Abiding in the True Vine

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Date: 12 May 2024

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[0:00] John chapter 15. I'm going to be in verses 1 through 10.

! Now in our text today, Jesus is with his disciples in Jerusalem. It is Passover week. He has just celebrated the Passover with his disciples. And during their time in the upper room, there are many things that Jesus taught and said to his disciples.
Some of them were shocking and troubling. Others of them were wonderful promises that Jesus had given to his disciples.
While they were there, Jesus shocked his disciples by taking on the form of a servant and washing their feet. He had celebrated the Passover in a new way that pointed to his body and blood being broken for us and spilled.
Jesus also revealed while he was up there that there would be a traitor in their midst. Someone who had served alongside them so closely for these years of Jesus' ministry. And even prophesied that Peter, his most zealous disciple, was going to deny him.
[1:31] But in the midst of all of these troubling things that they had learned, he also gives great reassurance with wonderful promises. John 14.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And he reassured them that when he leaves, he goes to prepare a place for them. He goes on to promise that he's not going to leave them as orphans either.
That he is going to send the great comforter, the counselor, the Holy Spirit to dwell within them. And after they rise to leave the upper room, they begin their trek to the garden.
And it's somewhere in between the upper room and the garden that our text today takes place where Jesus has this conversation. And again, gives them wonderful words that would reassure them.
So if you all would stand together as we read God's word today. John chapter 15, starting in verse 1. I am the true vine, and my father is the vinedresser.
[2:41] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes. That it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.
I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing.
If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.
By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the father has loved me, so have I loved you.
[3:46] Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. Just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide his love. And going on to verse 11.

These things I have spoken to you. That my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. This is the word of the Lord. Church, you may have a seat. I am the vine.
There are seven I am statements in the gospel of John. I am the bread of life. John chapter 6. I am the light of the world.
John chapter 8. I am the gate for the sheep. John chapter 10. Also in John chapter 10, I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life.

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John chapter 11. I am the way, the truth, and the life. John chapter 14. And finally, our text today. I am the true vine. In all of these I am statements, Jesus is trying to tell his disciples that he is the ultimate source of satisfaction.
[4:51] That the true hope of being made right with God, that being pleasing to the Father, it's all wrapped up in him. You don't need to go any further than Christ. Jesus is also proclaiming his deity.

His oneness with God. I am is one of the most notable ways that God has described himself. And Jesus, in proclaiming these I am statements over himself, he's not leaving much to the imagination about who he is claiming to be.
He is God. He is a co-equal part of the Trinitarian Godhead. And if you believe anything less than that about Jesus, it is not a saving belief in Jesus.
To have a saving faith in Jesus Christ, you need to believe everything that Jesus says about himself. No matter how radical the claims.
And these were very radical claims then. There were lots of people that had come before Christ and after Christ that claimed to be the Messiah. But none of them claimed to be the Son of God or to have equality with God.
[5:58] So these were very radical claims that Jesus makes. But we have to believe them. They must be true. Otherwise, what we do is we make Jesus out to be a liar.

With every I am statement, Jesus is reminding the people that he is God and the flesh and his sufficiency to meet our greatest needs.
So Jesus was no stranger to using metaphors to illustrate heavenly messages. And they were always metaphors that people could really, you know, latch on to.
That they could relate to. And we see Jesus, he's really doing this same thing as he's talking to his disciples. He's talking about a vineyard, a vine. There were lots of gardeners back then, lots of farmers.
This is something that they could have related to. But also what Jesus was trying to do was he was trying to prepare his disciples for a very drastic change that was coming.
[7:01] Jesus was in Jerusalem as the better Passover lamb to be sacrificed for our sins. He was about to die and ascend back to his father in heaven.

And naturally, this is going to change the nature of their relationship. Having for the last three years walked beside Jesus, heard his teachings with their own ears, being able to reach out and touch him.
Jesus was not going to be there. He was going to be in heaven with his father. So naturally, this changes the dynamic of this relationship.
But what Jesus is trying to do in this text and a lot of these other texts, he's saying it's not over. This isn't the end of our relationship. We can still have a deep abiding connection.
You can still abide in me or remain in me, depending on the translation that you have. He wants them to know how they can remain in him and bear fruit that is pleasing to the father.
[8:06] And as you read through this text today, we're going to see several words repeated a lot. The first one is abide or remain in me, again, depending on the translation that you have. Another one is bearing fruit.

