

John Chapter 15 (Part 2)

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[0 : 0 0] It's Philippians chapter 1 and it's verses 9 to 11. Verses 9 to 11. Paul often wrote about his prayer life, about his prayer for God's people.

And this is just one of his prayers, the shorter one of his prayers. Verse 9. This is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.

So that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ. And particularly this line, which those of you here this morning will understand.

Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. The glory and praise of God.

Filled with the fruit of righteousness. I'd like us just to take a moment, just maybe 30 seconds. Just with our Bibles open, reading through that prayer. Making it our own prayer.

[1 : 0 6] That this evening, as we come into God's presence, that we may abound more and more with love, knowledge and so on. So let's turn it into our own words of prayer, quietly before the Lord.

And then we'll come to sing. Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1.

Colossians chapter 1 verses 3 and following. How again this theme of fruit and fruitfulness springs up all the way through the scriptures. Particularly the New Testament. We've already seen that from there.

From Philippians chapter 1. The fruit of righteousness through our Lord Jesus. But here again is Paul writing and talking about his prayers. And talking about what God has done.

Colossians 1 verse 3. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.

[2 : 3 0] And of the love you have for all the saints. The faith and love that spring up from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven. And that you've already heard about in the word of truth.

The gospel that has come to you. All over the world, this gospel is bearing fruit. And growing. Just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it.

And understood God's grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras. Our dear fellow servant who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf.

And who also told us of your love in the spirit. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we've not stopped praying for you. And asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will.

Through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this. In order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord. And may please him in every way.

[3 : 3 3] Bearing fruit in every good work. Growing in the knowledge of God. Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might. So that you may have great endurance and patience.

And joyfully giving thanks to the Father. Who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints. In the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness.

Brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. In whom we have redemption. The forgiveness of sins. By turning to John 15. And to these words of Jesus.

We looked this morning about the importance and necessity. Of what it means to be abiding or remaining in Christ. Really words that describe the Christian life.

And how that affects us. And how that is essential really. To everything. And I want us to think about something else as well.

[4 : 35] But we're going to read first of all then. Verses 1 to 4. And pick up on a couple of other verses as well. So 1 to 4.

I am the true vine. And my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit. While every branch that does bear fruit he prunes.

So that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me and I will remain in you.

No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. On to verse 8.

This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit. Showing yourselves to me my disciples. Verse 16. You did not choose me. But I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit.

[5 : 36] Fruit that will last. It was a farmer who was a prize winning apple grower. And had a huge orchard.

Whenever he took his apples to shows. They would win medals and gold standards and so on. Anyway. The land adjoining to him was bought by somebody.

A new person. A neighbor. Moved in. And the farmer thought it would be a friendly gesture to break the ice. And get to know his neighbor. By taking him around a box of his best apples. His prize winning apples.

So he went to the door. Knocked on the door. Door was open. After a few words of greeting etc. The farmer offered his box of apples to his neighbor. No thank you.

Said the neighbor. I've tried one of your apples. Sorry to say they are awfully bitter. Where did you get it from? Asked the farmer. Well some of your apple tree branches were overhanging our fence.

[6 : 37] And I just tried one of those. And I hope you don't mind. The farmer began to chuckle to himself. He said of course. That apple was bitter. I purposefully planted bitter apple trees all around the edge of my orchard.

To put off scoundrels and thieves. All my good fruit trees are in the middle. Well Jesus calls himself the true vine.

He is purposely making a comparison between himself and another vine. And between the fruit that he bears. And the fruit that the other vine bears.

One of the very common images that we find in the Old Testament. To describe or picture the people of God. Israel in the Old Testament is that of a vine or a vineyard.

You can find them everywhere. Here is just one from Psalm 80. Where David writes. Or rather Asaph writes. You brought a vine out of Egypt.

[7 : 40] You drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it. Took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade. The mighty cedars with its branches. Sent out bows.

