it was last night or the night before, they showed a picture of H. H. Humphrey at some great reception in Washington. Every time you see him, his face is more drawn, you can see his bones sticking out and everything else.

He is feeding the cancer. He's got no option about it. And they even said, here is a dying man.

The country paying homage from the President down to so many other people. But this man is feeding the cancer. Now if I'm going to get very near to God, he's going to be so gracious and loving to me that he's going to apply the knife sometimes.

For it's the branch that bears the fruit that gets the knife. Why? Well, because one sign of life is recklessness very often. I was thinking of our David's little, sweet little girl, and I don't know, maybe she should have been a boy.

They hoped she would be, but she wasn't. She came a little girl, but man, was she full of mystery. She was only very small, and she discovered by pulling one drawer out, a good bit, and the next not so much, and the next a little bit less, she could step up, so she had the steps.

And when they came in, she's walking on the counter, around the sink, by the sink. They were terrified, the little thing. And they saw she pulled out steps to get there.

Well, she was corrected, so she didn't do it anymore. Next time she climbed on the piano. She was told not to go on the sink, and so she obeyed her parents.

And when they came in, she's walking on the top of the piano. And they said, you know, you don't know what to do. She's full of life.

Oh, I sometimes wish I could find what they feed babies on. I'd like some right now. Give me some life, some energy.

They seemed to overflow with life. It's exactly the same. What did you do with a colt when you were on the farm? Man, you let the thing out of the stable, and if you didn't have a rope on it, it was galloping round, kicking its legs, jumping over.

Away it goes, it's full of life. Well, you do the same thing with a vine. You plant a vine, and it'll grow and grow and grow and grow.

But it won't bear any fruit. You see, again, to me there's a subtle thing in this. He says, Jesus says, I am the vine, you're the branches.

I would say again, logically, he should have said, I am the vine, you're the grapes. Why didn't he say that? Ah, I came to this conclusion rightly or wrongly, because you can do anything you like with grapes. If they're not mature, you can make vinegar out of them.

If they are mature, eat them, they're good for you. I've often told people, I don't charge for my wisdom, but if you lived on grapes one day a week, you'd be a lot healthier. No cooking, meals for grapes for morning, breakfast, noon and evening.

Grapes will do your system a world of good. There's a lot of life in them. Jesus drank of the fruit of the vine.

He won't drink of it again until he drinks of it in the kingdom. But if you get grapes before they're ripe, you can make vinegar out of them. If you get grapes when they're ripe, they're luscious to eat.

If you leave them, they get overripe, they become raisins. So it doesn't matter whether they're immature, mature or overmature, they're useful, they're not wasteful. But that is not true in the case of a Christian.

What good is a sour Christian? What good is a dried up Christian? Now, why do you get grapes? You get grapes for a number of reasons and one is they make wines out of them. Now remember on the west coast, if you haven't been through the vineyards, do go through them sometimes, they're fascinating. Not because they give you a free drink.

We saw signs all the way up, this is so-and-so's vineyard, please come in and have a drink. And I thought, well I said, Martha I don't know whether this wine's good or bad, would it make us intoxicated? I don't know anything about wines at all, I've no idea. It could have been cranberry juice or anything, I knew.

And I said, well I don't know, and I was going in and the man said, would you like a drink? And the voice behind me said yes, and I looked, there's a fellow, and he reached down, do you know he brought a paper cup about that size? Man, he wouldn't fill a cavity in your tooth. I don't know how in the world he could tell it was wine. But wait a minute, I watched the men there, and there's a man who's smoking a big pipe or a stoggy there, and he's slashing at grapes, and he picks them up and bangs them there.

Oh, I thought, wait a minute. Is there anything more beautiful, more attractive than still fruit? Those lovely grapes with a bloom on them, you can't put it on, you can take it off. It's like a peach, it has a lovely blush on its cheek.