There are several other characters that are mentioned in our text today. There's the vine, which is Jesus. He proclaimed himself as the true and better vine. There is the vine dresser.
That is God the father. There's the branches. Now, there's actually two types of branches that we're going to see in this story. There's the branches that bear fruit. And there are the branches that don't bear fruit.
And then lastly, there's the fruit. Now, just so we all know what the fruit is, in case you're new here and this is new language for you, when we talk about fruit, and we're going to talk about it a lot this morning, what we are talking about is righteous living that stems from a relationship with Christ. Righteous living that brings kingdom growth in the world around you and in yourself. So as we say fruit this morning, as we go throughout the sermon, that is what we're referring to.
[9:19] Now, this passage, it can teach us many things. There are books that have been written about this passage. There are sermon series, whole series that have been done on this passage. So my goal today is to pick two of the high points of this and also to give you the main idea of this text.

And that main idea is this. True disciples will bear fruit. So how do we bear fruit?

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What do all four of these things that we've mentioned have in common with each other? And what is the father's role in it? Our first truth that we see today from this text is that the father will prune for fruitfulness.
He will prune for fruitfulness. Just reading verses one and two again, Jesus says, I'm the true vine and my father is the vine dresser.
Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. In this particular I am statement, Jesus says that he is the true vine.
[10:34] He is using an imagery from the Old Testament. In the Psalms, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Israel is often referred to as a vineyard or as a fertile vine that God himself dresses.

That God himself has planted in a good land so that they could be this vine that shows the life giving goodness of God to a lost world.
But unfortunately, as we read these prophecies, Israel is always found bearing fruit of unrighteousness. Isaiah 5, 4, God says this, 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? See, God has chosen Israel to be this vine, again, that shows the life giving goodness of God.
But because Israel has failed in that, because they have bore fruit of unrighteousness, unrighteousness, God is the good vine dresser, and he is going to prune. Now, Jesus is saying here that he is the true vine.
[11:46] Where Israel has failed to show a lost world the life giving goodness of God, Jesus is now coming as the true and better vine to succeed where Israel has fallen short.

But what does pruning look like? I am not a gardener. I've never claimed to be a gardener, have any interest in it.
Really, my wife does, not so much me. The only growing things I really care about are my children. And I struggle to keep them alive sometimes. But one experience that I do have with pruning, I guess, when I was growing up, my parents had several acres, and it was heavily treed.
There were trees everywhere. Now, trees, as they grow, branches die, they fall off, it makes a mess. And sometimes, dead branches, they don't fall off.
They just hang out there. They stay there. So, my dad and brother and I, we would always get our pole saws, and we would go out there, we would cut these branches off to better the health of the tree.
[12:55] These heavy branches would be weighing the trees down. And on top of that, they were just ugly. So, we would cut them off. And every month or so, we would have enough branches to build a bonfire.

Now, I don't know how many neighbors men you have met, but we are some of the finest pyros in the state of Oklahoma. We love fire. We had a little fire going in my driveway yesterday, and Titus was so excited with it.
He got his little stick and was catching it on fire and running around saying, I'm the master of the fire. I'm so proud of him. Well, this one particular time, it was July.
We had just gotten done launching off fireworks, and we had this nice big pile of brush that was ready to be burned. Have you all ever heard of Saturn rockets?
Okay. They make a really high-pitched sound. They shoot really fast. It's unmistakable. Well, I had a box of what I thought was empty Saturn rockets that I threw into the burning pile.
[13:57] Well, my dad and I gathered around the pile of dead branches, and we thought we're going to light this thing on fire. So we get the gas. Gasoline makes everything better if you're a pyro.

