

1. **Introduction:** We will begin today at the point we ended in last Sunday’s lesson.
  - ◆ Obedience is necessary to abide in Christ. We can only begin to truly obey God when He regenerates us and begins to transform us into a moral likeness of Christ.
  - ◆ Abiding in Christ is more than obedience, but not less. The Holy Spirit indwells each believer and enables them to abide in Christ and shows them that Christ abides in them.
  - ◆ At regeneration, a chain begins with obedience which enables abiding in Christ. Abiding in Christ enables bearing good fruit. So, obedience enables bearing good fruit.
  - ◆ No obedience, then no abiding and no good fruit.
  - ◆ In 15:7 Jesus makes an astounding promise.
2. **John 15:7:** *“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”* The only constraint is that what is asked be within God’s will.
  - ◆ Ask for *“whatever you wish”* within the bounds of God’s will and it will be done.
  - ◆ This amazing promise is conditioned on abiding in Jesus and His words abiding in us.
  - ◆ To receive the benefits of the promise, you must believe Jesus’ words, act in accordance with them (obey), and align your life with His will.
  - ◆ When you abide in Christ, you have His promise that God will answer prayers that are in accordance with God’s will. Ask and it will be done for you.
3. **John 15:8:** *“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*
  - ◆ The Westminster Shorter Catechism says the chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever. What does it mean to glorify God?
  - ◆ It cannot mean adding to God’s intrinsic glory for that is impossible. To glorify God means truly acknowledging the glory that is His because of who and what He is.
  - ◆ The fundamental meaning of the word *glory* is “heavy in weight.” Glory is the “weighty importance and shining majesty that accompany God’s presence.”
  - ◆ The verb *glorify* then means “to give weight to” or “to honor.” We glorify God by recognizing and honoring Him for who He truly is.
  - ◆ Fruit-bearing is for the benefit of the Father. Abundant good fruit is to God’s glory. Both everything the incarnate Jesus did and everything Christ enables believers to do was and is to the glory of the Father.
  - ◆ In Jesus prayer, in John 17:4, He says in His earthly work He glorified the Father by completing the work the Father gave Him to do. Believers also bring glory to the Father when they complete the work the Father gives them to do.
  - ◆ A believer’s first work is to believe in Jesus and the Father who sent Him. Then the work The work of abiding in Christ and producing much good fruit begins.

- ◆ Year after year of producing abundant good fruit “in Christ” demonstrates progress in being transformed into a moral likeness of Christ.

**4. Producing Fruit That Brings Glory to God:** There are two categories of fruit God desires believers to produce. (1.) Internal “fruit of the spirit.” (2.) External fruit of “good works.”

- ◆ The “fruit of the spirit” develops in a believer’s inner being. ***“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*** (Galatians 5:22-23).
- ◆ The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the spirit in the lives of obedient believers.
- ◆ Each spiritual fruit represents an internal quality that produces external expressions.
- ◆ Development of the fruit of the spirit is necessary to produce outward external actions like evangelism and other good works.
- ◆ External “good works” are important but don’t come first. They flow from a transformed character built on the fruit of the spirit.
- ◆ Boice says striving to produce the fruit of conversions when initially converted is like demanding an apple tree produce other apple trees. It doesn’t work that way.
- ◆ First, an apple tree produces apples, which contain seeds. Then, with God’s provision, new apple trees are produced from the seeds. So it should be with us.
- ◆ Develop the internal “fruit of the spirit” and external good works will follow.
- ◆ Obedience is necessary to abide in Christ. Abiding is necessary for fruitfulness. Fruitfulness is necessary for successful evangelism.
- ◆ Ephesians 5:8-11, ***“At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), <sup>10</sup> and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.”***
- ◆ When the internal fruit of the spirit is real in the life of a believer, the internal fruit will be expressed as external fruit impacting the lives of people.
- ◆ What does God require of His people? Micah 6:8<sup>NKJV</sup>, ***“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”***
- ◆ To act “justly” means righteous actions that conform to the law, that is, acting in conformity with what is morally upright or good (righteous, impartial, fair).
- ◆ “Mercy” combines an emotional/intellectual element of compassion, forgiveness, and love with a practical response to meet the needs of the object of mercy.
- ◆ “Walking humbly” with God means recognizing and accepting that we are totally dependent on God. He is the source of everything including the gift of life.
- ◆ Believers are thus surrounded by cords of love, which draw us ever closer to our Savior.