Or boughs rather to the sea. Its shoots as far as the river. Like a vine. God cared for his people. Took them out of Egypt. Gave them a land of their own.

As a good gardener. He tended. And lovingly looked after his people. But in spite of his very best care for them. And for his providing for them all that they needed.

God received little or no fruit. From this vine Israel. Rather. They produced rotten fruit.

Here is Isaiah in chapter 5. I will sing for the one I love. A song about his vineyard. My loved one. This is the Lord. Had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

[8 : 36] He dug up and cleared it of stones. Planted it with the choicest vines. Built a watchtower in it. And cut out a wine press as well. He. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes.

But it yielded only bad fruits. It's not just Isaiah. Jeremiah and Ezekiel. All. Use the same prophetic language.

To talk about how God. Cared for. His vineyard Israel. His vine. But again and again. When he looked for good fruit. There was only bad fruits.

Or no fruits. And so when Jesus himself. In his ministry. Speaks about the vineyard. He also uses a similar parable.

In one sense. To chastise. The religious leaders of his day. Probably his most scathing parable. Is found in Matthew 21. It was a parable.

[9 : 30] That the religious leaders were told. Understood was about them. It's the parable of the tenants. And the vineyard. You probably know it quite well. We're told that.

In 21. That. Jesus began to. Teach. About a landowner. Who planted a vineyard. And looked after it. And cared for it. And put it in the hands of tenants.

But they never gave him any fruit. Or any harvest. And when he sent his servants. They attacked them. Or killed them. When he sent his own son. They murdered him.

And cast his body. Out of the vineyard. And we're told that at the end. When the owner comes back. He will. Kill them. Throw them out of the vineyard.

And give the crop. To someone else. And this is how Jesus concludes. The parable. Therefore. I tell you. That the kingdom of God. Will be taken away from you. And given to a people.

[10 : 25] Who will produce. Its. Fruit. When the chief priests. And Pharisees. Heard Jesus' parables. They knew. He's talking. About. Them. So the old testament.

Israel. Was an imperfect vine. It was always a shadow. It was never the final. Complete. Picture. The old testament. Israel. Was always pointing forward.

To the true vine. The good vine. Bearing good fruit. And that is. Of course. The Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we have. A complete bible. We don't just have.

An old testament. We don't just have. A new testament. We have. The complete. Which shows us. Again. God's wonderful. History. Of redemption. How he worked.

In and through. All of time. And history. To bring about. His purposes. In bringing about. People for himself. And as we thought. This morning. Jesus.

[11 : 20] The true vine. The perfect vine. The fulfillment. Of all the promises. Of God. Bears fruit. Through his branches. And that's us. Christians.

Does he say? I am the true vine. My father is the gardener. Then verse. Five. I am the vine. You are the branches. So the church.

Those who belong. To the Lord Jesus Christ. Are those who are the branches. Who bear fruit. This morning. We looked at how. In these verses. Jesus uses the word. Abide. Or remain. Ten times.

And we thought about that. But the other. Repeated phrase. Used eight times. At least here. Is this phrase. About fruit. And fruitfulness. And it's that.

Which I want us to concentrate. On this evening. Fruitfulness. If Christ is the true vine. And we are connected with him. United with him. Abiding in him. Then we are to be fruitful.

[12 : 16] We saw that this morning. But the question is this. Of course. Is what is the fruit. We're to bear. What does the fruit look like? And how is that fruit produced? When we did the children's talk.

With the children. We did a very simple thing. Didn't we? They were shown a picture. Of a branch. Of an apple tree. With apples hanging from it. You would not expect. To find apples hanging from a pear tree.

Or pears hanging from an apple tree. There's illustration of that. As well. In the New Testament. Where God speaks about figs. Not being on a bramble bush. And brambles not being on a fig tree.

We know. That a tree. A fruit. Only comes from. The tree. That is. The possessor of those qualities. We'll put it that way.

So we as branches. Are to bear fruit. What is the fruit. That we are to bear. What's it to resemble? Well surely. Ultimately. The fruit that we are to bear.