And we start this fire, and we're watching with a sense of pride as this branch pile is going up in flames, and all of a sudden, I hear this unmistakable whistle.
This thing shoots out of the burn pile, and it nails my dad right in the chest. And I see him stumble back and trip over the bench that's behind him. Now, he was okay. He was angry, but he was fine.
And I tell you that story because, first of all, that's funny. Looking back on it, that's pretty funny. But second, I want to paint this picture of dead branches.
What do you do with them? You don't leave them on the tree. You don't put them back on the ground, and hopefully they regain life and start bearing fruit. That's not what you do with them. You throw them on the fire.

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[15:01] You burn them. You get rid of them. Now, again, we go back to the main idea of this text that the Father wants his saints to bear much fruit, and he is going to tend and prune his saints to that end.

If you are a believer, God is going to remove the things in your life that make you unfruitful because he is the good vine dresser. I've seen new believers and mature believers get tripped up with many sinful vices that they are not willing to let go of, and the result is they aren't fruitful anymore.
They stop bearing fruit. There are many different sins that we can fall into. That's why the applications of this text are numerous. But there are many sins that we can fall into, but I wanted to hone in on a couple of big ones that I've just seen in my time in ministry, especially in student ministry.
Perhaps one of the biggest stumbling blocks that I see in many believers are bad relationships. Too many saints have decided to yoke themselves to unbelievers, whether it be in a romantic nature or in a deep abiding friendship.
Now, church, we obviously need to be in the world, all right? We need to have relationships that allow us to share the gospel with those that are in desperate need of it, but we cannot enter into a relationship that is going to lead us away from Christ and hamper our fruitfulness.
[16:37] The line between having friends in the world and being friends with the world gets very easily blurred. And when it does, if you are somebody that is not solid in your faith, you will lose your fruitfulness.

We see consequences of this in scripture. The most notable was King Solomon. I want to read this passage from 1 Kings chapter 11. Solomon was said to be the wisest king in Israel that ever was and that ever would be.
So in 1 Kings chapter 11, says now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, Hittite women from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, you shall not enter into marriage with them.
Neither shall they with you for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines and his wives turned away his heart.
For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God as was the heart of David, his father.
[18:04] This was the man that was supposed to be the wisest man. But even his heart was led astray by being unequally yoked.

Now a familiar proverb, Proverbs 13, 20 says, whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Church, the Bible says a lot about the relationships that we allow ourselves to get invested in.
And yes, sometimes the relationships that we allow to identify who we are. If you are actively seeking to live for the Lord, odds are that you are going to be at odds with those that are lost, that are in your life.
It's just gonna happen. At some point, there's gonna be a line in the sand that you cannot cross. And it's at that point that you are going to have to decide where your devotion and your love lies. Even in matters of family. Matthew 10, 37, Jesus says, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.
[19:14] And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Church, God's desire is for you to follow him and bear much fruit.

And God is not going to tolerate anything getting in the way of that. Perhaps the greatest pruning that God works in our lives, this is the greatest pruning that God works in our lives, is at the time of salvation when he cleanses us from the deadness of our sins.
Galatians 2, 20 says, I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.
We go on to another familiar passage that John or that Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus. Ephesians 2, and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the

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desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.
[20:42] By grace, you have been saved. You can't have it both ways. You cannot claim to be a disciple of Christ while still actively choosing to bear fruit of unrighteousness.

And when you have been made new in Christ, the Father is going to begin the work of pruning you, of removing those old parts of yourself away. One of the things that I have learned from Nicole, again, is she is the gardener in our family.
I've learned this about pruning. When I've watched her out there gardening, she starts snipping away at branches that look alive. They're still green. They have leaves on them.
Why is she getting rid of them? Well, in these little beanstalks that she has, it's because there's no beans on them. They're not bearing any fruit. Yes, they're alive, but there's no fruit on them.
And what happens is those fruitless branches begin to take nutrients that should be going to the rest of the plant that is bearing fruit. So she removes it.
[21:45] Now in our life, maybe there are branches in your life that aren't inherently sinful, but they do distract. They take up time.

