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Secrets of Fruitfulness-2



Part 27 (020120PM)

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Please open to our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ's final, and perhaps most vital introduction of Himself to us His children. It is located in [John 15:1-8](#).

Before I read these precious verses again with you this morning, may I remind you of the incredible challenge each of us have this morning. According to what Jesus said in the verses before us, all that will last of your and my life on earth will be the fruit that you and I produce while we are alive on this planet. Everything else of ours -- will either burn, rust, or rot. Have you paused lately and looked around all that fills up each of our lives?

All of our deeded income properties, all of our prized collections, all of our wise equity investments, all of our real estate, all of our awards, all of our beautifully built and decorated homes, all of our businesses we have built, all of our memory books, all of our electronic gadgets, all of our plants and pets and plans - everything will dissolve and go back to earthliness.

Everything we ever have will turn to rust and ashes except for what was transformed by our ABIDING in Christ into Eternal Fruit. Christ's rewards to us are based on what was GOOD or fruitful, all else attached to our lives Jesus Christ has promised He will burn away at the BEMA SEAT JUDGMENT.

With that in mind, stand with me and follow along please in [John 15:1-8](#).

[John 15:1-8](#) "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit **He lifts up**; and every branch that bears fruit **He prunes**, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, 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, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Now the question we need to ask ourselves is, how is my fruitfulness coming. Do you have fruit already sent up? Are you bearing fruit today? Are you living to protect your future fruitfulness?

Over the last weeks we drove by the great orchards and vineyards of NY and New England. It was amazing to see the lengths they go to insure fruitfulness. There was evidence of cultivation, pruning, new plantings and so on. In Florida we saw the smudge pots to protect from fruit loss to frost. Earthlings are focused on fruit bearing, are we for Heavenly fruit?

GOD WANTS TO MAKE EACH DAY OF OUR LIFE FRUITFUL

We were in John 15 last time as we studied the Gospel by John. I challenged you to Abide in Christ our Vine and be fruitful. This morning Jesus invites us to live in Him like He is all we need, Jesus is all I need, Jesus is all you need!

- Remember we who belong to Jesus Christ all share an uncommon passion: we want to bear fruit. This comes as we know Him more, serve Him more, love Him more, and please Him more.
- Remember that that God wants us not merely to hear His what His Word asks, but to DO what He asks.
- How can we bear more and more fruit to glorify God this year?

Let me answer that by reminding you of where we have been.

Part: 33	Do Troubles Push you Toward God?
Part: 32	Are You Pushed Toward God?
Part: 31	Is It Chastening or Pruning?
Part: 30	Our Father the VINEDRESSER
Part: 29	Fruit Bearing 101
Part: 28	Are You Cleansed, Clipped and Christ-like?
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Part: 25	A Life Useful for Jesus
Part: 24	Starting Over in Newness in Jesus
Part: 23	Jesus: I Am the Vine
Part: 22	Secrets of the VINE
Part: 21	How to Get Christ's Well Done
Part: 20	How To Walk Through The Valley Of Death's Shadow
Part: 19	The Race and the Crown
Part: 18	Finishing Well With Christ's WELL DONE
Part: 17	I Go To Prepare a Place
Part: 16	In My Fathers House
Part: 15	Who is the LORD - Jehovah or Allah?
Part: 14	Are You Secure for Eternity?
Part: 13	Mormonism Is the Wrong Way to God
Part: 12	Are You Ready to Die?
Part: 11	Jesus: I AM the Resurrection and the Life
Part: 10	Is Your Cup Overflowing
Part: 9	Following Jesus as My Good Shepherd in the Hard Times of Life!
Part: 8	Is Your Head Oiled?
Part: 7	Following Jesus As My Good Shepherd
Part: 6	I AM THE DOOR: Entering Life Through Jesus
Part: 5	Have You Given Your Life to Jesus?
Part: 4	Jesus: I AM the Bread of Life
Part: 3	Jesus: I am the LIGHT in the Wilderness
Part: 2	Jesus: I AM the Light to follow
Part: 1	Jesus: I AM the Light to Trust

1. **WE ARE FRUITFUL WHEN WE ABIDE.**
2. **ABIDING IS LIVING DAILY LIKE JESUS IS ALL I NEED.**

ABIDING STARTS WHEN WE BELIEVE THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