And you see the lovely grapes there, and they have a bloom on them, and he's cutting and he's slashing them like that, and he picks them up and he says, well I don't care who's going to win the next game, and he throws them in a truck like that. Wait a minute, wait a minute. That poor little tree has struggled against the wind and the storm and the extra heat, and it's produced grapes, and all you do is bash the things down like that, and then the truck goes, it's a dump truck, and they dump it, and they all go down the chute.

Now if you're out in the east, they don't do that, they're not rough like that. They have a rock like this, and it's hollowed out, and there's a tiny hole at the front. The man empties his grapes in, and then he rolls his trousers up, and he jumps in, and he crushes them with his feet.

When did he wash them? He's washing them now. What do you think he's doing? And so he crushes the grapes, and he pushes the juice through, and he has a little receptacle there, and he brings out the juice. How can you get wine unless you crush it? Doesn't it say of the Son of God Himself, He went into the winepress of the wrath of God? Don't you think the church is going into the winepress right now? I try to remind you of it, I don't know how often you've heard.

I refuse to let myself forget that every day people die in hell holes, in Russia and in China and elsewhere. Saints, I'm not worthy to carry their shoes. I'm not worthy to wash their feet.

I remember a precious woman I preached in Australia, and there was a woman with a face like a Madonna. She had a black scarf tied under her chin, and I looked at them as they stood up there, and I thought, Grandmother, mother, daughter. And afterwards they came up to me, and the daughter spoke a very lovely English, accented of course, broken.

And I said, but please, where are you from? Russia, Russia. When did you come? Oh, we have been in Australia a year, a little more than a year. From where? Russia.

How did you get here? We escaped into China, and then somebody smuggled us out of China into Hong Kong, and then we got money and we came down here. Oh, I said, it must be wonderful, and they were translating to the old grandmother, and I said, what's grandmother saying? Grandmother said, tell this man, this, very much like Russia, not so good. What do you mean, not so good? Aren't you glad to get out of Russia? Ask, ask, ask grandmother, would she go back to Russia tomorrow if she got the chance? Oh yeah, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, she said.

No presence of God in Australia. Everybody pursue money, nice clothes, big automobiles, eat, eat, eat. Russia, God come very near.

God come, I weep in His holy presence. God come, I see Him in all His majesty. Oh, people here, come to church if they want, don't bother.

Russia, every door, every time you, the door is open, you get there, you look around, no spy, say, Jesus speak to you today? Jesus say what to you today? Did you read So and So's Bible? Yeah, I read it for ten minutes yesterday. A friend of mine who went out there said he, he saw that a preacher go borrow a Bible from a man in the pew, because the preacher has never had one in his life. And when they finished, the man smuggled it there inside his coat, and he took it home.

The only known Bible in that area. You see, we forget His benefits, don't we? We're pursuing this and racing that and the other. Look, we're going to spend eternity in His presence, we'd better get used to it.

I say respectfully, let's not be strangers when we get to heaven in God's name, let's not, let's not be accused of giving so much time to this, that and the other, and speaking chivalrous about loving Him. Oh, I'm going to take a back seat when I get in eternity, you won't need to push me back brother, I'm going to stand back and you can see the glorious saints who have suffered martyrdom. I was reading about somebody yesterday, I think it was, who was chopped up limb by limb.

Alive! Others, whose enemies stood in amazement. They don't curse, or profane. They say, Hallelujah, oh Jesus, that's all, that's all, that's all.

I don't understand it. Do you? If you do, would you share your secret? The branch that's going to bear the much fruit, you see, all we think about is fruit in this life. Wait a minute, there's another life.

This life is a little island on which I stand, surrounded by an ocean of eternity. I can't get off anywhere but plunge into eternity. The life that now is, is a fraction.

The life that is to come is endless, it's duration, it's ages without ending, as Webster says. Cycles of ages and ages. He keeps the score, as I often say to her.

It's pruning his vine. When I think of dear, Phil, dear wife there, I naturally think of the Alliance, and you know, they're the one church that had more revival in Vietnam than any other group in the past ten years, prior to the collapse of that great country. Well, politics, they're too corrupt to talk about.

They make me indignant, that's all I can think about, politics, whether British or American, anybody else. It's so full of hypocrisy. It's a wonder God doesn't slaughter the whole thing.

