

THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL

Text: John 15:1-11

In the last evening that Jesus would spend with his disciples before the cross, he began to disclose new information to them. He told them that the time was approaching for him to go away but that he would send them another Comforter. He then gave glimpses into what the work the Spirit would do in the world and in believers, even telling them that it was for their benefit that he go away. They couldn't possibly fathom how it would be more beneficial for them that he go away, but Jesus said the Comforter would not come unless he went away. We now know that Jesus ascended back to heaven 40 days after his resurrection and ten days later the Holy Ghost came in power on the day of Pentecost. Since that time born again believers receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of their conversion and he dwells with us forever.

Here's why it's more beneficial for us now than what it was for the disciples who walked with Christ on earth. During the Lord's earthly ministry, he was limited by locality! Meaning that even though he was the Son of God with all power, he was limited by only being able to be in place at one time. Now that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and communicates to us for Christ, he is not limited by locality. We can talk with Christ and he can talk with us anytime anywhere.

Then Jesus gave the disciples the message concerning the vine and the branches. The Lord was the best illustrative preacher ever. He said that he was the true vine(source) and that we are the branches(resource). The point of the message and the aim of our life is to produce fruit that glorifies the Father. Fruit in the Bible means demonstrating the attitudes and actions of a life transformed by faith in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit's influence. Jesus said his Father was glorified in us bearing much fruit. One of the definitions of "glorifying" is making the invisible seen. When you turn on a light switch and light comes on in a room, that light is the glory of electricity. When fruit is produced on a tree, that fruit is the visible expression of the root.

God is emphatic about us producing fruit because He is invisible to the world and the only way He can be seen is through us. God likes to be made known to a world of unbelievers. Jesus said that the only way for us to produce fruit was by abiding in him. That's not one of several ways or the best way, it's the only way. He said if we abide in him and he in us that we would bring forth much fruit. The source of a tree or vine's life is in the roots but the fruit is produced a long way from the roots on the end of the branches. The reason that the fruit is produced from the root is because of an invisible inner liquid called sap that flows from the root up to the branches. Sap is the reason that the leaves are green and the fruit grows. The sap is the connection between the root and the branches. The Holy Spirit is like the sap in that he is invisible and he is the connection between Jesus Christ and us. He also is producing in us the character of Jesus Christ and the love of God - **Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The point that Jesus was making here is that fruit is produced in our lives not by trying to be better people or external religious activity, but by simply maintaining a relational connection with him. The word “abide” means to dwell or live in. To abide in Christ means to have a healthy and loving relationship with him. This relationship must be maintained in order for it to produce fruit in our lives.

- **Communication** – The foundation to any solid relationship is constant and honest communication. Prayer is how we communicate to the Lord our hearts and our feelings. It's how we make requests and intercede for others. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** Pray without ceasing. **Luke 18:1** And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; *When marriages begin to fall apart it is due to the breakdown of communication, friendships dry up when people stop communicating and your relationship with Christ will suffer when you stop praying!*
- **Affection** – The fruit of good communication is affection. The more you know about someone you love, the more affection grows in your heart for that individual. The apostle Paul said that everything else in life was a waste except knowing Christ. The more we come to know Jesus Christ and experience him, the more we can say like Solomon in his song of songs, He is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys...He is the chiefest among ten thousand: yea He is altogether lovely, This is my beloved and this is my friend. His love is like no other and he is full of grace and truth. He is precious and there's not another like him!
- **Obedience** – It is when we grow in our relationship that our love grows for him who loved us first. That love is what the Lord said must be the driving force of our obedience, not fear or guilt. **John 14:23** Jesus answered and said unto him, *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* That means that our obedience to Christ is tied to our love for him and our obedience will be rewarded with more of God's presence. Our obedience will also open up a more fruitful prayer life - **John 15:7** *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

Then Jesus sums up this portion of his teaching by saying John 15:11 *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Joy is a deep, lasting state of gladness, delight, and contentment that comes from God..not worldly circumstances.* What he is saying at the close of this portion of his message is that fullness of joy is the measuring stick to where our relationship with him is. He has here given us the keys to having his joy in us. If we don't have joy or very little joy, it's a good indication that there's something wrong in our relationship somewhere.

He had this to say concerning those that don't abide in him - John 15:6 *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* *The most miserable people on the earth today are folk that are saved but have no fellowship with Christ because of disobedience or chasing things in the world.*