Now the summary of our Jesus who is all we need. Jesus inspired John the Apostle to write this gospel around a seven sign frame. We learned that in chapter one Jesus is introduced by a seven-titled "calling card". What are the seven titles, and their significance as recorded in John chapter one? Jesus is recorded as being:

- We listen to Jesus as the **Word (John 1:1)**,
- We follow Jesus as our **Light (John 1:7)**,
- We worship Jesus who is **God the Son (John 1:18)**,
- We have identified by faith with Jesus who is God's **Lamb (John 1:29)**,
- We accept Jesus as God's **Messiah (John 1:41)**,
- We yield to Jesus as our **King (John 1:49)**, and
- We hold to Jesus as the **Son of Man (John 1:51)**, *Jesus the Christ is the "living link" between heaven and earth.* Christ is God's "ladder" between heaven and earth. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

By this seven-titled "calling card" Jesus reveals to them and to us that the Christ, who is the Messiah, who is the only way to God is here!

When we believe the truth about Christ we are never alone, never isolated, never hopeless, never out of touch, never useless, never worthless, never aimless, never on a dead end road, never trapped, never outcast!

FRUITFULLY ABIDING IN JESUS IS THE BEST LIFE THERE IS!

Now what else does it mean to find Jesus as all I need? That is what we learn next in this book. By seven clearly described miraculous signs, Jesus describes the wonders of the salvation all who come to Him experience. This is the best part of the book in my opinion. John wrote in 20:31 **"These** (seven miraculous signs) **are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ** (the living link, the only ladder, or way to the God of Heaven) **and that believing you may have life** (the overflowing joy filled life of endless new beginnings) **in His name."**

- **HE TURNS** water into wine (2:1-11)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us is **always miraculous**;
- **He heals** the nobleman's son (4:46-54)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us is **only by faith**;
- **He heals** the paralytic (5:1-9)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us is **only by grace**;
- **He Feeds** the 5,000 (6:1-14)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us brings **inexhaustible satisfaction**;
- **He Stills** the storm (6:16-21)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us brings **complete peace**;
- **He heals** the blind man (9:1-7)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us brings **light to our souls**;
- **He Raises** Lazarus (11:38-45)— The Powerful New Life Jesus offers us brings **an endless life**;

How do we live fruitfully for Jesus in 2002?

If your life is anything like ours you probably are operating at capacity. So any new idea, or old idea I am reminded of – like abiding – has to be a concept that I can grasp without too much complexity. In other words it has to be simple. For me, I have found that if I can find something in the Bible and do what it says, that is about the best way to go. So, here is a simple plan I follow to be fruitful that God has spelled out in His Word. This plan is to start living right now the way we want to have Him find us at the end when He comes (at the rapture) or calls (through our death). I call this some specific Plans for Growing in Fruitfulness, and all of these are found in Psalm 71.

If you can find some space on your bulletin or somewhere else, you may even want to jot these in your Bible to remember them! Let's turn ^[1] to Psalm 71 and conclude there.

1. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **flee to God for hope** as my troubles threaten to drown me. v. 1 Just like David did in **1 Samuel 30:6** over 3,000 years ago and just like John Paton did 150 years ago, we can do today!
2. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **cry out to God for help** before I give in to temptations. v. 2b **Saying with Joseph that God sees me whether it was 4,000 years ago in Egypt from Genesis 39:9** or today – it is always true!
3. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **trust God's Word over my fears** before I get paralyzed by them. v. 3a Remember Paul and Silas in prison in Acts 16!
4. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **seek the Lord about my hurts before I get bitter**. v. 4 **As Paul was in prison writing Philipians, he never lost sight of the goodness of God in spite of our problems.** As in Job, etc.
5. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **keep reminding myself** of God's faithfulness for all of my life to this moment. v. 5, 17 Jacob at the end of Genesis says the Lord has led, fed, and forgiven him all his life long!
6. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **seek God's plan** for my life each day. v.6 Why did Jesus need to get up before dawn? Why did He pray? If He did why not follow His example! Mark 1 says He got up daily before dawn to meet with His Father!
7. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **use my mouth so often for praise**, no room will be left to complain. v. 8, 14b, 24. Who saw God's Hand on Saul and introduced him to ministry? Barnabus, son of encouragement of Acts 4!
8. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **trust in the Lord's ability to rescue me** as much as in 911's. v. 12 As David confessed in **Psalm 118:6** – The Lord is on my side, I will not fear, what can man do unto me?
9. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **never give up** even if I end up all alone, sick or even forgotten by everyone in the world except God. v. 14 Remember that His eye is on the sparrow!
10. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **never stop looking** for people -- to share a testimony of God's goodness in my life. v. 15 John Newton's last days and Paul with his guards, Dale this week in my copier machine.
11. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **humbly depend** on the Lord. v. 16

12. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **seek out** younger people and pass on to them my testimony of God's goodness and great faithfulness. v. 18 II Timothy like Bill Eddy!
13. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **never stop pursuing God** -- in a deepening experience of knowing Him daily. v. 19 like Howard Smith
14. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **welcome pain and suffering** as God's perfect tools for shaping my life. v. 20 like Job, Paul, Ezra in Psalm 119, and modern saints like Pat Bartlett, Dorothy Crebs, and Joni Erickson Tada.
15. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **forsake the stereotypes the uselessness of 'old timers'** and never stop singing and speaking and shouting about God's goodness. v. 22-23 What if Simeon and Anna would have said they were too old for God to use? Just think what they would have missed!
16. ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO **let God invade my whole day**, not just the start or finish, but all of it! v. 24 Remember Daniel? Three times a day he stopped everything, walked home, climbed the stairs to his prayer place, knelt and praised and thanked the Lord/ What excuse do any of us have for not doing the same?

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

Civilla D. Martin, 1869–1948

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father in heaven. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than sparrows. (Matthew 10:29–31)

Mrs. Civilla Martin, author of this gospel hymn text, tells of a visit in 1904 to a bedridden Christian friend. Mrs. Martin asked the woman if she ever got discouraged because of her physical condition. Her friend responded quickly: "Mrs. Martin, how can I be discouraged when my heavenly Father watches over each little sparrow and I know He loves and cares for me." Within just a few minutes Mrs. Martin completed the writing of her new text, which has since been a source of much encouragement to many of God's people.

It is interesting that our Lord chose the most common of all birds, sparrows of little value, to teach a profound truth: In God's eyes, no one is insignificant! He is vitally concerned with even the details of our lives. Notice also that the Bible uses another bird to teach this inspiring truth: "Those who hope in the Lord will soar on wings like eagles ..." (Isaiah 40:31). With an awareness of God's concern for our lives and the promise of His enabling power to live victoriously, why should we be afraid?

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. (Habakkuk 3:17, 18)

1. Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come, why should my heart be lonely and long for Heav'n and home, when Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
2. "Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear, and resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears: tho' by the path He leadeth but one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know we watches me.
3. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise, when songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies, I draw the closer to Him; from care He sets me free; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me; His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
4. **Refrain:** I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free, for His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me. [2]

ABIDING IN CHRIST MEANS THAT I CHOOSE TO:

1. **Flee to God for hope** as my troubles threaten to drown me
2. **Cry out to God for help** before I give in to temptations
3. **Trust God's Word over my fears** before I get paralyzed by them
4. **Seek the Lord about my hurts** before I get bitter
5. **Keep reminding myself** of God's faithfulness for all of my life to this moment.
6. **Seek God's plan** for my life each day.
7. **Use my mouth so often for praise**, no room will be left to complain.
8. **Trust in the Lord's ability to rescue me**
9. **Never give up**
10. **Never stop looking** for people -- to share a testimony of God's goodness in my life.
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All of our collections, all of our investments, all of our real estate, all of our awards, all of our memory books, all of our electronic gadgets, all of our plants and pets and plans – everything will dissolve and go back to earthliness. Everything but what was transformed by our ABIDING in Christ into Eternal Fruit. Christ's rewards to us are based on what was GOOD or fruitful, all else attached to our lives He burns at the BEMA SEAT.

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[1] Adapted from "Reflections on an old Psalmist" by John Piper, A Godward Life, p. 134.

[2] Osbeck, Kenneth W., *Amazing Grace—366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications) 1997.

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