- ◆ The love of Christ draws us to Him. 1 Jn 4:19, *“We love because he first loved us.”*
  - ◆ The cords of love that surround us are secured by obedience. John 14:15, Jesus said, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”* Obedience demonstrates our genuine love for God and expresses our desire to glorify Him.
  - ◆ If it were not for God’s grace and love and His Son, our Lord, willingly becoming incarnate to live on our behalf the perfect life under the Law that we are unable to live, and then dying as our substitute to pay the penalty due our sins, we would be separated from God and under His wrath.
5. **John 15:9-10:** *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> 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.”*
- ◆ The Apostle John says, *“God is love.”* We bring glory to God by loving as He loves. By imitating or mirroring His love, we acknowledge He is God and worthy of imitating.
  - ◆ God’s great commandments focus on love. Matthew 22:36-40, *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*
  - ◆ John 14:21, *“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”* John 14:23-24a *“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.”*
  - ◆ Paul tells us that love is the greatest of the fruit of the Spirit. *“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love”* (1 Corinthians 13:13).
  - ◆ Obedience is the key to bringing glory to God as we recognize and acknowledge His intrinsic glory through appropriate attitudes and actions.
  - ◆ Jesus perfectly glorified the Father. We cannot. But we can acknowledge God and His glory by honoring Him for who He truly is.
  - ◆ We can glorify God by obediently loving Him as He commands and by loving people with selfless agape love as He commands.
6. **The Process of Converting the Internal Spiritual Fruit of “Love” into External “Agape Love” for Others:** Agape love seeks that which is in the true best interest of the one loved. Such love might be expressed by kindness like giving the thirsty water, feeding the hungry, caring for those who hurt, and evangelizing the lost. It also means things like

restraining the violent, God commands that we practice agape love. Jesus says agape love can and should be extended to everyone, even our worst enemy.

- ◆ Jesus says in Matthew 5:43-45, ***“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”***
- ◆ We do so following Scriptural guidance. Here are a few examples:
- ◆ ***“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you”*** (Ephesians 4:32). ***“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves”*** (Philippians 2:3).
- ◆ ***“Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother”*** (Romans 14:13).
- ◆ ***“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”*** (Galatians 6:2).
- ◆ ***“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another”*** (Ephesians 4:25).
- ◆ ***“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling”*** (1 Peter 4:9).

7. **John 15:11**: ***“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”***

- ◆ In 15:1-10 Jesus said that abiding in Him and bearing much fruit will bring answered prayer. He promises to abide in those who abide in Him and keep them in His love.
- ◆ Jesus, then, says He told them those things so that ***“my joy may be in you.”***
- ◆ By ***“my joy”*** Jesus means His spiritual joy, based on peace with God, a joy never ending and which only Jesus can impart. “In Christ” believers are indeed at peace with God.
- ◆ That night the disciples especially needed encouragement. They were troubled and sorrowful (John 14:1, 27; 16:6). Jesus had said He was about to suffer and die. He said one of them would betray Him. What could it all mean?
- ◆ Jesus wants them to have His inner delight, truth, and loving fellowship with the Father.
- ◆ Jesus joy is of God. It is rightly listed as the second fruit of the Spirit. It is joy that cannot be deterred by suffering or other circumstances. Hebrews 12:2 says about Jesus, ***“who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”***
- ◆ There are things like sin, disobedience, and unbelief that can disturb a believer’s joy. David confessed that truth, crying out to God, Psalm 51:12, ***“Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”*** It was not that his salvation was lost, but his joy had evaporated.
- ◆ Broken fellowship with God leads to loss of His joy. Abide in Christ and His joy will abide in you. That joy is linked to fruitfulness, love, and obedience.
- ◆ As the True Vine metaphor teaches us, we can never of our own accord produce fruitfulness, or love, or obedience. But Jesus can and will do it as we abide in Him.

8. **What is Next**: John 15:12-17.