

To Be A Friend Of Jesus

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[0 : 00] the weeping pastor. Gee whiz. Let him flow more. Powerful song.

There's a lot of people in here. Indeed the power of his love. Alright, as you know, Pastor Bill had surgery.

We're not as young as we used to be. Takes a little bit longer to recover from things. So, I got tapped in the privilege and honor to be able to deliver a message today.

Not the message that he prepares because nobody can do it better than Bill. And how the Lord's speaking to him through the book of Luke. So, he gave me a choice.

He said either prepare a sermon or we could have an open discussion and just open it up to everybody and talk about whatever. Or we could have a more prayer and share time and this time break into groups and groups of three or four and just huddle together and pray for one another.

[1 : 16] And so that's what we're going to do. And I'm just kidding. As fear just grips your heart at this time.

Oh no, prayer in groups. That's scary. I hear you. First up, those that are prayer warriors and it's easy for them.

Right, James? Amen. Let's do it, right? No, today we are going to be looking in the Gospel of John. It'll be chapter 15 and we will be looking at the verses 1 through 17.

So, if you're able, well, first of all, turn to that. Oh, I gotta get this other Bible. Because my Bible is a NSAB and since most people have their ESVs, we'll be reading from that.

That's what's going to be up on the screen. But I use the, as they say, the inspired version. So, I don't know which one you guys use. So, no. I like to look at different versions and see what the different words are used.

[2 : 28] But anyway, we've, so John 15, 1 through 17, page 901 in your Pew Bible. So, bear with me as I read through that.

It's a very small print that I see. And I am not reading in the format that I'm used to in my Bible.

So, it's going to be a little bit harder for me. But we'll do it, right? So, if you're able, please stand. For the reading of God's Word. John 15, starting in verse 1.

Jesus says, these are Jesus' words. It's the first of the I am statements. I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

every branch in me. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes. That it may be more fruitful or bear more fruit.

[3 : 36] Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you. as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he is, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers and the branches are gathered that are gathered are thrown into the fire and burned.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this, my Father is glorified. Oops, weren't too many pages.

Sorry. Too, too many pages. Sorry. Had to turn the page. Man, I'm not good at this part. So, back here, let's see.

[4 : 45] By this, my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

these things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

[5 : 44] You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide! so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give it to you.

These things I command you so that you will love one another. So reads his word. Father, we do thank you for those words.

We thank you that we are able to study it here in a free country openly and as we do study your word today we just ask Holy Spirit that you would open our minds and eyes and hearts that we can just take in what Jesus you are saying to his disciples to your disciples and so we just look forward to what you have for us today may we just internalize it in Jesus name we pray Amen.

Please be seated. So I've titled the message Fruit Bearers ask you a question are you a disciple of Jesus?

And then another question did he choose you or did you choose him? and how you answer that question is important because it reflects how you're going to live out your Christian walk.

[7 : 30] If you chose Jesus then we have the potential to because we chose that we start making up maybe we start choosing how we're going to follow Jesus we start dancing around things because it's our choice and that's you know we get to choose and I'm going to decide how I'm going to follow him I'm going to today I feel like it tomorrow I don't I'm in this situation I want to listen to him eh maybe not I don't know so it's can lead to danger by you choosing you may want to lay down some ground rules about following him and they get to change based on whatever circumstances you're in when times get rough you may want to abandon any further walk because the road is too difficult however if Jesus chose you then guess what he gets to make the rules and we follow those rules and commands what he chose what he set aside appointed handpicked us to be and to do so he chose us that's what's going on let's look at verse 16 he gives us the answer you did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain there's our answer who chose did you choose him or did you did you choose him or did he choose you here's a funny part in 1st

Corinthians we're told that well first of all because sometimes we can think that God chose me Jesus chose me to be his disciples because I've got so much to offer him I'm going to be faithful I'm you know I am able to do this and this I have the intellect I have the ability to speak I have influence of friends and all these different reasons that's why he chose me well guess what you're not all that and a bag of chips so here's another thought 1st Corinthians 1 27 says that Jesus chose the foolish things to confound the wise so if he's chosen you guess what you are guess what I am I'm a foolish thing and I will readily admit it I know nothing and I need his help so if you think you're all that he chose you but he chose you because you're one of the foolish things so that he could confound the wise the people who think they are smart we have been chosen as his disciples for why to be fruit bearers see now we do he chose us but we do have a choice if we're going to follow him that is our choice he gave it to the disciples follow me and they did they had a choice they didn't have to just like we do every day when we wake up we choose if we're going to follow him today if we're going to listen to him today are we going to walk with him today it's a choice every time you made a choice when you came to church this morning you made that choice you said

