

Spiritual Growth and Fruitfulness

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[0 : 00] I greet you in Jesus' name this morning. It's good to be here. Turn to John chapter 15.

And this morning the title will be Spiritual Growth and Fruitfulness.

And I wanted to have this here in the Amplified and I lost it. John chapter 15.

I read probably the first eight verses or so. I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away in every branch that beareth fruit. He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit.

[1 : 19] Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself.

Except it abide in the vine. No more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches.

He that abideth in me and I in him. The same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered.

A man gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples. You know, what's he saying here?

[2 : 27] This last little phrase, so shall ye be my disciples. This is how we become disciples of Jesus Christ. Are we disciples or not?

He says if we bear much fruit, then we are. Now let's go back and let's start here. Jesus is the true vine.

And the very fact that the word true is in there to describe him will tell me that there are many vines. There are many options. There are many false vines. There are many out there. But he is the true vine.

Jesus is the true vine. And my father is the husbandman. The father is the one that takes care of the vineyard.

[3 : 31] The father is the one that watches over, that looks over the vineyard. He is the one that does the pruning. He is the one that does the watering. He is the one that takes care of the vineyard and watches that it bears fruit.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit. Yes, so he's looking for fruit. The father is looking for fruit. And it says that the branches that do not bring fruit, he's going to cut them off. And they're going to be thrown away. But the branches that do bear fruit.

He will purge them. He will trim them. You know, just think with me a little bit about fruit. You know, fruit is something that grows.

Fruit is something that it's not instant. You know, if you receive a gift, you have it instantly. But fruit is something that takes time.

[4 : 38] And there's seasons of the year. And we're still in wintertime. We're still in, naturally, we're still in the pruning time of the year.

But so we're looking for fruit. And we're looking for growth this morning. So the branch cannot bear fruit of itself.

Now let's look at verse 3. Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. You know, and so he was talking here.

And this was before the written New Testament. But the very word that Jesus spoke. Now in the Amplified, this verse says, You are cleansed and pruned already because of the word which I have given you.

The teachings I have discussed with you. And so this word, if we allow it, it will prune us. It will trim off those things that are offensive.

[5 : 53] It will prune off what is necessary. If we will be obedient to this word. If we will read this word. If we will hear this word.

And allow it to do its work in us. It will prune us. It will cleanse us. And it will bring a fruitfulness in our life.

Amen. Growth comes naturally. You know, we had the children up front here this morning.

And, you know, when you sit down at the table at home to eat. And you give them food. You don't tell them, now you be sure.

Now you eat this. And you be sure to grow. Right? Why not? Because as we eat, growth comes naturally.

[7 : 00] Growth is a part of life. If we're not growing, then there's something wrong. There's something wrong with the life.

With our life. There's something wrong. So growth comes naturally. And, you know, let's just think a little bit.

Let's think a little bit further. You know, Jesus said, maybe I'll just turn there. In Matthew 18, there's a couple verses.

Jesus brought a child. In chapter 18, verse 1 through 4.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them.

[8 : 06] And he said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as his little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Now, Jesus took a child and he gave a lesson here. And he said, except you be converted, unless you become like little children.

And let's just think a little bit of little children. Before, you know, when they're really small, they eat, they grow.

They're totally dependent on their parents. And they're not afraid that they won't receive what they need. They won't worry about the next meal.

[9 : 14] They won't worry that their parents are going to forsake them. They don't worry. I mean, I know those things happen, but not here. They don't worry.

They don't worry. That they will be going hungry and there won't be anything to eat. They don't worry. Why? Because they totally trust their parents.

They totally trust their parents. They don't have their own agenda. They just live their life. They lay in their crib.

They play with their toys. They do whatever. And they eat and they grow. And if we, can we become as little children, that we depend upon our Heavenly Father in this way, that we trust Him for everything, that we trust Him in every situation, that we trust Him for every need.

Children, they don't have their own agenda. They don't try to hide things. I know when they're a little older, they might.

[10 : 34] They do. But a young child, they're so transparent. They're so open. They will say whatever they think.