It's amazing how indignant we can get over one thing. The British held their peace about some atrocities in Africa, but they squealed like mad and withdrew their ambassador when four guys got killed in Spain, not

too long ago. A whole nation being disturbed, didn't matter, but four choice people, and you upset diplomacy.

Well, this is the world, but going back, how is the church suffering in Vietnam? Did you pray for it today, or Laos, or Cambodia, or Russia, or China? He's seeing of the travail of his soul, and the frustrated boys who say, you know, I preach on 345 radio stations every morning, and you know, we have so many millions of income this year, and how many pieces of literature we publish, and you know this, that, and the other. I say, no, brother, I don't care a hill of beans, and you can't stir me to envy. But if I'm in the vine, I may be the least of the twig at the end of the branch, but I'm going to feel, if that vine is shaking, if that vine is being manipulated or cut, And it's every branch that bearer fruit he purges it.

Again I was thinking of Judy's mother, she's quite a gifted artist. I was mentioning a picture I saw painted some years ago. And she does wonderful sculpting.

And you know that's all, that's all that the vine dresser is doing, he's sculpting that tree. Every time he cuts it, it seems shapeless and senseless. But if he lets that vine run, it will go on and on and on and on.

And you know what it will do? It will just make leaves that will fill this whole house and the grapes will be that size. Now that plant is only capable of producing so much energy. You can do two things with it.

You can let it run its course or cut it off and the energy will go in the grapes. If you don't prune it, the energy will go into waste material. Again it's like the colt that kicks and jumps and he doesn't want.

You see those mustangs out in the west sometimes going over the desert, they're gorgeous. Remember seeing wild horses go through beautiful things, kicking their heels, nobody could tame them. But how useless they are.

And you know this is what it is, really it's disciplining the tree to make it bring forth more fruit. Again God is not capricious. God doesn't play tricks with any of us.

If he severs something for me, he does it for his glory. Not to give me pain, but if it's the only way he can do it by pain, he'll give me pain. Because he sees the other side of the story, not the side that I'm looking at necessarily.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, every branch in me that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Pruning is an art. There are men who just live to prune.

They charge an awful lot of money for doing it. I'll give you a couple of illustration before I finish. When we were out west some years ago in Idaho, the only thing I knew about Idaho was it grew the largest potatoes I'd ever seen in my life.

I didn't know it grew the largest apples. But after we had been into a farmer's for lunch one day, this good brother said, listen I want to take you to see something. You were talking about pruning.

I said, fine. Don't take too much time. I need to pray this afternoon.

I've a meeting tonight. Won't take long. We'll go this way home.

We went round a country road. He stopped the car and said, look and there the side of the road the trees looked as though they'd been sprayed with brilliant red paint. And I said, what a crop.

He said, this man knows how to prune. We went a bit further down the road and I was looking up and he said, no there's no trees up there. The trees were so heavy.

You see here it is. Look there's a branch of a tree. When the branch of the tree has flowers on, well it can wave its branch in the sky.

The flowers are there but then the flowers break off and the little seed box becomes an apple and apple and apple. And you'll get five or seven or eight apples there and they get bigger and bigger and heavier and heavier and heavier and they pull the tree down. And so to keep the tree from breaking he put clumps underneath.

And when I looked at the next section it looked as though a lot of red umbrellas. The trees were all bent over carrying their load. Oh I said, that's wonderful.

Man, he knows how to prune. He's doing a great way. Wait a minute brother Adrian, there's something else, you see.

Well I've seen the trees up there and I've seen that. Well what else? We went a little further down the road, down a kind of a dip and then he stopped the car and said, look the ground was blazing red. Why? Because the man didn't have enough support for the branches.

What happened? The branches pulled themselves out of the trunk of the tree. Just as though you're taking an axe and separated them like cartwheels. All the branches were on the floor and they were loaded with fruit.

Yes I said he's got a crop. But he's killed a tree. And immediately I came to my mind that scripture in John 12.

