



## I. OUR DESPERATE NEED TO BEAR FRUIT

### A. John 15:1-11

- i. *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (John 15:8)*
- ii. The proof of us being disciples is the bearing of fruit. If we are not bearing fruit, we have not proven to be true disciples of Jesus.
- iii. *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ (Matthew 7:21-23)*
- iv. The fear of the Lord should come upon us knowing that we can do all the works of the ministry and have Him say on that day that he never even knew us!
- v. There is no instance in the Bible of “asking Jesus into your heart” to get saved. The message is “repent of your sin, be baptized, take up your cross, lay everything down, die to yourself and follow Jesus.” It is by grace through faith, in the laying down of our lives and abiding in Jesus that we inherit eternal life.

### B. Bearing fruit means abiding in Jesus.

- i. *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. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, 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. (John 15:5-7)*
- ii. The only way we can bear fruit is to abide in Jesus. Apart from Him we can do nothing!
- iii. If there is any area of your life that does not bear fruit, that branch will wither. It will be gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned.

### C. Gifts of the Spirit manifest the power of God and are necessary tools to carry out the works of the Kingdom, but if they are not flowing through a vessel that is overflowing with the fruit of the Spirit there will be great disaster, moral failure, wounding and other messes that can set back the works of the Kingdom.

- i. We must earnestly desire the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:1), but we must desperately plead for the fruit of the Spirit, and strive to abide in the Vine!

## II. FRUIT BY FIRE

### A. When Jesus answers our prayer to bear fruit, and to receive the fruit of the Spirit, his answer often comes in the form of trial, testing and fire.

- i. *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)*
- ii. The fruit of the Spirit can be equated to character. To achieve Godly character, we must begin with suffering, and *rejoicing* in our sufferings. If we rejoice in them and continue to abide in Jesus (enduring), that endurance will produce character, which produces hope that does not put us to shame.



- B. The key to rejoicing in our sufferings is faith.
- i. *“...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* (Romans 10:17)
  - ii. If we know God’s Word, and we know the truth which says He knows what He’s doing and works *all* things together for our good (Romans 8:28), then we can believe in faith that these sufferings are temporary and serve a much greater purpose, allowing us to rejoice in the midst of them.
    1. *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
  - iii. Faith is achieved by reading the word, believing what we read, and acting in accordance with that truth.
    1. God did not carefully write every word of Scripture and give it to us so that we could read it in unbelief or let it collect dust on our shelves.
    2. Jesus would look people in the eye and rebuke them for their little faith. He would also marvel at those with great faith and they would see done what they asked of Him!
- C. Jesus walked through the fire of suffering and endurance in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- i. He first asked the Father to take the cup from him that the suffering might pass, if he was willing. This is often our first response to suffering, trial and hardship when we encounter it.
  - ii. Jesus then says, “Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” (Matt. 22:42) He chooses to endure the suffering. What happens next is remarkable: an angel from heaven appeared to him, and strengthened him. After being strengthened, in agony, he prayed even more earnestly than before. It was a God-given strength to endure the suffering, which allowed him to press into His Father even more.
- D. *Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.* (Matthew 16:24-25)
- i. God’s ways are not man’s ways – it is in the laying down and the dying and the burning up that we find life and fruit.
  - ii. When you are being taken through the fire, do NOT avoid it, complain about it or not notice it. Ask for more, because the Lord is doing a good work in you and will be faithful to complete it.
- E. *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.* (Philippians 3:7-11 ESV)
- i. We identify with Christ in his death and share in his sufferings.



1. John came with a baptism in water of repentance, in which we identify with Christ's death. But he said there is one coming greater than he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- F. *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."* Peter said to him, *"Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."* Jesus said, *"I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."* (Matthew 22:31-34)
  - i. Jesus could have easily said, "Simon, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat. And I have told him no." But instead of removing the suffering and the trial, Jesus prays for him to be strengthened that his faith may not fail and he would endure it!
  - ii. Endurance produces character. As we endure suffering, it produces in us character to walk in purity with the Holy Spirit, to operate in the gifts at a greater level, and to strengthen others with our newly developed character. Jesus told Peter to strengthen his brothers when he has returned again.

### III. RESURRECTION POWER

- A. *It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.* (Romans 4:24-25)
  - i. Jesus was delivered up (crucified) for our trespasses (everlasting punishment), sparing us from the eternal wrath of hell. It was His work on the cross that paid our debt.
    1. Jonathan Edwards, in his sermon 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' described it in this way: *"You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe and burn it asunder; and you have nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you have ever done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment."*
    2. It is this terrifying wrath that Jesus paid for on the cross!
  - ii. Though Christ was delivered up for our trespasses, he was *raised* for our justification.
    1. His work on the cross spared us of our everlasting punishment for sin, but it was his walking out of the grave that "declared us righteous" and brought us back into right relationship with the Father.
- B. God is restoring the preaching of the resurrection to the Church today.
  - i. In the book of Acts, the disciples spoke more of the resurrection than they did of the cross.
- C. We must not underestimate the power of the resurrection! We find payment for our sins in the cross of Christ, but true life to the fullest in a God who is alive forevermore!
  - i. Our job is to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons and say as we go, "the Kingdom of heaven is at hand"! We are to establish the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven and destroy the works of the evil one! A dead person can't do any of that!
  - ii. Our death with Christ and the resurrection empower us to live holy lives.



- iii. *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*
- Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:1-14 ESV)*
- iv. Grace is far more than God forgiving the sins we commit. True grace is being empowered by the Holy Spirit through the death and resurrection of Christ to actually live a holy life!
- D. The Lord is in a season of gathering up the withered branches, and the fire is being prepared to burn away all that does not bear fruit!
- i. *Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:10-12)*
- ii. *...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith... (Romans 12:1-2)*
1. There are things that are sin, but there are also things that may not be sin but are attached to us like a heavy ball and chain that slow us down in the race we are running.
- E. 8:34 "Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us....no, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."