They've not learned to trust in their own self yet. Isn't that so often our problem in the Christian life? We want to trust in ourself instead of trusting God. And we're going to trust in ourself and loving God. We want to trust in ourself, And we're going to trust in ourself.

We'll be looking at some of these things. In Luke chapter 8, here is a parable that he gave about the sower. and we won't read all of this but we'll just read a couple verses here or maybe one verse verse 14 and that which fell among thorns are they which when they had heard they go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection but that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart having heard the word keep it and bring forth fruit with patience so here we have we have two opposites we have the good ground and those that hear the word and they keep it and it says they bring forth fruit with patience you know it takes all summer it takes all summer for fruit to grow and if there's something that will choke out the nutrition in our life then we'll be like this verse 14 it says brings no fruit to perfection you know how

often do you see fruit starting on a tree you see the tree bloom and then you see fruit coming but somehow it just stays small and hard and then eventually it falls off that's what he's talking about but what he wants is that we bring fruit to perfection and here it says that it takes patience it takes patience you know the husbandman he will have long patience for the fruit and we as those branches that are bearing fruit we must have long patience because it takes time it takes time and you know children back to children again you know every so often they want to measure they want to know how tall they are and all of that but you know it happens automatically you know it takes it takes many years for the human body to grow up to to a full stature and you know a small child it might say well oh I wish I was 16

I wish I was 20 but in reality they have they're content where they're at and we as Christians are we content in walking faithfully where we are at and applying ourselves and giving all diligence to grow we probably won't get there but in Peter he talks about adding to our faith and giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure and all of that and those that is our part that is so important that we give all diligence that we give all diligence in reading this word that we give all diligence in walking in obedience and give all diligence you know there's there's so much that we can do to advance our growth you know if we will just sit idly by and not avail ourselves to the nutrition how will we grow back in John 15

[16:15] Jesus is the true vine the father the husband we are those branches and he's looking for fruit he is looking for fruit well how will we bear fruit he says abide in me and I in you how do we abide in Christ how do we how do we stay there how do we not drift away I'm going to look at that for a little while here I believe that well we'll just look at some of these verses

I have a couple verses I'm going to look at in the book of Psalm in Psalms 34 and 51 and Isaiah Micah we'll just go there and we'll see what in Psalm 34 in verse 18 says the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and save us such as be of a contrite spirit a broken heart and a contrite spirit Jesus what did Jesus say he said those he talked about the poor in spirit poverty of spirit what's he talking about what are we talking about here the poor in spirit broken hearted you know I believe that when we come to this place we recognize that we have nothing of ourself our pride has been taken away we've we've gotten rid of all that pride we've gotten rid of all self and and we'll be talking about some of this for a while the self life that needs to go that we can abide in our in Christ in Psalm 51 here we have

David after he had fallen and he was repenting he says create in me a clean heart oh God renew a right spirit within me and then verse 17 the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit a broken and a contrite heart oh God thou wilt not despise a broken and a contrite heart the opposite of a proud heart you know God resists the proud but he gives grace to the humble our God our God the husbandman if we are proud if we are self-sufficient if we think we can please God on our own he will resist us he will resist us but the sacrifices what God is looking for it's a broken spirit a broken and a contrite heart one who comes to

God and he knows that he's done of his own self there's nothing I can do to save myself but I'm completely completely at the mercy of an almighty God broken and contrite in heart this God will not despise such a one but he will happily accept accept us our self life must be crushed it must be beaten down it must be broken we must come to the place where we have nowhere else to turn but to God all who are broken of God are characterized by meekness remember Moses Moses you know before he left Egypt as a young man he felt the call of God to deliver the children of Israel and he tried to do it on his own he killed an

Egyptian and then he tried to set the Jewish brothers aright the one was wronging another and he was beginning but he was doing it in his own strength he was doing it out of the will of God he was doing it not in God's timing but after 40 years in the backside of the desert God had worked something in the heart of Moses and the Bible tells us Moses was the meekest man that ever lived Moses the greatest leader that Israel ever had was also the meekest why what happened to Moses I believe he was broken you know he so wanted to help his people but doing it in his own strength did not work and so he left