This is the law of life. What is the law of life? Death. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die.

I received a letter yesterday from a very wonderful man of God. He's a Presbyterian, one of the finest men I know in this country. He's a layman but he's a profound thinker.

Some things he said were very beautiful but amongst them he said in essence, you know what we're trying to do? We want a revival and blessing of God in this land but we want to hold on to everything we can material with this and God says no. There's a place where you die. Well I'll maybe say some more about that next week.

But you see those trees in order to reproduce their kind they gave their life. Now I looked across the road and there's a tree. It had fungus.

It had two apples at the top. Skinny things. I would even have eaten them never mind bought them.

And you know that tree was waving like this as much as to say hey look what I've done. Look what I've done. I've worked all year and I've produced two apples.

And I turned around and said hey look what those have done. They've given their life and they've produced a thousand or so many apples that they'll never live again. Oh I learned another lesson there.

You know the tree that bears the most fruit is the humblest. It bows down. It's like filling a cup with water under a tap.

You turn the tap and the water comes in and the water fills the cup and then the water overflows and you don't see the vessel. You see the overflow. That's how it should be in us.

That they don't see us they see him. That they don't see our ministry. If anybody goes away and I've had some wonderful times preaching I'm bad.

And I remember Dr Sangster said to me one day, Ravenhill look if people go away saying you and I are great preachers we missed it. They should go away and say either the man has a great message or he has a great savior. And when they say message many of them just mean they have a great God to deliver.

Immediately we get in the picture. We pile the thing up. And the law of reproduction is the law of death and the law of life.

He laid down his life the result is what? The church of the living God today. Let's take a minute here and say what is this fruit bearing? Well you can say it's soul winning if you like. I don't think it bears out actually in this in this context.

I think it's good. After all when God established the law here in the old testament it was the seed. The fruit bore its seed, its seed of its kind.

You see the church now relies on propaganda not propagation. Propaganda. The church that has the most money does the most advertising.

They can afford a spot on radio. They can afford a page in the newspaper. But the law of revival in the early days away there in Korea when they shook that nation was this.

You could not be a church member unless you yourself had reproduced your kind. You personally led something to somebody to Jesus. Not coming to the altar to pray with them but you personally had led them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You approved that you're a sheep and you bear a lamb and you bring them to the shepherd. Well supposing you take the other picture there. The picture that's given in the fifth chapter again of Galatians.

What does it say there? Well you know what it says. It talks about the works of the flesh and then it talks about the fruits of the spirit. What is the fruit of the spirit? Well let's take three.

Love, joy and peace. Well you say I need those but wait a minute. Paul writing to Titus, pardon me, writing to Timothy isn't it? I didn't read my testament.

I marked it. 2 Timothy 2.6 I guess. He says the husbandman must be first partaker of the fruit.

Now I do not bear fruit to justify the fact that I'm in dwelling in, I'm dwelt in Christ and Christ dwells in me. I bear fruit to justify the pruning of the husbandman. He must be the first partaker of the fruit.

All right let's take the first fruit. The fruit of the spirit is love. But he demands the first portion of my love.

The first part of my love is God The second part of my love is manward. The third part of my love is inward. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.

That's the greatest thing. Not preaching great sermons, not doing great miracles, not building great churches. The first thing that God desires of my heart is that I love him with all my heart and soul and mind and strength.

So the first love, he is the first partaker of the fruit that he's cultivated with his manipulating or with his pruning. He comes the husbandman to find the first leanings. And so he expects first of all my love and my loyalty to him.

The fruit of the spirit is love. Godward, manward, to my fellow man. How is it going to work out to my fellow man? Well in consideration of him and in ministrations to him.

So it works Godward first, that's his first portion, manward and then inward. You say do you love yourself? Well that's what Jesus says. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

How do I love myself? To protect myself from evil. Do you remember Paul says to Timothy, young man he loves so much, Timothy keep that which I've committed to thy trust. He doesn't say ask God to keep you.

He doesn't say pray for angels to keep you. He says keep yourself. Just as again he says keep yourself and spot it from the world.