[13 : 13] Is the fruit. That resembles. The Lord Jesus Christ. We're to bear fruit. That. Reflects him. That's why Jesus said himself there.

That if you bear fruit. You will show yourself. To be my disciples. Verse 8. Bear much fruit. Showing yourselves. To be my disciples. As those who are in union.

With Jesus. As those through whom. The very life. And spirit of Jesus. Flows and works. We must bear fruit. That characterized. His life. That shows.

We belong to him. What is it. To be a Christian. But surely. A little Christ. In one sense. Or a reflection of Christ. A follower. A disciple. A someone who is like Christ.

Showing ourselves. To be his. Jesus says. That's why. He chose us. Verse 16. Why he chose the disciples. And every. Every branch.

[14 : 10] And believer. You did not choose me. Won't go into that. Necessarily. But we understand. What it means. That we have been chosen. By Christ. Why has he chosen us. Yes. That we might go to heaven.

Yes. That we might escape hell. Yes. That we might enjoy. God's. Blessings. And promises. Yes. That we might be gathered. In a church. But. Jesus said. I chose you.

To bow. And bear. Fruits. And notice. It's fruit. That will last. It's eternal fruit. So we're talking about. Spiritual fruit. Not talking about. Just. Things that are.

Of the earth. Things that are passing. Things that are temporary. But spiritual fruit. And that spiritual fruit. That eternal fruit. Is to bear the likeness. Of Christ.

Paul says something very similar. When he writes to the Christians at Rome. In chapter 8. Of his letter. He tells them. The reason that God. Chose them. Or predestined them.

[15 : 03] Was to be conformed. To the likeness. Of his son. And so the great purpose. That. For which we are branches.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great purpose. That we are. Those who are walking with him. And united with him. Is that we might show Christ. That we might show forth. The Lord Jesus.

That we might be like him. And so the question. We have to ask ourselves. At the outset. Is this. Do I want to be like Jesus? All of us. I'm sure.

When we were children. Had heroes. Whether they were sporting heroes. Or movie heroes. Or even people in our own family. An uncle. Or somebody else. Who we looked up to. When I grow up.

I want to be like them. But when we become Christians. There must be. Or should be. And will be. A change of heart. That says. My hero is the Lord Jesus. And I want to be. Like him.

[15 : 58] When I grow up. Is that how we pray? Because what we want. In our hearts. Is what we pray for. Isn't it?

If we want. A member of the family. To be saved. We pray for them. If we want. God to provide our. Material needs. We pray for that. We want. Somebody to be helped. In a situation.

We pray for that. Surely. One of the truest signs. That we are. Real branches. And we are part. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is that we want. To be like him.

We want to bear fruit. That reveals. That we are his. And fruit. That shows. His. Likeness. This surely. Is the prayer of Paul. Isn't it?

When he shares. So very personally. Of his own. Heart. To the church. At Philippi. Philippians 3. Verse 10. I want to know. Christ.

[16 : 51] The power of his resurrection. The fellowship of his sufferings. Becoming. Like him. In his death. Later on again. Doesn't he say.

Just very similarly. Verse 15. One thing I do. Forgetting what is ahead. Straining. Sorry. Forgetting what is behind. Straining. Towards what is ahead.

I press on towards the goal. To win the prize. Which Christ. Jesus. Called me. Heavenwards. All of us. Who are mature. Should take such a view of things.

So to be like Jesus. That's the fruit. Well what is the fruit. Of a life. United to Jesus. Like. If it's like Jesus. What. What does it look like?

Well of course. We could immediately. Naturally turn to Galatians 5. Couldn't we? Where we have this list. Of the fruit of the spirit. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Gentleness. Kindness. Goodness. Goodness. Faithfulness.

[17 : 49] Self-control. A wonderful list. Of the fruit of the spirit. And without doubt. These. Fruit of the spirit. Are very much. Like. And reflective. The person of Jesus.