[22:41] Egypt a broken man fleeing for his life but God yes God met Moses and he changed him and for 40 years I believe God taught him and Moses learned to know God and at the end of those 40 years God had a man that he could use Isaiah 57 verse 15 for for thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy

I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones here we have God the great and holy God the one who inhabits eternity the one who does not have a beginning the one that will never have an end the one who fills eternity this great God but he comes and he dwells with those that are of a humble heart those that have a contrite and a humble spirit he comes to revive us and to raise us up and to build us up and to fill us and to revive the heart of the contrite ones oh yes oh yes our God our God he will he is a husbandman he will come and he will prune us he will come and he will make us more fruitful as we bear fruit we bear fruit this year and next year he will prune us and he will bring forth more fruit are we bringing forth more fruit and more as it goes as time goes on are we becoming more and more fruitful how is it with us yes in in in

Matthew Matthew chapter 5 we'll just read a couple verses there in the beatitudes Jesus he opened his mouth and he taught them in verse 3 blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God now notice here we already talked about being poor in spirit he says here that those that are poor in spirit they theirs is the kingdom of heaven but verse 6 blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled do you hunger and thirst after righteousness are you hungry this morning are you hungry during the week are you hungry for this word you know and other you know there's so many resources there's so many faithful men of

God that have written books that we can read and they challenge us and they strengthen us but are you hungry are you satisfied in yourself he says here we are blessed if we hunger and thirst why because if we eat if we are hungry we will eat if we're thirsty we will drink and as we take in the nutrition God will bless us and we will grow and we will be fruitful but if we don't hunger if we don't thirst we will be without fruit are we taking in the nutrition that is needed it there's a verse

I want I'm not sure which one it is anymore maybe I missed writing it down but about about a fig tree let me see Luke 13 Luke 13 we have a tree that was barren a tree that did not bring forth the fruit expected of it Luke 13 verse six and he spake also this parable a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came and he sought fruit thereon and found none then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none cut it down why cumbereth it the ground and he answering said unto him

[29 : 34] Lord let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it and dung it and if it bear fruit well and if not then after that thou shalt cut it down you know what I see here is that the master he will do all he can to make us to help us bring fruit to make us fruitful in our life here on earth that we will bring forth fruit unto the master it says here you know he sought fruit of this tree three years in a row and he said well cut it down it's useless all it's doing is it's taking nutrition out of the ground it's taking the water this precious water that that some other tree could use it's it's drinking in that water it's eating the nutrition and it's not bringing any fruit it's worthless cut it down but the husbandman says oh give me one more chance let's let's try it one more year let's try it one more year and I'll dig about it and I'll dung it

I'll put fertilizer on it and I'll I'll I'll freshen up around the roots here make sure that the nutrition gets to the roots and and we'll see if not maybe it will bring forth fruit are we bringing fruit you know our God he will do everything he will do everything needed for us to bring fruit if we will fruit there's a there's an example in Isaiah five there's an example of this and I wasn't sure if we were going to look at this but I believe we will it brings out that our God he will do everything that we need to be fruitful let's read here in Isaiah five this account of the vineyard now will

I sing to my well beloved a song of my vineyard a song of my beloved touching his vineyard my beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill and he fenced it and he gathered out the stones thereof and planted it with the choicest vine and built a tower in the midst of it and also made a winepress therein and he looked that it should bring forth grapes and it brought forth wild grapes he planted a vineyard and he planted this vineyard in a very fruitful place on a very fruitful hill and then he built a fence around about it to keep out the wild animals and to keep out things that would destroy it things that would eat the fruit before he would be able to get it he put a fence about it he gathered out the stones that the ground would be fertile and not hindered and then he planted it the choicest vine the very best that was available he planted it and he took care of this vineyard and he built a

difference here we have a man we have a man that knew outside of God he had no hope he had no good works he had no track record of living a good life and he knew that outside the mercy of God he was lost but the Pharisee he had done all these good things all his life and he had all these wild grapes to show but he was never fruitful with the true fruit that our

