

A Fruitful Life

1. We All Want to Bear Good Fruit.

2. Abiding Is an Essential Practice.

3. Pruning Is an Essential Practice too.

CONCLUSION: God wants you and your ministry to bear good fruit. There are things He wants to add to your life. Ways for you to get and stay connected to Jesus. Ways for you to be a branch (or water sprinkler) and extend that love to others. There are things He wants to cut out too. Ways for you to be lightened, and guided, and experience newfound growth. While you have a part to play in this growth (abide is a command, after all), this work did not originate with you, and it is not entirely up to you either. This is the Father's doing. You are in the hands of a good vinedresser. Even now, He is running His hands through the leaves of your life, strengthening connections, forging new ones, cutting off branches, and causing you to grow. This is for His glory and our enjoyment—yours, mine, the world's. Amen.

Isaiah 5:1-7

Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his *vineyard*:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;

I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ *I will make it a waste*; it shall not be pruned or hoed, & *briers and thorns shall grow up*; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

Mark 4:1-20

Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ² And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³ “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸ And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” ⁹ And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

¹⁰ And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹² so that

“*they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.*”

¹³ And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴ The sower sows *the word*. ¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²⁰ But *those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit*, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

(see also Psalm 34)