Must be seen. And must be seen. In every one of us. In some measure. In fact. I would suggest. To your dear friends. That from time to time. You actually turn to that passage.

In Galatians 5. Read through. The fruit of the spirit. Slowly. And carefully. First of all. Asking yourself. Are these things. Evident. In me.

And secondly. Asking. Lord. I want more. Of these things. To be evident in me. I think that would be. A helpful exercise. But I would like us.

Just to. Restrict ourselves. In one sense. To the passage. We have here. And to the three fruit. Which characterize. The life of the Lord Jesus. As he speaks.

[18 : 41] And shares. And talks. With the disciples. Here in chapter 15. Because I think. That they are a good summary. Of ultimately. What we are. Seeking. After. In our own lives.

The first of them. We've picked up. This morning. And I want to. Reiterate. Is of course. The fruit of love. Love. Verse 9. As the Father has loved me.

So have I loved you. Now remain. Abide. In my. Love. The very first. On the list. Of the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5.22. The fruit of the Spirit.

Is love. We know that. When we read. 1 Corinthians 13. The very greatest. Attribute. Is love. We know that. Jesus tells us. That the. This new commandment.

Is to love. Should be no surprise. Of course. That we find it. In Jesus's. Life. And. We certainly do. Wherever we look.

[19 : 38] Wherever we turn. His life is. Marked. With love. But Jesus talks about. The perfect love. Doesn't he. Between the persons. Of the Trinity. Which is seen. In the life.

Of the Lord Jesus. As the Father. Has loved me. So have I loved you. That's where Jesus speaks. About his love. For the Father. There's that incredible. Glorious. Mysterious love.

That existed. From before the world. Was made. Between the Father. And the Son. And the Spirit. God did not create us. Because he needed. Something. Or someone. To love. He already enjoyed.

That perfect love. Within the persons. Of the Godhead. Mysterious. In the sense. That we can't fully. Understand it. But glorious. And wonderful. All the same. But of course.

We know. That the love of Christ. Is the greatest love. Of all. And epitomizes his life. Because of the cross. Don't we? Here's verse 13. Greater love.

[20 : 33] Has no one than this. That he lay down his life. For his friends. What's he talking about? We know what he's talking about. Because we've seen it again. And again. Earlier in chapter 10. Where Jesus says.

I'm the good shepherd. I lay down my life. For the sheep. It's nothing but the cross. Is it? It's Jesus telling us. And speaking to us. That in the cross. We see the love of God.

Demonstrated. Romans in chapter 5. God demonstrates. Proclaims. Makes known.

Makes manifest. In this. While we were sinners. Christ died. For us. Dear friends. Again. Another.

Helpful exercise. I'm sure. For each one of us. Would be. If we were to think more. Of the cross. We would never doubt. God's love for us. You know. Those times.

[21 : 27] When things are difficult. And. Problematic. And we find ourselves. Perhaps a little bit heavy. And the weight of the world. On our shoulders. And we begin. Perhaps. To a certain degree.

To doubt the love of God. For us. We would lift our eyes again. To the cross. We would have no doubt. Would we? If only we would meditate. Upon the cross. That Christ. Went there.

In love for us. And so if Christ. The very true vine. Emanates love. Then the branches. Must also. Bear the fruit of love.

Love must be seen. It must be observed. It must be noticed. It must be. Marked upon. Again. To reinforce.

The truth. Of what Jesus is saying. And what he's talking about. We have. Him repeating. This commandment. Love one another. As I have loved you. He's already said it. Earlier on. In chapter 13.

[22 : 25] Hasn't he? He says it there. In verse 12. My command is this. Love each other. As I have loved you. Verse 17. This is my command. Love each other. I think this is probably.

One of the most challenging things. That Jesus has to say to us. Because. It would be easier. For him to say. Love me. Wouldn't it?

Love me. That's the sign. That's the proof. That's the evidence. That you are a Christian. And a follower of Christ. Is that you love Christ. Now we know that's true. But Jesus doesn't say that.