They take up resources that could be used for bearing much fruit for the kingdom. Satan is good about that, about finding things that seem like they are unsinful, but perverting them to his own means.
You know, just a personal testimony here. I had to delete my Facebook account. One of the things that I always found myself doing, I would find myself spending like two hours just swiping through the news articles, the negative things that are going on in our world, listening to people air their relationship garbage on Facebook.
And I would find myself leaving that, you know, death swipe that you get in just feeling very negative, not edified. I would spend two hours doing that.
And then the next minute, I would be complaining about the fact that I don't have time to do things like read my Bible. I had to delete my Facebook account. That was a useless branch in my life that Satan was using to distract me from further fruitfulness.
[23:02] Another one, maybe are you a workaholic? There's nothing wrong with working hard at your job, but sometimes we allow ourselves to sacrifice the things that we shouldn't in pursuit of these worldly gains.

Are you sacrificing being a good husband or wife or a good father? Does fellowship with the body of Christ become something that is expendable for you?
Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters. We will love one and hate the other. And as long as you allow your old self to flourish in your life and you stay connected to these useless things that control your time and distract you from further fruitfulness, you are not going to bear the fruit of righteousness that God is calling you to bear.
Your heart is going to be divided. The love and affection that should belong to the father is going to be used to maintain something else in your life, something that the father would rather prune.
Not so that you are less of a person, but so that you can become more of the new creation that he is constantly working to make you into. Pruning isn't fun.
[24:21] I mean, it involves severing things that we used to be attached to. If pruning were fun, it wouldn't involve a knife. But from God's word, I can make this promise to you that it is a good work that has to happen.

Philippians 1.6 says, I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus. Believer, God has started a good work in you.
And he hasn't finished yet. And the pruning will take place through his word. God is going to expose the unfruitful parts of our life through different means.
Maybe it's through trials. Maybe it's through sinful failures. He is going to expose those things that need to be pruned in our life. And he is going to convict us with his Holy Spirit that these things need to be removed.
And he will prune us through his word. He will use his word to prune us, to make us more fruitful and to become more like Christ.
[25:29] Everything that we need for righteous living and kingdom work is found in God's word. You don't need to look any further than this. It's all here. Everything that God wants us to know

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about him, the image of Christ that he wants us to be conformed into, it's all in his Bible.

Now there's another pruning that the Father does as well. There are many people who have attached themselves to Jesus, claiming to be his disciples, but truly are not.
Or maybe it's somebody that has a loose cultural affiliation to Christianity and they claim that as part of their identity because that's just the environment that they grew up in.
Now I'm fully aware that I have no ability to judge the true contents of somebody's heart. That's not my place to do that, but what the Bible does do is it does give us definite indicators that we can look for in people's life that shows us what is in their heart.
Matthew 7, verses 15 through 20, Jesus says this, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.
[26:43] You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
Thus, you will recognize them by their fruit. The true hallmark of a disciple is always going to be their fruit.
And even if we miss the signs, which is possible, we are all flawed, even if we miss the signs that they are a false believer, the good vine dresser will not be deceived.
And he will prune every branch that was not truly in Christ. That's why you get this story in the gospel that says, didn't we do all these great things in your name?
[27:48] Jesus says, I never knew you. There are many people that think they are in Christ. And one day at the final judgment, they are going to find out that they were tragically mistaken.

that's what this passage is referring to when it talks about removing fruitless branches from the vine, which is Jesus. Removing those that were not his true disciples.
And this is talking about the final judgment that they will face. It's too bad that Judas had already been dismissed from the Passover when Jesus was talking about this.
Would have given him a lot to think on as he was betraying our Lord. an application question that I have just from this point is, is there anything in your life that is keeping you from bearing fruit?
Is your heart divided between the things of your old self and the pursuit of the new self? if there is anything in your life that you are actively clinging to, that you know is not bearing fruit, the response is repentance and moving forward, grounding your life in God's word to pursue the image of Christ in your life.
[29:10] Now the second truth that we have in our text today is abiding in Jesus is how we bear fruit.