I'm going to go to church he's telling me to go he's encouraged me I'm going to do it or I'm going to go because this is where I get to see my brothers and sisters again we get to raise up our voices to the Lord in song and worship him I'm going so we have a choice of what we're going to do now that he's chosen us so if we are to be fruit bearers what's the fruit good question in this gospel of John in this part of John fruit has a very broad meaning and could mean could mean the making of new disciples that's the fruit or and or it could mean love for people that could be the fruit your love for people well we're going to concentrate on that latter meaning the love for people and I base that on verse nine where it says just as the father has loved me

I also love you abide! in my love! so I'm basing it off of that also when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was what did he answer he said you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind and then he said in the second command is like it you shall love your neighbor as yourself and then he went on to say that on these two commandments depends the whole law and the prophets love the love God to love God and to love people see you love God vertically you love people horizontally picture the cross that's what it's all about

Jesus demonstrated that practically as we know he loved God by being obedient even to death on a cross and he loved people sacrificially dying for our sins and on love hangs all the laws and the prophets we are to love God and be obedient even to death the death in this case of our sin of self centered ness love and we do that by sacrificially loving others that's a big statement I even have it highlighted everything in there Galatians 5 22 we all know it it tells us where the fruit of love comes from the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness and gentleness self control the fruit you guys know this the fruit of the spirit is is is love singular it doesn't say the fruits of the spirit are these things it says the fruit is love all the other words that are there the joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control those are adjectives those are descriptive words understand the fruit of the spirit is one thing love is one thing but it's manifold expressed out there it is a picture of what love should be love should be full of joy full of peace full of kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self control i know it's elementary what i'm what i'm saying here but understand this here's another part fruit is not produced for the sake of the branch jesus said he is the vine we are the branches did you know that the branches don't produce fruit for themselves think about that a branch doesn't produce fruit for itself yet we somehow get this idea that i want love and joy and peace in these things in my life and so that i can be satisfied well that's wrong fruit is always produced for others but christians are on a pursuit to produce fruit fruit for their own satisfaction to tell god that you want to produce fruit so you can enjoy it and be happy and full of joy if you're doing that you're missing the point completely fruit again is not produced for the branch but ultimately for the vine dresser the husbandry the owner of the vineyard to do as he sees fit and as he pleases in genesis 4 or in genesis 49 22

[17 : 41] where it speaks of joseph the man of god this is what it has to say joseph is a fruitful bough planted by the well his branches run over the wall his branches full of fruit they overflow where do they overflow they overflow into the neighbor's yard it overhangs the sidewalk where someone who walks by can reach up and pick the fruit and be satisfied and be blessed that's the picture it overflows its boundaries not keeping it to itself but to let it overflow from us and to those around us so that they can what pick on us I don't like that one ouch pick on us ooch in

John 15 1 back in our text Jesus tells us something about himself and the father he says I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser Jesus is the vine all this is going somewhere this will all tie together and the father is the husbandman the vine keeper the gardener and you are the garden and we're going to go some place here real quick just to add some more picture to this what I'm trying to explain so you are a garden and Solomon describes speaks about a garden in the song of Solomon you exist to bring forth fruit Jesus said we are to bring forth fruit more fruit much fruit and why are we to do it for the glory of the vine dresser in the book of Solomon in chapters 4 10 through 5 1 so there's just a little section there that talks about the garden we do have a garden story and it's a fruit picture the king in this story the king who is a picture of