Does he? He says. Love. One another. That's much more difficult. Isn't it? We can love Jesus.

Because he's lovely. Isn't he? He's beautiful. He's magnificent. He's glorious. He's gracious. He's patient. He's all the things we're not. To love one another.

[23 : 22] Is much more difficult. But here's the fruit. Here's the nub. If I can put it that way. We've got to love one another. And it.

I know it's hard at times. But really. It shouldn't be as difficult. As we make it out to be. Love one another. It's the fruit. Of my life.

In everything that I do. There should be the savor. Of love. In my attitudes. To one another. There should be.

The flavor of love. In my judgments. Of others. In my words. To others. In my actions. And reactions. To the things that they do.

That upset me. There must be love. Do they? Can I honestly say. Can I honestly search my own heart.

[24 : 26] And say. That in my life. The things that I say. And do. The attitudes I have. To those who are brothers and sisters. In Christ. Always. Flavored. With love. Love.

And I'm sure like myself. You'll reply. Not nearly as much. As they should do. Nearly as much.

As they should do. So the first fruit is love. The second fruit. That Jesus speaks about here. That is evident in his own life.

And must be evident in ours. Is his obedience. Obedience. Verse 10. If you obey my commands. You will remain in my love. Just as I have obeyed.

My father's commands. And remain in his love. Again. It's so apparent. Isn't it? All the way through the life of Jesus. Is obedience to the father. I've not come to do my will.

[25 : 21] He says early in John. But the will of him who sent me. Now this is a great mystery to us. Isn't it? This is one of the mysteries of. What theologians call the incarnation.

God becoming a man. The son of God. Becoming human. We know that God the father. God the son. And God the spirit. Are one. God. Equal in authority.

Equal in godness. And yet for the purpose of our salvation. We know that the son. Humbled himself. And placed himself.

On the level of God's servant. So that he could fulfill the work. Of saving. God's people. It's Philippians 2 isn't it? That incredible passage. Just read it again for you.

Just for a moment. Part of it. Who being. This is Christ Jesus. Being in very nature God. Did not consider equality. With God. Something to be grasped.

[26 : 15] That word. Something to be grasped. Or translated there. Has become. Better understood. To mean. Something to be used. For his own advantage. But made himself nothing.

Taking the very nature of a servant. Being made in human likeness. Being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself. And listen. Became obedient. To death. Even death.

On a cross. Who is he obedient to? He was obedient to the father. In love for us. In a desire to. To glorify God.

Christ himself. Who has. And always will be. Divine. And God. Humbled himself. And became. Obedient. Now if Jesus. Became obedient.

Though equal with the father. How much more should we be obedient. To Jesus. Who are nowhere near. Equal to him. We're not divine. We are not lord.

[27 : 12] We may think of ourselves. As some do. As the God of our world. Lord. How much more should we be obedient. To him who was obedient. To the father.

So just as love. Is one fruit of the. Of the. Of our union with Christ. So obedience. Is another fruit. Submitted obedience.

So we ask ourselves. The question. Is this true of me? Is my chief desire. To do what Jesus wants. Yes. To be like him. And to do what he wants.

Who is at command. Of my life. Who is at the steering wheel. As it were. Of my choices. My relationships. My time. My money. Who decides? Greats.

I believe this is the acid test. Isn't it? One of the things that Jesus spoke about. When he comes again. Is he says. There will be many people. Who say to me. Lord. Lord. Did we not do this?

[28 : 12] And did we not do that? And did we not do the other? And Jesus says. Away from me. You workers of iniquity. I never knew you. By just mouthing the words.

Lord. Jesus said. It's not those. Who say. Lord. Lord. But those who do. The will of the father. In heaven. So the question is. Who is the Lord.

Of my life. Who am I obedient. To. Who am I submitted. To. Can we. Answer. Though imperfectly.

I want this. Jesus. To rule over me. I want this. Jesus. To be the king. Of my life. I want Jesus. To be. The one who. Is in control.