[43 : 26] God was looking for he was bringing forth fruit out of himself out of his self life things that he could do things that made him look good things that that made that won the respect of the people but God knew his heart and God knows our heart he knows our heart today God is not mocked whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap remember remember you know and and some of I'm giving some quotes here today and I think this one is probably from from one of Steve Gallinger's books but self reigns as a dictator approving or denying any requirements the word of God or the spirit might make just think of this just think of this how this is self he's a dictator sitting he wants to sit on the throne of your heart and when the word of God comes that dictator he either approves or denies whatever whatever word that came to him that puts him above God that puts him above the word of God but that is what self does that is what self does he reigns as a dictator approving or denying any requirements that the word of God or the spirit of God might make he is unbroken and unrepentant and unsundered and that is why that self life must be put on the cross that old self man he must be put on the cross and crucified with Christ he cannot and he will not be subject to the law of God and as long as he's on the throne of your heart he will judge every word that comes to him and he will decide whether he accepts it or rejects it he puts himself above God and all he can produce is wild grapes that's the best that he can produce Matthew 11 beautiful verses here Matthew 11 28 come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest Jesus speaking here inviting us inviting humanity to come to him take take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light take my yoke are we are we yoked with

Christ today you know if we are truly yoked with him he will he will pull that load you know we will still we will still we you know we we walk with him it's such an easy yoke it's just like the children they don't worry they don't worry about what's tomorrow they don't worry about what they'll eat they don't worry why because they fully trust their parents and when we fully trust our savior and we're yoked with him his yoke is easy it's easy for us to live this life it's easy for us to live this Christian life and to be fruitful why because growth comes naturally but we must abide in him we must eat and drink we must hunger after this word we must be yoked to him if we're laboring if it's a heavy burden if it's a heavy burden come to

Jesus come to Jesus and he will give you rest come to him and take his yoke you know we don't he doesn't just take his yoke off of him and put it on us no but we become yoked with him you know when we're yoked with him we're harnessed with him and we walk with him we can be effective in this walk we can be effective in this Christian life you know a horse is worthless as long as it's not harnessed as long as it's not trained and brought under the yoke and a man even though he professes to be a Christian he's worthless until he learns to take this yoke with our Savior we cannot be effective in the kingdom of

[49 : 22] God without being yoked with our Savior he says learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart our Savior meek and lowly in heart and when we're yoked with him we will find rest for our souls and when we're yoked with him that yoke is easy and when we're yoked with him our burden becomes light why because he's pulling in that yoke along with us hallelujah yes yes until a believer's life is under God's control he is of little use in the kingdom of

God he is of no use in the kingdom of God until our life comes under the control of our God yes yes Galatians 6 7 and 8 be not deceived God is not mocked whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not remember that verse in Luke about bringing forth fruit with patience allowing our Lord to work in us and allowing that fruit to grow you know we need to be satisfied you know we experience a chasing we experience a pruning and it's a part of our life Hebrews says the man that God doesn't chasten he doesn't love there's a verse somewhere like that that who's the one that God loves he chastens and he scourges every son whom he receiveth and so when he prunes us you know when you prune the trees it's winter time going towards spring and then after a while those buds come and there'll be a flower and then after a while you'll begin to see a little fruit coming but it's still months it's still months until that fruit comes to perfection patience we must

endure with patience yes the race that is set before us oh yes in Hebrews chapter 4 you know God knows the fruit when he sees it he knows our life says here in Hebrews 4 you know he talks about entering into that rest and I believe what he's talking about here is when we are yoked with our Savior we enter into a rest that we rest in our labors with him not that we're not busy laboring and working and doing the will of God and doing what he's called us to do but we're doing it in his power and in his strength he talks about the children of Israel and how they could not enter in to the land of

