

Wednesday, March 22, 2023
CONNECTION
PART 2: FRUIT BEARING

Last week, we looked at what Jesus shared with His disciples right before He went to the cross. He talked with them about the importance of connection – first to Him and as a result to one another. Connection to Jesus is vital to the salvation of the soul. Connection to one another is vital to the healing of the soul. When people are saved, they are in Christ. When they are saved, they join the body. Connection to the body brings healing and what comes next. Tonight, we expand from healing into fruit bearing.

John 15:1-13 (NKJV)

There are a few truths in this passage that we should embrace: *The vine produces fruit*. Who is the vine? Jesus. What fruit are we talking about?

karpós – properly, *fruit*; (figuratively) everything done in *true partnership with Christ*, i.e. a believer (a branch) lives in union with Christ (the Vine). By definition, fruit (*karpós*) results from *two* life-streams – the Lord living His life through ours – to yield what is eternal (cf. 1 Jn 4:17).

The vinedresser works with the vine for increase in fruit bearing. Who is the vinedresser? The Father. How is fruit produced? *Abiding in the vine*.

Abide: A primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy) -- abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry, sojourn.

Connection to Jesus is necessary to produce fruit. Jesus' desire is for us to increase in fruit bearing. How does that happen? *Through being pruned or cleaned by the word*.

kathairō – make clean by *purging* (removing undesirable elements); hence, "pruned (purged)"; eliminating what is fruitless by purifying (making *unmixed*).

Remember last Wednesday's teaching? We are saved and our connection to Christ, using our connection to one another, heals us through our obedience to the Word. How many of you want the Father to be glorified in

your life? It is accomplished through you bearing much fruit. An increase in fruit bearing is also a sign we are Christ's disciples. We are a part of the vine and by implication, a part of one another. The vine and the branches carry the same DNA but each branch carries the same DNA as the others. What is our DNA? The Holy Spirit. Our code is the Word. If we carry the same DNA, how come we can act and react so differently? Two primary reasons:

Selfishness and fear.

We're talking about people who are abiding in the vine. Those who do so agree that the Word is truth. So, what causes division? See above. Let's define selfishness:

The quality or state of being selfish; exclusive regard to one's own interest or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others.

This interrupts the process of fruit bearing whose greatest expression is love for one another.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:12-13)

Fear is a product of hurt. When hurt goes unhealed, fear surrounds the hurt in an effort to protect the carrier. Sadly, fear does not heal the hurt and often resists trust in others, thus damaging relationships. God uses relationship with Him and others to bring our fear to the surface, not to protect the hurt but to heal it. When this happens, some resist healing because of their lack of trust in God's sovereignty and His use of imperfect vessels in the process. What is the solution?

We must realize that God is using our connection to others/church to bring our fears and selfishness to the surface. His goal is to heal the hurt and drive out the fear. It is imperative that we do not act on selfish motives and allow God to bring His Word to pass in us.

Connection will always be a part of your walk with God. If connections become difficult, check what is going on. Are they difficult because someone refuses to obey the Word? Are they difficult because my selfishness and fear is being challenged? Maybe the Reverend Al Green's song of many years ago will help us now: "Let's Stay Together!"

Today's Scriptures:

- John 15:1-13 (NKJV)