Obedience. Is a key fruit. Of the Christian life. And thirdly. Here. Again. Just in this passage. We see. We mentioned these things.

[29 : 12] Already this morning. We see that. Joy. Is a fruit. Of being. Like Jesus. Verse. Verse. Eleven. I have told you this.

So that my. Joy. May be in you. And that your joy. May be. Complete. Jesus speaks about his own joy. Doesn't he?

And sharing his own joy. With them. Earlier on. In chapter 14. Verse 27. He speaks there. About sharing something. Which was his own. As well. Peace.

Peace. Peace. I leave with you. My peace. I give you. Here it's joy. My joy. I give you. He desires. That all of us.

Should bear the fruit of joy. That really does sort of. Shake us up a bit. Doesn't it? Particularly some of us.

[30 : 12] Who have the great ability. To be serious. Which is important. Sober minded. Which is good. But really. Do we. Show the fruit of joy.

Joy. Is it evident. In our lives. And again. We learn this. That joy. Comes through. The knowledge. That we are loved.

And through obedience. To Christ. Do you notice that? Jesus says. If you obey. My commands. You will remain. In my love. Just as I have. Obeyed my father's command.

And remain in his love. I've told you this. That my joy. May be in you. In other words. Jesus is joy. We know that. Because elsewhere. He says. My food and drink. Is to do the will. Of him who sent me.

The joy. That Jesus found. Was in doing. The father's. Will. In obedience to him. Because he knew. That he was loved. By the father. And our joy. Is dear friends. Is knowing.

[31 : 06] That we are loved. By Christ. And in doing. His will. It's not to be a duty. It's not to be a burden. It's not to be an obstacle. It's not to be something. That we have to do.

It's a joy. And we've lost it. Haven't we? We've lost it. Now perhaps we might think. Well Jesus didn't seem to be all that joyful.

When we think about it. He was called the man of sorrows. So why does he speak about his joy? Well. We know that Jesus himself. Was a man of joy. Luke tells us. That Jesus full of the Holy Spirit.

Filled with joy from the Holy Spirit. When we read Hebrews in chapter 12. We're told of Jesus. For the joy that was set before him. Endured the cross.

In the face of his crucifixion. And his death. He was able to have joy. And so we understand. That joy is not just a happiness. Or a passing feeling. It's not just something that comes and goes.

[32 : 07] It's joy that is able to blossom. In the harshest of conditions. Facing death. And of course then we understand.

That this joy must have a source. Outside of itself. Joy comes from. Not our situation. Joy comes from.

Not from ourselves. Whipping it up in that sense. But it comes from God. The joy that comes from being assured. That we are loved by God.

And that we are living in a life. Which is pleasing to God. That's where the joy comes from. Something like. Nothing the world has ever seen.

Or known. But it belongs to the Christian. It belongs to you. And it belongs to me. Because we are connected to Christ. The source of joy. So three fruits.

[33 : 05] Love. Obedience. Joy. If we were all. Magically changed into trees.

What fruit would be hanging from my branches. And yours. I believe that for every Christian. There would be.

And must be some fruit. Love. Obedience. And joy. But here's again. What Jesus has to say. He wants us to have more. He wants us to be.

Greedy. Notice what we read. Verse two. He cuts off every branch in me. That bears no fruit. While every branch that does bear fruit. But he prunes. Why?

So that it will be even. More fruitful. More fruitful. Verse eight. This is to my father's glory. That you bear. Much fruits. Jesus doesn't say.

[34 : 06] You're bearing some fruit. Just be satisfied. You've got. You've got some fruit. Just be content with that. One of the wonderful things. About the gospel. I believe is this. It not only satisfies our thirst.

For the things of God. But it creates a greater thirst. For more of the things of God's. That's the wonderful paradox. Of the Christian life. We are as saved. As we ever shall be.

We are as loved. As we ever shall be. We are as holy. In one sense. In the sight of God. As we ever shall be. But we long to have more. We long to learn more. Of that salvation. We long to be a little more holy. We long to be more like Christ.