Jesus is describing his bride and liking her unto a garden well as we know we are the bride of Christ and this is a picture of you and me so I'm going to turn there you can listen or you can turn there song of Solomon 4 write it down look up it later look it up later there we go so starting in verse 10 how beautiful is your love my friend my bride how much better is your love than wine and the fragrance of your oils than all kinds of spices your lips my bride drip honey honey and milk are under your tongue and the fragrance of your garden of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon a garden a garden locked is my friend my bride a rock garden locked a spring sealed up your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits henna with nard and plants nard and saffron calamus and cinnamon with all the trees of frankincense myrrh and aloes along with all the finest spices you are a garden spring a well of fresh water and streams flowing from Lebanon awake oh north wind and come wind of the south make my garden breathe out fragrance let its spices be wafted abroad and then she answers the bride answers may my beloved come into his garden and eat its choices fruits now again remember the king is Jesus we are the bride who he speaks of and he's just saying how much he just you know really loves his bride and gives all these

descriptions and everything and he loves what's in the garden and these fruits and these fragrances and stuff and so what does he do he calls for the north wind and the south wind to blow now what happens when a wind blows through an area that has great smells what

I don't have I don't live out here in Palmer Lake but a couple weeks ago there were purple plants everywhere purple flowers everywhere around here it's crazy and man when you walked by it was like that smells nice have you ever been open up your windows or open up your door at home or something and you open up the back door and all stuff what is that smell I'm smelling barbecue phew woohoo yay or man it's early in the morning you smell somebody cooking bacon and eggs and you're going man that smells good it's such a beautiful aroma that comes out that's what the king is doing here he's letting the north and south winds blow so that the fragrance of his bride is going out there it's so that other people can smell it and they get enticed by it they're going ooh what is that that is nice well that's you and me if our fruit is good fruit right get the picture you guys can see it it's an enticing smell and guess what love is a sacrifice remember the fruit is love and loving is a sacrifice and a sacrifice is a sweet aroma to God what do I mean by that love is a sacrifice to love somebody that's sacrificial because in order to love what do we have to love others what do we have to do almost all the time we have to put ourselves away we have to die to ourselves to our sin of selfishness that's why love is a sacrifice and that sacrifice of sacrificing loving is a sweet aroma to God and it's a sweet aroma to those around when they recognize what's going on next page so that's what God is doing but in verse five of Song of Solomon we have the bride's response

[24 : 53] I'm sorry we already said the response my beloved come into his garden and eat your choice fruit so this is so now the king says okie dokie I'll come in here I come and so he said verse five I have come into my garden chapter five verse one I have come into my garden my friend my bride I have gathered my myrrh along with my balsam I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey I have drunk my wine and my milk but all of a sudden he said something so he came in and he ate of this he enjoyed the fruit that was there but then he does something something that hmm we can see how you would like it and he says eat friends drink and imbibe deeply what's he done he's invited others in to the garden to your garden wait a minute

I don't like that part no this was for you God I'm doing this for you I'm trying to bear fruit for you what's he do he invites others they don't deserve it see it wasn't produced for you but for his glory and pleasure to do as he sees fit and pleases he invites others to partake and that means that it's going to get messy they're going to be picking on you they're going to be stepping on you they're going to be taking from you taking advantage of you enjoying the fruit meant for the vine dresser these people don't deserve it they're just going to use me guess what god reigns on the just and the unjust it's his choice he decides who gets to pick that fruit and be partakers of that fruit of love that you are producing actually you're not producing it we'll figure that out here later how does it get there so you know that

I got little extra notes in here go off script that sometimes when you're tired you're exhausted and the lord tells you go talk to somebody no lord it's my day off I don't really want to it's I'm tired it was a long week I had this going on that going on no I don't want to talk to him all right I'll go die to myself die my selfishness I'll do what you say because you're the master you're the king you're my lord I'll go do it I'll be it grudgingly and we're not supposed to do it grudgingly but I'll go talk and then we go and we talk to somebody however the lord has us talk to them and it's a blessing to them because we're showing them love by taking the time giving them a bite of that fruit to partake in that fruit that we are told to bear we are to bear fruit another thing another example work ethics no I'm not going to do that it's not my job or this place just uses me anyway I got passed up for that job I'm not going to train the person that I got passed up for and that other person got hired now I got to train them no you'll do it you're going to be obedient yeah oh man alright here's another one dying to self I don't mean to put any guilt trips on people that's not my motive at all this is between you and God and that is volunteering to help we got things that are in the front of our pews here that tell us you know you want to volunteer to help these are areas that we could use you in you know and so you pray about it and you look and you say am I going to be selfish and not help or am I going to help I'll leave it at that that's between you and God we are to be fruit bearers not for our satisfaction but so others can be brought into our garden and benefit from the fruit that he has produced in you and why do we do this why because it glorifies God verse 8 tells us so my father is glorified by this that you bear much fruit you want to glorify God that's how you do it bear fruit and

then let him use you the way he wants to be obedient be a lover of God and love others it all hangs on that get your eyes off yourself get them off your problems and your needs your hurts your tears your situation you know what if you want to become miserable just become self focused that's how you'll become miserable the key to life to really living is to say