Jesus is drawing a clear connection for us here. Going back to verse 5, actually verses 3 through 5 here, it says, already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.
abide in me and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.
Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing. Jesus is making a clear connection for us here that as the vine, as the true and better vine, he is the source of life and we are utterly dependent on him.
We are hopeless apart from him. We cannot bear fruit if we are not connected to Jesus in an actual abiding relationship that is founded on genuine faith that he is everything that he has claimed to be.
[30:28] Unfortunately, though, in our culture of Christianity that we have here, we try to answer that question of how do we abide in Jesus by boiling it down to a simple confession of faith.

If you just confess Jesus as Savior, then you are good. That is not what God's word says. You cannot confess Christ as Lord and then forget about him again until you think you need him.
That is not what Jesus has laid out for us in his word and that is not what he has promised to us either. He says, abide in me and I in you.
This is an actual relationship that Jesus is talking about where we abide in his love and he returns that by abiding in us.
James, one of the disciples in his epistle says that if you draw near to God, he will draw near to you.
We have a God that desires to be close to us, that desires to have that intimate connection with those that are his true disciples, those that are truly attached to Christ.

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[31:44] Jesus may ask a lot of us, says to bear your cross, to follow him, but of all the things that he asks for us, it pales in comparison to what he has promised us.

And this abiding relationship he is talking about is the foundation of the abundant life that Jesus is calling us to live. So I think it's important again to answer this question, how do we abide in Jesus? First, there is an initial cleansing that needs to take place. The verses that we just read, it says, already you have been made clean because of the word I have spoken.
the disciples had already been made clean. They had been sitting under Jesus' teachings for three years now. They were made clean by the gospel that they had been hearing Christ proclaim all these years.
They had come to believe through the words of Christ that Jesus was the son of God, that he is the son of God. So yes, these disciples, they were cleansed.
[32:53] The gospel is what cleanses us. the gospel is also what keeps us as believers. Just because we have been cleansed, it doesn't mean that we're not going to struggle with sin anymore.

Otherwise, the father wouldn't need to prune his disciples. We still struggle with sin. First, John says this to the believing church, says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
So this initial cleansing, it's not a one and done thing. God doesn't just save us and forgets about us. He's pruning us. He's forgiving us.
He is sanctifying us. He is completing that good work that Philippians talked about. Now, the next way that we abide in Jesus is that there is a measure of obedience that is expected of us.
There's a measure of obedience that is expected of us. In verse 10, Jesus says this, if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love.
[34:07] As believers, we are called to live a life of faithful obedience to Jesus' commands. That is how we abide in his love. If we trust in Jesus, if we truly love him, then we are going to live a life of obedience to him because we have a genuine faith in him because we love him.

This isn't an obedience that is begrudging. That's why Jesus said that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. If we truly trust our Lord and Savior, we will desire to live in obedience and bear that fruit that he is calling us to bear.
This goes all the way back to the premise of the I am statements that Jesus is trying to tell us. He is all we need to be one with the father. He is the fulfillment of our greatest needs.
But if we refuse to follow his commands, we are telling Jesus that we don't love him enough to follow him in obedience. That he is not worth following.
Following Jesus is not just a simple confession of faith. It involves a lifetime of loving obedience to a Savior that we have come to know and abide in who has called us out of darkness.
[35:26] This abiding relationship, I think a practical effect that this has on our lives is that it doesn't just give us hope for the life to come.

Yes, that is our ultimate destination. That is where the good work is going to be complete. to live through the life until we reach eternity one day.
Church, we live in a broken world and the righteous are not exempt from that brokenness. We're all going to face it at some point, whether it be through relationship issues, sickness, death, financial problems, whatever it is that this broken world would throw at us, I want to submit to you this truth that you will not be able to effectively lean on a God that you have refused to abide in up until this point. I've got to see many believers walk through grief, walk through some of the most tragic times in their lives. And the saints that have been able to rejoice through those darkest times, they've been able to cling to that joy that they have in Christ are those that have a testimony of obedience to their savior that they love with all their hearts. You can't run to a stronghold for safety that you have spent your life fighting against.
Our faith can only grow through trials if you have a genuine faith in the Lord to begin with. So live in obedience now. Abide in Jesus now. Trials, they are a way of exposing what needs to be pruned in our lives. Trials have a way of exposing where we have grounded ourselves. But as people of faith, if we have abided in Christ up until this point, we can look at these trials from a heavenly perspective rather than looking at God and blaming him saying, why have you done this to me? We can look at God and say, how are you finishing the good work in my life? What is it that you are trying to prune in me?

