

“Fruit of Faith” (John 15:1–17)(9.29.21)

John 15:1–17 (NIV84) *The Vine and the Branches*

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.¹² My

command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"Fruit of Faith"**

INTRODUCTION:

I was surprised that Dr. Mark Partin used this scripture in his book, *Praying with Fire: Seeking His Presence through the Revival Passages of Scripture*. Previously, I would not have seen how Jesus' call to abide in Him connected directly to revival. Partin asks,

"How will spiritual pruning work with us? Here are the general steps: God gets our attention, forcing a choice. God allows us to try to handle the

situation in our own strength. God allows us to fail, so we understand deliverance comes from God, not humans.

God separates us from everything we once thought was important and everything that can distract us from Him and His divine purpose. God teaches us lessons we will need to become more useful to Him. God wants us to depend completely on Him and to bear fruit for His glory.

Some lessons we learn quickly, while others may take a lifetime. Time means nothing in God's economy. God just desires that we bear fruit, much fruit, more fruit, and eternal fruit. So He prunes us. In times of revival, pruning becomes evident.

In the revivals I was part of, televisions sat silent. Chores went undone. Vacations were cancelled. Why? People were hungry to commune with God, to read the Word of God, to pray, to unite with others, and to worship. There was a willingness to be still and silent before the Lord, to wait. How could you leave the manifest presence of God? Why would you leave? Time stood still, and **all that is important is Christ.**"

After reading a sermon by Alexander Maclaren, a connection to revival was more discernable to me:

“Fruitless branches mean all those who have a mere superficial adherence to the true vine. If there be any real union, there will be some life, and therefore some fruit. And so the application is to those nominal adherents to Christianity, who, if you ask them to put down in the census paper what they are, will say that they are Christians, but who have no real hold upon Jesus Christ, and no real reception of anything from Him; and the "taking away" is simply that God makes visible, what is a fact, that they do not belong to Him with whom they have this nominal connection.

The longer Christianity continues in any country, the more does the Church get weighted and lowered in its temperature by the aggregation round about it of people of that sort. **And one sometimes longs and prays for a storm to come, of some sort or other, to blow the dead wood out of the tree, and to get rid of all this oppressive and stifling weight of sham Christians that has come round every one of our churches.”**

Yes! We need the great wind of God the Holy Spirit to blow across the dry dead plains of our nation. Come Holy Spirit: cleanse, convict, and convert!

BODY:

In our responsive reading today, we used Psalm 80. Israel was God's Chosen People. The Promised Land was prepared for them. The nation of Israel was the vine rescued from Egypt and transplanted in the place prepared for them. They were blessed and prospered. Because of their waywardness, a rod of correction was brought against them. They cried out, **"Restore us, O Lord God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!"**

This 15th chapter of John starts with Jesus proclaiming, **"I am the true vine."** In every aspect that Israel was untrue, Jesus was true. Regarding sin, Israel required a continuous sacrifice, morning and evening, to cover them. Jesus was not only sinless, He was the Perfect Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. Regarding relationship, Israel was an adulterous wife and a prodigal son. Jesus did the work of the Father and communed in continual prayer with His Father the Gardener.

There are four conditions of bearing fruit addressed here. What happens to the branch that bears no fruit? It is broken off; thrown away; withers; gathered; thrown into the fire; and, burned. The other three conditions all bear fruit. It is not hard to see that if you do not abide or remain in the vine, you end up in the burning fire.

The other three connections to Christ are bearing fruit; being even more fruitful; and, bearing much fruit. How do we progress through the stages? Primarily, by staying connected to Jesus, the true vine. While we abide in Him, the Father, who is the gardener, will prune us. Interestingly, immediately after that, Jesus says, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." The Greek word for prune is the same for clean.

Jesus intertwines abiding with Him, abiding in His words, and abiding in His love. Each one enhances the others. Jesus also connects cleaning, obedience, and love. Surely you can see how abiding in Christ leads to righteousness.

We know that pruning is highly beneficial in orchards and other agricultural applications. If you are like me, you may be reluctant to sign up for pruning. At the same time, I know there are things that need to be cut out and cut away to make room for healthy godly growth.

Illustration from Saturday's grounds clean-up.

- Delayed pruning
- It is continuous

Now, let us examine the fruit we are to produce.

Jesus also addressed fruit in Matthew 7:16–20 (NIV84)

¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.²⁰ **Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.**

[Pr 11:30](#) The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise. (speaks to witnessing)

Philippians 1:9–11 (NIV84)

⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,¹¹ filled with **the fruit of righteousness** that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV84) The Fruit of the Spirit

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³

gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Thus by their fruit you will recognize them.

Matthew 3:8–11 (NIV84)

⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

[Pr 12:14](#) From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him. (You will reap as you sow the harvest of your speech.)