Do you expect to go into a night show, a burlesque show of strippers and keep pure? Do you expect to go to a filthy movie and keep clean? Do you expect to go into the company of sinners when you don't have to go there and not get somehow contaminated? I love God. Well if I love him, the way to manifest that love is I keep his commandments. And the commandment is I love him.

And the commandment is I love my neighbour. And the commandment is I love myself. And so I keep myself.

How? Well there's another scripture I won't quote it here. It talks about the fruit that we bear with patience. That's the way I cultivate my inner man with patience.

Read the 11th of Hebrews and then go back and read the 10th chapter which says that we have need of patience when we do the will of God. You know you can't accelerate fruit can you? There are an awful lot of things that science can do but bless God there are some things it can't do. One thing it can't make fruit.

And sometimes you give a child some orange juice and you say to him I don't like it. And he says well somebody advertised this on TV has been I don't like it. Why not? Mummy is it real juice? Well no it's not.

No I don't like it. You can't even cheat a child very often with juice. We cannot make fruit.

It's something that God alone can make. You can make yourself good. I've seen many a bad man turn into a good man by his own effort.

He quit drinking, smoking, fighting, lusting, doing all the things. I've seen men work an awful reformation in their lives. But they can't work regeneration in their lives.

That's the work of the Spirit of God. So this love which is shed abroad in my heart by the Spirit is first the fruit of the Spirit. The first fruit is love.

The first and greatest commandment is love. The first being in the world is love. The first fruit of the Spirit is love.

And now to love the Lord by God. First Godward and then manward and then inward. Fruit of the Spirit is love.

The next is joy. Think of this for a minute. The position of this text.

In the same chapter verse 11 he says these things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. Look at the position of that text. It's immediately before he steps into Gethsemane.

And he's praying for them that your joy may be full. He's going into measureless grief. He's going into indescribable misery.

He's going into bitter betrayal. And yet he is not asking them for their prayers that they stay by him. He says listen I'm concerned for you that your joy may be full.

Well that's the position of the text immediately before he goes to Gethsemane. The proclamation of the text is this in the 14th chapter. My peace I leave with you and my peace I give unto you.

In verse 14 and 29. Now I have told you before it comes to pass that when it comes to pass you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you for the prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in me.

That the world may know that I love the father as I have and as he gave and the father gave me commandment even so I do. Arise and let us go hence. So there's the position of the text immediately before Gethsemane.

There is the proclamation of the text that my joy might remain in you. And that your joy might be full. That's the 14th chapter of, pardon me, it's the 14th verse of the 16th chapter.

Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full. And there is then the possibility of the text that your joy may be full.

Right before Gethsemane. Something that will never be repeated. Something there's no precedent for.

Nobody in the Old Testament ever endured the same. And yet his concern here is that they may have his joy fulfilled in their own lives. Now I need joy in three ways.

I need joy toward God. Why? Because Jesus says he delighted to do his father's will. Who for the joy that was set before him, Hebrews says, endured the cross.

Is there something lovely about hanging naked on a cross, being cursed? Is there something lovely about being dragged through the streets like a common felon as though his hands were running with blood and murder or lust or raping people? Is there any joy in that? Sure there is. He's being identified with sinners but he's doing the will of his father and that's the joy. It's not the external thing, it's the inward sense of doing my father's will that gives him joy.

So just as my love is first Godward and then manward and then inward, so my joy is first upward to God. I joy to do the Master's will. How does it work out in my fellow man? I joy to see him rejoicing in the Lord.

Brother Wayne has been over to see me a number of times. Every time he comes he brings sunshine. His joy in the Lord is contagious.

He's liberated. He's a new man. He's found the pearl of great price.

And I rejoice in his joy. I'm glad for the excitement and peace and love that he's sharing these days. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering.

Well that's not too popular is it? But it's a fruit of the Spirit. You think by some interpretation of the Spirit in life you never suffer anything. But what is long-suffering? Well turn the world around.

It's not too nice but it's suffering long. That's all there is to it. Isn't it wonderful? And yet he prunes us from those things that previously would have irritated us.

