

SUN CITY SERMON NOTES

11 | NOVEMBER | 2018



FRUITFULNESS (Abiding in Christ)

Introduction

Many believe this parable was spoken very late in Jesus' ministry – possibly close to when He was going to be removed from them and therefore to encourage them to continue, to abide, to remain in Him because things would be coming that could challenge them to detach.

John 15:1-6 NIV: *'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² 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. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, as I also 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. ⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in Me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.'*

1. **God is interested in fruit** – not trees that look fruitful but trees that bear fruit beyond singing or talk about bearing fruit. Illustration: Fig tree that gave all appearance that there was fruit but there was none to be found. Fruit is produced from the interior and fruitfulness brings glory to the Name of God.

Thought Provokers

1.

God is interested in fruit, (not trees that look fruitful). Bearing fruit glorifies God.

2.

Fruit is manifestation.

3.

The vinedresser lifts fruitless branches to bring them back to the potential of bearing fruit.

4.

He prunes the fruitful branches that they be even more fruitful.

5.

We are the branches, Jesus is the Vine. Remain in Him because His desire is to remain in you. Our focus must be on abiding, not producing.

John 15:8: ¹⁸‘This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.’ If I want my life to glorify God, what is He speaking to me about fruitfulness?

2. **What is fruit.?** Galatians 5:22-23a ‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.’

My personal devotion, time in the Word, fellowship, giving and serving is not fruit. Fruit is manifestation out of the relationship that is being developed. If I say ‘I love God but I don’t like people’ then in this aspect I am fruitless because fruit cannot be displayed in isolation.

3. **What does Father do with unfruitful branches?** Verse 2: He lifts up/bears/carries the burden of every unfruitful branch.

Jesus left heaven, stooped low, washed us, lifted us, and tied us into family. He sets the solitaire in family. Many of try to run from the very trellis that Father designed we would bear fruit from. We must allow God to tie us in. Iron sharpens iron is not always pleasant experience.

4. **What does Father do with fruitful branches?** He prunes.

Father cares enough to prune the fruitful. If you have fruit expect the sequitaires secateurs. There is more in each one of us so we welcome the pruning that unsticks us from celebrating past harvests. Christian life is not an uphill trajectory – consider Joseph. In each season he abided, and in each season he was more prepared for the next, til a great many people were saved. In every pit, valley or prison he kept his heart soft and it empowered him to allow the pruning that prepared him for what was next.

We walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Keep walking with Him because life after that season is promised to be so much more fruitful. Whatever you may be going through, remain. You may have had great successes, remain. Remain sweet, planted, in faith, in prayer, in fellowship, in Jesus knowing you will see fruit.

5. **What must our focus then be?** Our focus must be in abiding, not in producing.

We are the branches, not the Vine. Our task is to remain in Christ and the overflow of that relationship produces fruit. Fruit is a byproduct of the vine; it is manifestation of the present. A detached branch cannot produce fruit and the longer we, as living branches, stay detached, the more time the devil has. Turn to Him – He has forgiven and He is here to life, wash and restore you because He wishes also, to remain in you.