We have good fruit. We have the fruit of righteousness. We have fruit from repentance. We have the fruit of our lips. And, [Heb 13:15](#) Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. (worship is fruit)

Ellen White “served in ministry for 70 years, and delivered at least 10,000 sermons and public addresses on three continents.” In her sermon, “I Am the True Vine,” she preached:

“What is the “much fruit” that we must bear? It is fruit of a heavenly nature, the result of lives sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God. When we abide in Christ, and Christ abides in us, we shall be men and women of prayer, of truth, men and women who carry themselves circumspectly before God and before the world. Daily we shall draw from Christ the strength we need to work the works of God. This is what the world needs—a manifestation of the power of truth in Christian characters.

What we need is faith in the Word of God, and with true faith we shall have the living witness that our ways please God. Of what worth is religion to us if when we approach God we cannot have the evidence in ourselves that He hears and answers prayer?”

We should be true branches connected to the true vine. How do we remain true? By abiding in the true vine. The sap feeds, nourishes, and strengthens. This sap is the love of God the Father and God the Son. If this is the source of your sustenance, you will produce fruit pleasing to the

Lord. You will bear much fruit and thereby, bring glory to your God and witness to Jesus.

If you are connected to the love of God, it is not hard to see the joy that should come forth. Jesus says, His joy will complete our joy. Often the joy of this world is transitory, and it seems to slip through our fingers with the slightest jostling.

What a friend we have in Jesus,

all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.

Jesus tells us, **“When we bear fruit that will last,
Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in
my name.**

CONCLUSION:

Preacher, Jabez Burns, proclaimed, “From this vineyard Jehovah expects an adequate return of fruit.

The purpose of planting a vineyard is to obtain fruit. The [gardener] expects this, reasonably looks for it; and looks for it in the proportion to the

means expended, and the favorable situation the vineyard occupies.

Thus God expects a return of fruit from His church. He blesses them that they may be manifest blessings. He enlightens that they may shine, etc. He expects from them a return of *heart fruit*—holy actions, desires, tempers, thoughts, etc.; *life fruit*—a constant regard to Himself, by reverence, fear, grateful acknowledgments, supreme love, etc.

And toward man, equity, truth, benevolence, and mercy. Over ourselves, vigilance, self-government, self-denial, etc. But, from all, in proportion to their privileges and blessings. This fruit honors and pleases God; and is the best evidences that we can have, of our regeneration and acceptance with God.”

Reflection Questions from Praying with Fire

1. In what way is your life becoming more narrowed to God’s ways? In what ways are you still trying to find fulfillment in the world?
2. Excitement and results can be addictive. How can you guard your life in these areas? What do you need to leave behind, so you can move forward with God?

3. What time robbers, things that distract you from God and His will, are present in your life? What will you do about them? Explain why a good idea may not necessarily be God's will.

4. Explain why an idea that makes no sense may be God's will.

5. What times of pruning, if any, have you experienced? In what ways did those times follow the general steps listed in the [introduction]?

My friends, Jesus said, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." Much fruit, much fruit glorifies our heavenly Father. Will you honor Him? Remain in the true vine, abide in Christ. Remain, in His word; abide in the way, the truth, and the life. Remain in the love of the Father and the Son; abide in that love. Love one another.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.

Scriptural Prayer for Revival

Persistent Father, remind me that while your prophets and Apostles were doing Your will, You pruned them. Let me understand pruning comes even as I am being obedient to Your will and calling.

I praise You for Your mighty works and for reaching out to the ignored and downtrodden. I pray that You will burden me to be an intentional witness to all people (Acts 8:5). Father, give me the words to say that will capture the attention of lost people. Move even with miracles, if You so choose (v. 6).

I pray You will give me the unction of Your Spirit to witness, to face those who are helpless and hopeless by the world's standards, even those who are possessed by this world and evil spirits. Let physical and spiritual healing and deliverance take place for Your glory (v. 7). As I share with others, let my life show Your glory and joy. Show me how to build relationships, so I can share (v. 8).

Keep me sensitive to sin and aware and discerning of false teaching and teachers. By Your Holy Spirit, allow me the boldness to challenge them in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ (v. 20). Let counterfeit conversions be exposed for what they are. Move with strong conviction upon individuals who profess to know You, but who live according to the flesh and the desires of this world (vv. 9, 21).

Pour out Your Spirit and move mightily, bringing forth repentance (vv. 12, 17). Father, teach me to understand Your pruning—how You prune even

good fruit, so that eternal fruit may come forth (v. 26). Enable me to be sensitive to Your leading, even when You lead me away from the great outpourings, to go to desert places.

Enable me to understand the value of one. Through one, entire families may become open to the gospel and cities and countries may be open to the gospel (vv. 26–27). Prune my life until I bear fruit only for You.

Thank You, Father. You are the one who cuts me back. Thank you that Jesus chose me. Thank you that Jesus calls me friend and laid down His life for me. Thank you for Jesus' love and your love. Empower me to love as Jesus has loved. Oh, Father, send revival to me and to Your people. Be exalted in us and among us.

In Jesus' name, amen.