Canaan because of unbelief and he warns us that we would not fall after that example but then in verse nine there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God for he that is entered into his rest he also has ceased from his own works as God did from his let us labor therefore to enter into that rest lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief for the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart the word of God it is quick and it is powerful it's sharper than a two-edged sword and it will divide it will show what is of soul and spirit in your life it will divide it will show what is true and what is false it will show what is of Christ and what is of self it's a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart yes

[55 : 44] God knows God knows be not deceived God is not mocked he knows he knows what what's coming of self and what's coming of him and only what's coming of him will stand the test of time and eternity Ephesians 4 talks of laying aside that old self get a couple verses here Ephesians 4 22 that you put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which after

God is created in righteousness and true holiness you know these are things that we must do you know if we do not consciously put off the old and live in the new then we will revert to type and we will live in the old man but he admonishes us to to put off that old man to put off the former conversation put off the works of the old man and the deceitfulness and to be renewed in the spirit of our mind to put on the new man oh yes which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness hallelujah now we'll go back to John 15 just a couple more thoughts here and laying aside the old it's a lifelong process a lifelong process of spiritual growth you know you know we will always we always need to grow we always need to feed on the word we always need to pray we always need to grow more we never arrive but there's always more our interest in the things of this world wane as our love for

God grows yes okay in John 15 start again let's read verse five again I am the vine ye are the branches he that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing if a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned if ye abide in me and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you herein is my father glorified that ye bear much fruit so shall ye be my disciples here we have in verse seven we have the master key of prayer when we come to

God in prayer does he hear you and does he answer your prayer if not examine where you are at are you abiding in him is he abiding in you are you yoked with our Lord and Savior Jesus the meek and lowly one are you living a meek and lowly life a contrite of a contrite spirit a broken and a contrite heart how is it is God answering your prayer my Bible has here on the side column here it says this is the master key to prayer is the key to answer prayer is to abide in Jesus to abide in the vine if we abide in him we can ask what we will and it shall be done unto you and our father will be glorified you know we will know the will of

God when we are abiding in him in this way and we mature in our Christian life and we learn to know our Savior we will know the will of God Ephesians says do not be ignorant but know the will of God don't be drunk with wine but be filled with the spirit if we are abiding in him and he is abiding in us he will hear our prayer and answer our prayer yes another quote should unsubmitive Christians is there such a thing is there such a thing as an unsubmitive Christian but he goes on here he says should unsubmitive Christians expect God to answer their petitions when they regularly flout his authority in their lives that word flout it means to mock and to scoff at the authority of God in your life you still have that eye on the throne and when the word of

[62 : 20] God comes you decide well I don't I don't like that I'd have to change my life if I'd accept that that's what God wants to do he wants to change you but as long as we're unsubmitive to to

God we cannot expect him to answer our prayers people trust in a grace that forgives but doesn't transform them you know we see that all the time we see that all over people pushing a grace and trusting in a grace that doesn't transform the heart it doesn't transform your life if if you if you have received the grace of God it has changed you it has transformed you it has made you a new creation in

Christ Jesus and the fruit that comes out of you will be fruit under righteousness it it will not be the wild grapes but it will be the true fruit he goes on to say such a grace does not exist and he's right he is right there is no such grace it's a man made grace out of the pit of hell and it will take millions to hell where are we today do we say yes Lord in all things is that our first response when we hear the word we say yes Lord is he your Lord is he your master is he you people want him to be their savior but they don't want him to be their lord they don't want him to be their master you can't have one and not the rest

Jesus is our lord he's our master and he's our savior who then is willing to consecrate his life to our God are we you know when we're abiding in him we we we draw our life from him we draw our sustenance from him the nutrition that feeds us it comes from him the true vine are we are we attached to the true vine is that where we get our life from are we drawing our life from some vine that's still connected to the old life to Egypt how is it

Paul when he was on that ship and everybody had given up hope what did he say he said the angel of God stood by me last night the God whose I am and who I serve that God his angel stood by me can we say along with Paul the God whose I am and who I serve or are we serving self are we serving some other God are we abiding in him are we bringing forth the fruit of righteousness are we bringing forth the fruit that the master is looking for are we bringing forth wild grapes how is it how is it with us today