[31 : 12] I want to be fruit bearing for others and we say how can I help how can I satisfy refresh others today that's what Jesus would want us to do and he wants us to be alright so if our walk is about fruit bearing and I want to be a fruit bearer how do I do it what's the secret to fruit bearing look with me John 15 verses 4 and 5 Jesus says abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine neither can you unless you abide in me I am the vine you are the branches whoever abides in me and

I in him he it is that bears much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing so the key to fruit bearing is abiding abiding is hanging in there clinging to the Lord and also just being at rest with the Lord again get the picture in your mind about a branch in the vine picture that in your mind and how that would look and that's how it's supposed to look for us in our relationship with Jesus you know at night I was trying to think of a an example here at night when you take your cell phone and you make your cell phone abide with your charger right and that's how it gets recharged it gets energized if you had it plugged in all the time you wouldn't need to just simply plug it in at night but we are able to take it off and the charger or we need to don't need anyway this doesn't exactly work but it's getting there anyway that you take it and you use it during the day and as it's in the world being used it's getting depleted it's energy sources running down and then we go back in and we plug it back in at night well unfortunately our

Christian walk more represents how we use our cell phones than how we are to remain plugged in abiding in Jesus he is our life our love source we're able to bring him along with us obviously but we don't we don't bring that power source with us throughout the day a lot of times we just leave it there it's in the bedroom it's on the counter that's where it's at that's where I left it we unplug from him during the day or sometimes for a week sometimes longer and only when we're low on power or struggling do we start to seek him again do we try to plug back into him and abide in him again Jesus goes on to say that if you chop it off remove a branch from the vine it won't produce fruit it will wither and die it's very simple to produce fruit you stay connected to the vine you stay tapped in to him and

Jesus would say I'm gonna put words in his mouth I don't know I hate that that's very dangerous if you would just enjoy me the fruit will come supernaturally naturally I am the source of nutrients and life abide in my love again that is the sap the life source I like more to say instead of saying it's a life source it's the love source in context of what we're reading that nutrients are transferred to the branch an apple tree will in due season produce fruit it doesn't have to make extra efforts it just hangs in there waiting for the proper time it cannot produce fruit on its own it cannot will it to happen you'll never see a peach tree struggling to produce fruit it's not going to sit there and come on fruit you can do it

I really this fruit is going to come out and there it is and no he has no control and yet we try to do that on our own we try to produce fruit on our own in our own efforts our strength instead of relaxing and just simply hanging in there with the Lord waiting for the proper season God's part is to produce the fruit and our part is to abide in him stay connected how do you know if you're staying connected if you are abiding how do you know well verse two and three tells us every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away and every branch that bears fruit he prunes it so that it may bear more fruit what that's telling us at least how

[37 : 18] I'm reading it in this context is that he brings correction sometimes we need correction and so he prunes us it's not a joyful thing if you're a branch ouch but it's necessary and we should welcome it because the result of that is that we even bear much more fruit so that's one way you know that you're abiding is if the father brings correction to you in your life instead of just letting you wild and go your own way and stuff another way is being washed verse three you are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you so there's also that idea and this I read this I don't know how true it was I wasn't able to verify it yet but the vineyards back then that they weren't up on how they are now on the crawling on the vines or whatever however it looks it didn't look like that back then that's not how they did so the branches would get heavy with the fruit and they would lay on the ground and so they instead of letting it just lay there and letting the fruit rot is they would come by the vine dresser would come by and he would lift it up and he would clean the mud and the

