



KEYS TO A FRUITFUL LIFE: ABIDE

If you have a pattern of having someone in your group share their *Story of Faith* (life before Jesus, encountering Jesus, life since/late with Jesus) and/or sharing *Evidences of God's grace*, begin with that, followed by a time of thankful prayer for Christ's work in the individual's life and/or the grace in your lives.

OPENING COMMENT

The Christian life apart from Jesus is no life at all. In the last of the great 'I am' sayings found in John's Gospel, "I am the true Vine" Jesus spells out for his disciples three significant principles for a fruitful life: Union with Jesus is the basis for truthfulness, the Father is continually pruning believers with the goal of making them more fruitful, the call of the disciples is to hold fast to the Vine..

What stood out to you from Sunday's text and sermon?

READ THE TEXT: John 15:1-8

¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. ²every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If 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. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you want to be remembered by your spouse, kids, family, friends? What do you want the Tag Line of your life to be? If you could write your Epitaph what would it say?
2. Professing Jesus is different than possessing Jesus. It is easy to say I follow Jesus - Profess Him. It is entirely another thing to actually follow Jesus - Posses Him. What is your relationship with Jesus? Professed or Possessed? How does your life demonstrate your answer to the previous question? Does it produce fruit in keeping with the Character of Christ?
3. What is involved in pruning? Read together *Psalm 119:67, 71, 107, James 1:24* Pruning is painful, it will either make you better or bitter. What is God's purpose in pruning?
4. Discuss the following quote by Dr. John Neufeld: "God uses the difficulties of life to break our attachment to the World, and strengthen our dependence on Him. The experience of suffering makes us focus on eternity in a way we never would have, had we not gone through it." Have you ever experienced a new perspective after a season of suffering?
5. Have you ever adopted the "Filling Station" perspective of faith? Come to fuel up at Church once per week and hope our tank gets filled? But we are called to "Abide in Him". What is your spiritual orientation? Is your life oriented to your relationship with Jesus?

CONCLUSION

This call to "bear fruit" could seem risky to some. Jesus imagines and promises a dynamic life for those who follow Him. Vines are pruned and cleansed. Branches that wither and die must be removed so the vine can bear new fruit. For the church this sets a course to a constantly changing community that is called to be on mission. All while abiding in a relationship of purpose and power.

SHARE & PRAY

- Share how you can pray for each other in light of what this text has impressed upon you. Take some time to discern how you might serve as individuals and as a group.
- We live in an age when we are easily susceptible to craft, create, and to following the Jesus of our own making. Pray that we will Abide in Jesus daily, staying close, staying connected to Him.
- Conclude by spending some time praying for one another, for the areas of growth and grace you are seeking, and the needs among you.

