

Jesus, the Fruit Producer

John 15:1-11

Every year on Easter Sunday we fill the stage with Easter lilies! The sight and smell of those blooming white flowers declares “It is Resurrection Day!”

We need those lilies to bloom for one Sunday out of the entire year, and you know what, **sometimes those lilies are like people - stubborn & obstinate!**

What do you do when an Easter lily won't bloom for Easter? I tried sunlight, water, heat, fertilizer, pruning, verbal communication...

What I realized was that there was nothing I could do to force them to bloom, so I took them back and exchanged them for different ones!

The experience was/is similar to that of pastoring a flock of people! I can't make any of you bloom, any more than I could make those lilies bloom!

I promise I won't try to exchange you for other people, but **where is hope to be found that the people of God will indeed bloom at the proper time?**

John 15 – Jesus is saying that the only hope we have is in a God who does the work (the vinedresser), and in a Savior (the Vine) that produces the desired results (the fruit)!

Israel, God's chosen people, in the O.T. was called “God's vineyard,” and yet they never became fruit producing vines! God's promises/commands/blessings were not enough to yield fruit from lifeless branches!

Something more was needed; someone more was needed – Jesus! He became the vine by which fruit can/is produced in the lives of God's people!

Jesus said, **“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser!”**

Jesus' last “I Am” statement reveals the very **life source** of transformation (blooming/fruit) within the people of God!

- Are you/I a part of God's vineyard (are we part of the Church)?

“You did not choose me, but I chose you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide...” – vs. 16

- Are we bearing fruit that **abides** (ongoing, noticeable life transformation)?

“Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit...” – vs. 5

- If we don't see the evidence of **Spiritual fruit** in our lives, what does that reveal about ourselves? **Galatians 5:19-24**

Is the fruit of the Spirit, or the works of the flesh more evident in our lives?

- What purpose/good do we serve if we are not producing abiding fruit?

“If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch & withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” – vs. 6

A Christian who does not display the **fruit of the Spirit** is like an Easter lily that does not bloom on Easter!

- What if some Spiritual fruit is being produced, but not what should be?

“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.” – vs. 2

- What **responsibility** do we have if apart from Jesus doing the work in us we can do nothing? **“apart from me you can do nothing.” – vs. 5**

Vs. 4 – “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.”

- What does it mean for us to **abide** in Christ?

Vs. 9-10 – “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. 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 in his love.”

There is a responsibility on our part in “abiding”! It is not passivity, just sitting back and letting God do the work, it is **being active in living out the commands of God**, all the while acknowledging that it is God at work in us!

Philippians 2:12 – “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

It is God's good pleasure to produce fruit in and through our lives! **But it is also our good pleasure to allow Him to do that work and join Him in it!**

Vs. 11 – “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” The secret to joy is abiding in Christ! The secret to abiding in Christ is love for and obedience to Him!

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