dirt off of the fruit so that it would be healthy good fruit clean fruit and so that's the idea here in verse 3 you are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you we live in the world we drag sometimes into the world and we're dragging the mud and we're laying down in it and the mud of the world and just the luckiness of it but Jesus comes by and he lifts us up and he cleans us with the water of the word and so that's again a picture that we're supposed to have of that that's how you know you're also abiding if that is happening with you if he comes along and he refreshes you and cleans you up with his word and then also you know you're abiding this is may seem strange to some people you know you're abiding verse seven if your prayers are being answered if you abide in me and my words abide in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you so the question would be are your prayers being answered it's an interesting question if they are being answered it means you are in harmony with the heart of god because you are in the word you are abiding with Jesus Jesus said if my words abide in you you will be asking for what things that are in harmony with god by abiding in his word you will understand his heart his nature his character and you will ask according to that knowledge of him and your prayers will be answered again something to think about this is what Jesus says I'm not saying it this is what Jesus says and what does it mean ponder think about it okay so if you feel like the lord is not answering your prayers maybe it's the way you're asking or what you're asking is it in harmony with him and that is like Jesus did at the garden of Gethsemane he praying for the cup to pass before him but he ultimately surrenders to the lord to the father and says but not my will but your will be done that to me is huge key when we're praying we're asking we're saying lord this is what I want this is what I desire this is how I think it should turn out but not my will but your will be done now you think he's going to answer that prayer he's going to answer it and then are you willing to accept his will again something to think about so if our walk is about fruit bearing and the secret to fruit bearing is abiding how do we abide verse 10 tells us if you keep my commandments you will abide in my love just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love so what is that telling us if we keep his commandments how do you abide in him by obeying so abide in the other way was abiding staying connected to him abiding in his love here means obeying you see the difference you're following along how it just changed over just a little bit just do what the lord is telling you to do at any given moment just obey simple to say obey his commandment to love god and one another it's very simple we just bring it down to the simplicity of it making all this so complicated here's a sad story what a fool King Saul was that day Saul you're back from slaying the Amalekites yeah said Saul to Samuel I did exactly what you told me you gave me the word of the Lord to slay the Amalekites that's what we did Samuel said then what is this I hear and who is this guy oh well this guy is Agag the king of the Amalekites why didn't you kill him the people brought him back as a trophy along with the best sheep and oxen so we could sacrifice here to the Lord why did you not obey the word of the Lord didn't he tell you to kill every Amalekite and every sheep and oxen don't you know Saul it's better to obey than to sacrifice we're told that disobedience and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft if you are not obeying God then you might as well be in an occult sobering because he says disobedience and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft I didn't say Samuel gave word that day to Saul that the kingdom was lost to him you remember the story Saul was up on Mount Gilboa he was wounded from battle and a young man comes to him and does him in he thrusts his sword into Saul and kills him before he died Saul asked who are you I am an Amalekite he didn't kill all the Amalekites like he was told to do the implication is that what you didn't kill of the flesh will kill you down the road what you don't deal with in obedience will come back and it will bite you God says don't watch that program don't go there on the internet don't complain about that issue don't hang out with those people don't laugh at those jokes don't gossip about that person on and on it can go whatever is happening if God says not to or to do we obey it is the key to abiding and again we're to do it without complaining if our walk is about fruit bearing and the key to fruit bearing is abiding and the key to abiding is obeying what is the key to obeying you see how this is going on here verse 23 oh no we have to go back to we didn't read this part chapter 4 verse 23 [46 : 39] I'll read it to you so we're looking for the key to obeying if anyone loves me he will keep my word or my commands and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him so the key to is love God now to you who love God obedience is no issue obviously Saul didn't love the Lord and that's why he found it difficult to obey he did what he thought was best he did in situations he took it upon himself to do as as they say did what was right in his own eyes how often do we do that we do things that we feel are right in our own eyes so we're not showing that we

love God if our walk is about we're just about done we're going to be pushing this through very quickly the last few steps if our walk is about fruit bearing and the key to fruit bearing is abiding and the key to abiding is obeying and what is the key to love verse 14 and 15 you are my friends if you do what

I command you no longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends for all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you so the key to loving God is knowing God very simple now can we apply it the more you know about the Lord the more you'll be impressed with him and the more you'll fall deeply in love with him and then how do you know him you guys know you know the answer how do you know him you know spend time with him spend time in his word spend time talking with him that's how you'll know that's what I've got father we thank you for your word again

I just ask that as we were listening that we only heard your words what you wanted us to hear to take away and that we as we heard these things that would penetrate our heart and that we would be doers of your word that we would obey your word and ultimately that we would be fruit bearers for your glory that is what we desire so just help us as we ponder this and as you bring it to this passage as we go through this week and we just think about it that you just start to change our heart change our thoughts and we just thank you for loving us and we say this in Jesus our Savior's name Amen Amen