And of course. That's a very. Common. Or accepted law. Isn't it? In the whole of creation. That where there is life. There must be growth. That's both true physically.

That's both true spiritually. Where there is life. There is growth. The plant. The person. Whatever it may be. The little puppy that you buy. Which is just able to hold in your hand.

[35 : 09] It's not going to stay that size. Is it? It's going to come a monster dog. And fill the house. That's not. It's a bit of an in joke. But don't worry about it. Everything grows.

Because it's alive. If it stops growing. It's dead. If we stop. If you. As a baby. Stay in a baby stage. You know there's something wrong. And so it must be spiritually.

Jesus talks there. Bearing more fruit. Bearing much fruit. And so we come to a question. Am I growing. In Christ. Is the fruit increasing.

Is it noticeable. And again. That isn't always. To be seen in the things we do. We've got to get away from that sometimes. As Christians. We keep talking about being saved by faith.

And the work of the spirit. And then we get caught up with these things. Don't we? Here. Here's the growth. It'll be seen there. Yes but it's here. My attitude. My prayer life.

[36 : 06] My character. God the father. Is the gardener. It's his work in us. That produces this fruit. And it's his work in us. That makes us more fruitful.

Everything comes through. Christ. And so he prunes us. Notice that. Cuts off every branch in me. That bears no fruit. That's. We thought about that this morning.

False branches. Those who outwardly may look like they're Christians. But spiritually have no union with Christ. But he says. Every branch that does bear fruit. He prunes so it'll be even more fruitful.

He prunes us. He cuts away the dead wood. He cuts away the fruitless parts of our lives. That hinder our productivity. And there's two ways he does that.

One which is very obviously here. And one which. Is more obvious to the rest of scripture. Two ways. First of all. God prunes us through his word.

[37 : 08] Verse three. Now you'll notice there's. Interesting change of word there. And those of you who know you're Greek. And I know all of you do. Read your Greek New Testaments nightly.

It says. You are already clean. Clean. Well the word clean. And the word prune. Are the same word. So in one sense. He cuts off every branch in me.

That bears no fruit. While every branch that does bear fruit. He cleans. So that it will be even more fruitful. You already clean. Of course. It helps us to understand the word prune.

So all believers. Have already experienced God's pruning. His cleansing. Haven't we? When we become a Christian. God cleans us. And cleanses us. A similar reflection upon Jesus.

Washing the disciples feet. Back in John 13. Remember what Jesus said to them. When he washed their feet. A person who's had a bath. Needs only to wash his feet. His whole body is clean.

[38 : 06] And you are clean. He said to his disciples. No not every one of you. Judas. Is who he's speaking about. For he knew who would betray him. That's why he said. That everyone wants clean.

So to be cleansed. Of our sin. To be clean. In God's sight. Is what happens at salvation. But what happens. Is that God continues. To clean us. That way.

To prune us. That we might become. More and more like Christ. That we might be more fruitful. That we might bear. More of his likeness. In the world. And God does that.

Through his word. His word. His word is his pruning. Knife. Hebrews in chapter. Four. The word of God.

Living and active. Too sharp. As a two edged sword. Word of God. Is living and active. Sharper than any two edged sword.

[39 : 02] God's word. Is used by God. To prune us. The Holy Spirit. Applies God's word. As we read it. As we hear it preached. So that by the word.

We are cleansed. From those. Hanging on bits of sin. In our lives. Those wrong thoughts. Those wrong attitudes. Those wrong habits. Which do not glorify God.

I'm sure we've all had. Something of that experience. We've been under the preaching. Of the word. Or we're reading the word. And. Something's happened. Spirit of God. Has taken that word. And applied it to us.

Very personally. And we've seen. That there's something. That needs to be cut away. Doubt with. Removed. Changed. In our attitude. With its forgiveness. Of somebody. Or patience.

