

Slide 1

The Joy of a Fruitful Life

JOHN 15:1-11

Introduction

1. There is nothing quite as good as fruit fresh from the vine or tree.
2. When my brother and I were young boys, we often went across the pasture to the home of my grandparents.
3. One of the things I remember about our time spent there was their Concord grape vines.
4. Toward the end of summer the grapes would begin to ripen and we could hardly wait to go out and begin pulling off bunches of grapes and eating them right there.
5. Those were good grapes, and we enjoyed those times.
6. After Becky and I married, we moved into that house which my parents then owned, and my father had begun restoring.
7. The grape vines were overgrown from years of neglect.
8. That winter, I decided I was going to prune them back.
9. By the time I got through there were basically three trunks with about two to three short vines traveling along the wires stretched above them.
10. Becky thought they would not recover from my severe pruning, but that summer, we had some the best grapes I ever remember from them.
11. People do not grow grape vines for their looks.
12. They grow them for the fruit they produce, and the more they produce the better.
13. In the text read for us this morning, Jesus uses the analogy of grape vines and their branches to speak to His disciples and to us about the need to bear fruit in our lives and what is necessary for such fruit bearing to be possible.

14. He ends by telling them, “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11).
15. As we look at what Jesus said, let us stop and ask ourselves, what is it that I must do to experience “The Joy of a Fruitful Life?”

Slide 2

I. What Is God Doing?

A. BASIC VITICULTURE

1. Today, if you were to travel to the nation of Israel, you would find grape vines being grown all over.
2. Grape vines need a great deal of attention if the best fruit is to be produced.
3. Typically, the young slips are planted about 12 feet apart.
4. For the first three years the vines are not allowed to bear fruit, and each year the plant is severely cut back to conserve its life and energy.
5. When it is mature, it is pruned in December and January.
6. The branches which do not bear fruit are removed so that they do not drain away the plant’s strength.
7. Those branches which bear fruit are pruned so that they may produce even better fruit the following season.

Slide 3

B. DIVINE VITICULTURE

1. It isn’t actual grape vines that Jesus is concerned about, but people, you and me.
2. When it comes to us, Jesus is the true vine (vv. 1, 5).
 - a. He is the source of life.
 - 1) “ I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).
 - 2) (Jesus to Martha) “I am the resurrection and the life . . .” (John 11:25).

- 3) “I am . . . the life” (John 14:6).
- b. He is the way to life.
 - 1) “I am the way” (John 14:6)
 - 2) “. . . through Him we . . . have our access in one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:18).

3a

2. Those of us who are Christians are the branches (v. 5).
 - a. It is our responsibility to bear fruit.
 - b. What kind of fruit are you and I to bear?
 - d. Though Jesus doesn’t tell us here, much of what we find in the rest of the N.T. has to do with Christian character.
 - c. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul tells us that the “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness [and] self-control.”
 - d. In Ephesians 5:9, he wrote of the “fruit of the light” and said that it “consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth.”
 - e. As we bear this fruit in our lives, we will in turn bear another type of fruit, it is that of souls won to Christ.
 - f. Stephanas and his household were the “first fruits” or the first converts of Achaia (1 Corinthians 16:15).

3b

3. God is the “vinedresser” (NASB95, ESV, NKJV), the “husbandman” (KJV), the “vineyard keeper” (HCSB).
 - a. He is the one who tends to the vine.
 - b. He watches over us to ensure our fruitfulness.
 - c. He acts to cleanse us so that we will live fruitful lives.
 - d. “Every branch . . . that does not bear fruit, He takes away” (v. 2a).

- e. “. . . every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit” (v. 2b).

Slide 4

II. Our Ability To Bear Fruit . . .

A. DEPENDS UPON US ABIDING IN JESUS (VV. 3-4)

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4–5)

1. Just as a physical branch on a grape vine cannot bear fruit unless it is attached to the vine and draws its life from the vine, so neither can we unless we abide in Jesus.
2. When Christ abides in us and we abide in Him, we bear much fruit.
3. However, if we isolate ourselves from Him we are helpless — we can do nothing of a spiritual nature.
4. But what does it mean for us to abide in Christ? What does that look like?
5. Do you remember what Jesus did when He lived among us? How He was in constant contact with His Father?
 - a. After a long day of teaching and healing in Capernaum, Mark 1:35 tells us that Jesus got up early in the morning, “while it was still dark . . . and went away to a secluded place” where He could pray to His Father.
 - b. Luke 5:16 lets us know that “Jesus . . . would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.”
 - c. The night before He chose the twelve, Jesus “spent the whole night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12).
 - ❑ Each of these times and many others like them were times in which Jesus was in contact with His Father.

6. One of the ways we abide in Jesus is by making sure that His words abide in us (v. 7).

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).

7. Psalm 1:2, lets us know that the blessed individual is that person who “meditates” upon God’s law (word) “day and night.”
8. In Psalm 119:11, the psalmist said to God, “Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11).
9. Several times in that same psalm, the psalmist said, “I wait for Your word” (Psalm 119: 74, 81, 147).
10. Not only do we allow God’s Word to sink deep into the recesses of our heart and mind, we live it out each day in our lives — we obey our Lord’s commandments.
11. When we do this, we “abide in [Christ’s] love” (v. 10), and the result is that we can ask whatever we wish — our requests will be in keeping with God’s will for us — and it will be done for us (v. 7).

Slide 5

B. RESULTS IN GOD BEING GLORIFIED

“My Father is glorified in this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples” (v. 8).

1. As you and I abide in Christ . . .
 - a. As His words abide us.
 - b. As we keep His commandments.
 - c. As we constantly communicate with Him through our prayers,
. . . we bear much fruit.
2. Our lives are being “transformed by the renewing of [our minds]” and we are constantly demonstrating to those around us what God’s “good and

acceptable and perfect” will look like (Romans 12:2).

3. Others see our transformed lives and our good works.
4. As a result, the thoughts of their minds are being turned to God, and He is being glorified.
5. William Barclay said, “The greatest glory of the Christian life is that by our life and conduct we can bring glory to God.”

Conclusion

Slide 6

1. We come back to where we began this morning.
2. At the end of our text, John 15:11, Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”
3. To this point in John’s gospel, the word “joy” has only been used one time.
4. However, starting with this verse, John 15:11, and continuing through John 17:13, it appears seven times (15:11, (2), 16:20, 21, 22, 24; 17:13).
5. Jesus wants us to know His joy — it is the joy of living a completely fruitful life.
6. It is a joy that comes from wholehearted obedience to His commands.
7. Even though you do not see Jesus now, but believe in Him, may you be able as Peter said in 1 Peter 1:8, to “greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory!”
8. Do you have such joy in your life? Do you know this kind of life?
9. If your answer is yes, then may God continue to increase your joy.
10. If your answer is no, then please surrender your life to Jesus today:
 - a. Repent of your sin by turning away from it.
 - b. Confess Jesus as your Savior and Lord.
 - c. Be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of your sins.
 - d. Start living a life which continually abides in Christ.