

Working Bearing Fruit

John 15:1-8

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about a man with roped blind friends, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, #7385.
- B. What is the fruit of the Christian?
 - 1. Individuals want to do several things with this text.
 - a. Some want to identify this fruit as the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5), yet that fruit is the fruit the Spirit produces in our lives.
 - b. Some want to talk about denominational churches being the branches; the good they do is the fruit.
 - 2. The fruit here seems to be souls--the fruit of a Christian is another Christian.
 - a. Paul wanted to preach in Rome so that he might have some fruit there (Rm 1:13).
 - b. Epaphroditus is the firstfruits of Christ in Achaia (Rm 16:5).
 - c. We were won to Christ in order that we might bear fruit for God (Rm 7:4).
- C. Let us examine what God teaches about bearing fruit:

THE WORK OF CHRIST, v 1

- A. Christ is the true vine.
 - 1. This juxtaposes him to those who are not the true vine.
 - a. The Israelites often thought of themselves as a vine.
 - 1) A great golden vine decorated the Temple Porch.
 - 2) The coinage minted during the Maccabean revolt had the symbol of a vine.
 - b. The OT spoke of the Israelites as a vine.
 - 1) Ps 80:8.
 - 2) Jer 2:21.
 - 3) Each time the OT spoke of Israel as a vine, the writers spoke of how miserably Israel had failed in its purpose.
 - c. Jesus isn't an imitation vine--he's the real thing.
 - 2. As the true vine, Jesus gives life to the branches.
 - a. A branch cannot bear fruit of itself; therefore, the disciples must remain in Jesus.
 - b. The branch by itself can do nothing; it needs the vine.
 - c. We as Christians can do nothing by ourselves; we need Jesus.
- B. Jesus cleanses his disciples through the word (v 3).
 - 1. "Cleansed" here means "ready to bear fruit."
 - 2. The preparation the apostles needed to bear fruit was their hearing Jesus' message.
 - 3. God's Word purifies us.
 - a. A young man can cleanse his way by heeding God's Word (Ps 119:9).
 - b. The word sanctifies us (Jn 17:17).
- C. Are you in the vine, clean, & ready to bear fruit?

THE WORK OF THE FATHER, vv 1-2

- A. The Father is the vinedresser.
 - 1. He isn't merely someone who cares for the vines.

2. He is the owner of the vineyard.
- B. The branches which bear no fruit he takes away.
 1. Vine dressers do two things to keep the vine growing well.
 - a. In the winter, they cut off the dry & withered branches.
 - b. In the spring, they remove the rank & useless growth from the branches.
 - c. Here, the Father is depicted as pruning & cutting something which, something which will help the vine to grow.
 2. This shows that Christians can fall away--The Father actually removes growth which had been a part of the vine.
- C. The branch that yields fruit the Father prunes.
 1. This helps the branch continue growing--these branches keep on bearing more fruit.
 2. This is like the discipline spoken of elsewhere.
 - a. God allows us to be disciplined so that we can grow in the faith (Heb 12:5-11).
 - b. As we endure difficulties, we are better able to bear fruit.
- D. Has the Father taken you away or is he pruning you for more work?

THE WORK OF THE DISCIPLES, vv 3-8

- A. They must bear fruit.
 1. Those branches which bear no fruit are taken away.
 2. The Lord expects Christians to bear fruit.
 3. Christians should expect themselves to win souls.
 - a. George Whitefield said, "O Lord, give me souls, or take my soul."
 - b. Henry Martyn, a missionary to India, said, "Here let me burn out for God."
 - c. Mrs. Comstock, a missionary in India, prayed when she sent her children home, "Lord Jesus, I do this for thee."
- B. They must be clean.
 1. Although the word Jesus spoke cleanses them, the disciples must be clean.
 2. God cannot use impure lives to spread his Word.
- C. They must remain in Christ.
 1. Just as a branch can't bear fruit by itself, neither can a Christian bear fruit by himself.
 2. Really bearing fruit is a joint venture with God--God works through us.
 3. Abiding in Christ refers to having fellowship with him.
 - a. Fellowship with Christ means we live the way he lived (1 Jn 2:6).
 - b. Do you have union with Christ?
- D. The one who abides in Christ bears much fruit.
 1. One cannot be in Christ & not bearing fruit--it just doesn't work that way.
 2. Jesus outlines the disciples' mission.
 - a. Many will believe in him through the word (Jn 17:20).
 - b. He sends his apostles as his Father sent him (Jn 20:21).
 3. The one in Christ doesn't just bear some fruit here & there; he bears much fruit.
 4. Apart from Jesus we can do nothing.
 - a. We cannot win souls unless we are in union with him.
 - b. Martin Luther prayed, "Do Thou, my God, do Thou, God, stand by me against all the world's wisdom and reason. O do it! Thou must do it. Stand by me. Thou True, Eternal God!"
 5. The one who doesn't abide in Christ is thrown out as a branch.
 - a. Branches on a vine that bear no fruit are useless--Branches in Christ that bear no fruit are useless.
 - b. Those branches that bear no fruit are burned--those in Christ who bear no fruit are burned.

CONCLUSION

- A. The Father is glorified by our bearing fruit (Jn 15:8).
- B. In that way we will prove to be Jesus' disciples.
- C. Are you a true disciple?