With some situation. Or letting go. Of something. Which we know. We've held on to. For too long. Dear friends. We must be very. Careful. Not to reject. The pruning hand.

[40 : 00] Of our heavenly father. Because his purpose. In doing so. Is to make us ever more. Fruitful. That's why it's so important. We read the word. We thought about this morning.

Didn't we? We love the word. We want to know. What God is saying to us. There's one other thing. That God uses. To prune us. It's not clear here. Though I think it's fair.

To say. That it's part of this. Sense of God. Pruning. Cutting away. And that is. Trials. In our lives. Romans. In chapter five. There's a couple of places.

We can turn to. One is Romans five. In verse three. Where Paul writes this. Not only so. He's talked about rejoicing. In the hope. Of the glory of God.

He says. Not only so. We also rejoice. In our sufferings. Why? Because we know. That suffering. Produces. Perseverance. Perseverance. Character.

[40 : 54] And character. Hope. There's a product. When we suffer trials. There is a product. There is a fruitfulness. That's being born. In our lives. Comes out again.

Particularly in Hebrews. In chapter 12. Where. The writer talks about God. Disciplining us. Through trials. And hardships. He says.

At the end of these things. No discipline. Seems pleasant. At the time. But painful. Later on. However. It produces. And in every translation. Apart from the NIV. It says. Produces the fruit.

Of righteousness. The NIV. It talks about the harvest. Of righteousness. And peace. Those who've been trained. By it. So trials. Are God's secateurs.

Which he cuts away. Those things. In our lives. Which often. Can be a snare. To our fruitfulness. Like a good gardener. He cuts away.

[41 : 48] The bind wheat. The ivy. That grows. Over the vine. And slowly strangles it. And so there are times. When God needs to strip away.

Some of those. Parts of our lives. Those Klingons. As it were. That slowly. But surely. Smother the spiritual life. Within us. And the removal of those things.

Is often painful. Can be done through. Times of loss. Times of difficulty. Times of suffering. Times of hardship.

All sorts of painful trials. Which ultimately. Are for our spiritual. Good. As we saw there.

In Hebrews. Chapter 12. Later on. However. It produces the fruit. Of righteousness. And peace. That's why James. Tells the believers.

[42 : 43] There doesn't he. In his letter. To rejoice. When we suffer trials. Of many kinds. He says the same sort of thing. As Paul. Because. Because they produce.

Perseverance. And here. Paul again. Rejoicing. In suffering. Because we know it produces. It's not in vain. And this is the thing.

We need to take on board. Again and again. Don't we in our lives. One of the things. We find so difficult. That when we are facing trials. It is not to take away. From our lives. But to add to our lives.

It's not to cause us. Distress and loss. But to cause us. Gain and blessing. So God prunes us. Prunes us.

That we may be more fruitful. For his glory. This is why Christ saved you. Dear friends. This is why he. Made you a part of the vine. And grafted you. As it were. Into Christ.

[43 : 40] By grace. That you and I. May be fruitful. In love. In obedience. In joy. So can we pray.
Can we include. In our daily prayer time. Lord prune me. Prune me. Of those things. In my
life. Which take away. From the fruitfulness.
That you want to bring about. In me. Lord. Strip away. Anything that. Hinders your glory.
Being seen. In my life. Make me more fruitful.
Don't be content. Dear friends. God has much. Much more. That he. Seeks to do. In us.
And through us. For the glory. Of his name. Six.
Four. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven.
Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven. Five.

[44 : 49] Seven. Seven. Nine.

Seven. Fured through the fiercest, proudest storm On threats, O God, on depths of
peace And fears are still my striving cease My comfort, O God, my only Lord Here in the
love of Christ I stand The gifts in life, the fear in death This is the power of Christ in me
From lifeless pride to final breath Jesus who runs my destiny The power of hell must be
the man

And let the blood be from his hand Till he returns from close to home Here in the love of
Christ I stand May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through May
your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
The one who calls you is faithful And he will do it The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be
with us all Amen