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How is it that you are trying to make me more like Christ? This isn't me trying to minimize the pain that we go through in our trials.
[37:55] They are real. We do suffer here on earth. But if we abide in Christ and he abides in us, when we are pushed, that abiding relationship is something that we will be able to lean on, to draw joy from in the midst of our grief. Because we have a savior that we not only abide in, but he abides in us. So the main point of application, I think we all need to take away from this, is that we need to make it our goal to bear fruit in all areas of our life.

So believer, are you bearing fruit? If not, why? All believers need to pray this psalm over their life. Search me, O God, and know my heart. See if there be any wicked way in me.
So believer, if you are not bearing fruit, what that is, is that is a symptom of a deeper problem in your life? What is it in your life that is making you unfruitful? Or maybe not as fruitful as you could be?
Because I will tell you that it can be easy to have our one and done claim to fame. Like you did something for the kingdom, now you're good. It's time to relax. That's not the life that Christ calls us to.
God is not asking for parts of your life or certain time frames of your life. He wants your whole life. He wants the righteousness of Christ to shine in your workplace, in your families, in your schools.
[39:47] And also in your soul, in your heart, the part of you that most people don't see.

Psalm 90, verse 8. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins, in the light of your presence.
There is nothing that is hidden from God. And there is no part of your life that he is not concerned with. He wants to see fruit in every area of your life. The life-giving vine that is Jesus wants to grow in every area of your life, making you a fruitful branch to share the life-giving goodness of God to a world lost in darkness and death. So ask God to search your hearts today.
Now, unbelievers, if you are here today, I want to thank you for coming. Our text today speaks directly to you.
Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.
[41:08] This verse speaks of the final judgment like we were talking about earlier. Now, there are some here that may think they are in Christ.

That you have attached yourself to a culture of Christianity, but in reality, there's no desire in you to be fruitful, to abide in Christ. You like the idea of Christianity.
I've heard lots of people say that that aren't believers. They like the idea of Christianity and they try to follow some of its principles. But there's no desire to know Christ.
God's word is clear in this section. And this is my loving warning and plea to you all that are unbelievers. That the final destination of those that reject Christ in their hearts is judgment.
Eternal separation from God. So here's the good news. If you are hearing this, then it's not too late. You can still repent and abide in Christ.
[42:12] You can still have that relationship, that abundant life that Christ is calling you to. If he is calling you out of darkness today, I know I make this plea every Sunday, but it is important.

Repent and be saved. Respond in obedience to that call and be made new in Christ. Become a fruitful branch of the true vine.
We're going to leave the altar open for a couple of minutes after I get done praying. And if you are somebody that needs to make that decision, if Christ is calling you out of darkness today, then respond. Come and talk to me.
Talk to one of our elders. Talk to one of our Sunday school teachers. We are here to answer your questions and talk about how you can have a relationship with Christ. If you are a believer, the altar is open for you to come and lay something at God's feet.
If there's something you need to repent of, the altar is open. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that Jesus has come as the true and better vine.
[43:19] Lord, that he has come to save us from our sins. Lord, I pray that if there's anyone here today that does not know Jesus, that does not abide in him, then Lord, I pray that you would awaken their spirits, Lord, that you would call them out of darkness.

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Lord, that you would do a saving work in their lives and that they would confess Jesus as Lord and Savior and become a fruitful branch that bears fruit to a lost world that's around them that is pleasing to you.
Lord, I pray also for any believer that is here that needs to repent of something or that is maybe struggling with bearing fruit. Lord, maybe they're heavy laden with sin.
Lord, maybe there's something in their life as well that, Lord, maybe there's something that is keeping them from bearing fruit that they have committed themselves to and their resources to.
Lord, I pray that you would also reveal that to them. Lord, I pray that Christ would be exalted today in our time of response and as we go throughout the rest of this week.
[44:31] I pray for all these things. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

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