He's taken the friction out of our nature. He's taken the irritability out of our nature. He's taken the self-pity out of our nature.

He's pruned and pruned and pruned and pruned. He didn't give up the first time we failed. If he did none of us would have made it.

He was tender and loving. And he says what I poured out on others I expect you to pour out on others too. I learned a secret about wine from a friend of mine.

He doesn't drink it but he was out in those vineyards asking a lot of questions. And he said to one of the men, he said, when you say this wine is for instance it's a 50 year old bottle. Now supposing I buy six bottles of this wine, are they consistent? Oh no sir, no.

No he said they may all have come out of the same vat. There may be grapes of the same roll that were all put in the vat. They were all squashed or crunched as they are with machinery now.

They all came out of that little tube the same. And they went in the six different bottles. But we can't guarantee that they taste the same.

Well they're all the same mixture, exactly. They all went through the machinery cellar, exactly. They were all bottled the same day, exactly.

They're all in the same kind of bottle, exactly. They were all coked at the same time, exactly. They've all been away in the dark for so many years, exactly.

And they don't turn out the same. No, why not? He said, well sir, you're asking me a question that no, no grape grower can answer. No producer of wine knows why you put that wine into different bottles and then after a period of time the texture of the wine is not the same, the taste of the wine is not the same.

We don't know whether it's because we leave a little bit more air in some bottlenecks than others. We can't explain it. But you know, even though it all comes out of the same machine and it all comes out of the same crusher and it all gets bottled the same, the wines are not the same.

You know I found a bit of encouragement in that. After all, Jesus worked with twelve disciples, they sure didn't all come out the same. There were three of them that he took on to the Mount of Transfiguration and he took to the Garden of Gethsemane, but he didn't take the other nine there.

There was one he took out of the other three, he didn't even take the other two out of that. He's very selective. Any pastor will tell you, he'll say, sure I've got a number of people.

A man talked with me this week, he said, well church, we've got some godly people, we've got a lot that are not spiritual. You know it's amazing, they all listen to the same preacher and somebody says, man that was rich, I enjoyed it. Somebody says, well I didn't, I got a bit bored and fell asleep then I woke up and I did, I liked the part I enjoyed and I liked this or I didn't do that, so what? You feed your children around the table, they don't put on the same weight.

You send them to the same school, the same teacher, do they all graduate the same? No, no, no, no, no, no. But there is one, one unmistakable sign for those who are going to ripen in grace and come to know Him. And it's this, blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled.

It isn't knowledge in itself that's enough. It's like an old mystic said years ago, we've got to practice the presence of God. And if we're going to do that, let me tell you for nothing, there'll be an awful lot of pruning.

The best way to tell how much I love Him is at the end of the day, just tomorrow, live it normally and at the end of the day, just before you slip into bed, see how much time you've taken with Him to be holy and quiet. I know there are pressures in life, I'm not stupid, but an awful lot of time we have that we don't give in holy contemplation and meditation. Seeking His face, loving Him first, sharing joy with Him first, bearing His long-suffering with joy and delight.

And of course peace, I need peace with God. If I have it, I want peace with my fellow man. And then I want inward peace, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

And I think somebody rather smartly said, and all misunderstanding, my father is the husbandman. And I think he's going to keep pruning right till we get to the pearly gates. He's going to keep correcting us because he loves us.

And whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. But again, he does it in love. And that love is covered with wisdom.

And he loves me so much he'll never injure me, but he'll wound me to heal me. He'll strip me to clothe me. He'll empty me to fill me.

He'll cut me down to build me up. He'll cut something off that I may bear more fruit. I'm not only proficient in fruit bearing, but permanent in fruit bearing.

Again Lord, we thank you for your word. We're glad you're the husbandman. Amen.

We pray that you'll be the first partaker of the fruits in our lives, our first desire. Ambition is to please thee, to magnify thee, to glorify thy name. Help us to do it as we go out to a world that loves thee not, that we may show forth your praise and your glory in Jesus name.

Amen. Thank you.

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