



ALL SAINTS
PRESBYTERIAN

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

"A Fruitful Life" | Rev. Jordan Griesbeck | May 2, 2021

John 15:1-11

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every 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. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 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. 5 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. 6 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. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 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. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Key Points and Discussion Questions from Tim's Sermon:

Introductory Exercise

Read the passage at left and reflect upon Jordan's opening illustration: our tradition of decorating Christmas trees. Why did Jordan use this illustration?

1. Discussion of point #1: the formation of a fruitful life.

- o What is the most repeated word in the text? How many times is it used? From what root word is it derived?
- o What two illustrations did Jordan use to exemplify the concept of "abiding"? (hint, think about sports medicine, and pets).
- o Is abiding essentially an active or passive activity? Discuss.
- o Read vs. 5. How much does the formation of a fruitful life depend on abiding in Jesus? (see v. 4-5)
- o In this metaphor of vines and branches, what two roles does the Godhead play? See vs. 4-5 and then vs. 1-2.
- o In consideration of God the Father's role, what type of vines in real life produce the best grapes? Can we expect pain in our personal lives from God as our Vinedresser"? How does this make you feel?
- o What sobering reality about our life in the Church does this indicate we can expect to hold true? Will all of our existing church relationships remain permanent? Consider also First John 2:18-19. How does this make you feel? Have you ever experienced this?

2. Discussion of point #2: The definition of a fruitful life.

- o Is Christian fruitfulness equivalent with productivity?
- o Read 1 John 2: 3-6. Consider also verse 10 at left. What are the two primary marks (fruits) of an abundant, fruitful life according to this passage?
- o Jordan noted that Henry Nowan experienced handicapped people as being fruitful. How do the two marks of fruitfulness show up very practically in the life of a handicapped person?
- o What must we as believers learn from the handicapped? (Read 2 Corinthians 12:9)
- o What would emulating a handicapped person look like in your life right now? Does this excite you or frighten you? Discuss.

3. Discussion of Point #3: The Purpose of Fruitful Life

- o Read vs 11 again. Why was there a parade for Sarah Smith in C.S. Lewis novel, *The Great Divorce*? How does this strike you?
- o What is the purpose of a fruitful life? How does it relate to joy?
- o Is this a reliable promise/correlation?

Closing Consideration:

Reflecting again on Jordan's opening analogy of the Christmas Tree. What is one activity of "decorating the dead" you can abandon this week in order to make space for the passive action of God in your life? How will you occupy that space? Share with your group and close in prayer.