

Sunday Morning Message

January 8, 2023

Title – *“Be Thou Faithful (Fruitful) Until Death”*

Topic – Perseverance in Fruit Bearing

Text – 2 Timothy 4:1 - 8

Congregational Reading – 2 Timothy 4:6 - 8

Introduction

We have been preaching through a series of messages about bearing fruit.

*"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, **that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain**" (John 15:16a)*

Several weeks ago, we started a series of messages from the Gospel of John, chapter 15, about Fruit Bearing:

- 1 Week One – “Without Me Ye Can Do Nothing” – The Power of Fruit Bearing – Abiding in Christ.
- 2 Week Two – “Ask What Ye Will” – The Prayer of Fruit Bearing – tailoring our prayer life on the needs of others – specifically praying about fulfilling the Great Commission.
- 3 Week Three – “Herein Is My Father Glorified” – The Plan of Fruit Bearing in a localized setting – direct influence – bearing fruit through:
- 4 Week Four – “Go Ye Into All The World” – The Project For Bearing Fruit Beyond The Local Church
- 5 Week Five – “Becoming Unfruitful” – The Problems Associated (the Enemies) with Fruit Bearing.
- 6 Week Six – “Ye Shall Be Witnesses” – The Product of Fruit Bearing

Today we will look at the subject of perseverance in bearing fruit. This message will try to encourage you to remain fruitful (faithful) until the Lord calls you home.

Read and Explain 2 Timothy 4:1 – 8

Illustrate – Melissa Dilley was saved along with her parents through the bus ministry of Ocean County Baptist Church. She grew up in church – she was grounded in the Word of God – she gave her life sacrificially to the cause of Christ. She remained fruitful until her death.

Illustrate – Bruce Thompson

Illustrate – Pastor Wedemeyer, Miss Dot

Additional Verses:

To the Church at Smyrna Jesus said:

*"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**" - (Revelation 2:10)*

To the church at Philadelphia Jesus said:

*"Behold, I come quickly: **hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.**" - (Revelation 3:11)*

*"Look to yourselves, **that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.**" - (2 John 1:8)*

Many Christians will start out fruitful, but few will remain fruitful until the Lord calls them home.

In 1 and 2 Timothy, Paul admonishes young Timothy repeatedly to “continue” – to stay faithful – to stay fruitful:

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: (1 Timothy 4:16a)

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: (1 Timothy 6:20)

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." - (2 Timothy 1:13-15)

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." - (2 Timothy 2:3-4)

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; (2 Timothy 3:14)

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." - (2 Timothy 4:10-11)

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" - (John 8:31)

Transition

How are you and I going to persevere in fruit bearing? How are we going to remain fruitful (faithful) until death?

This morning, I want to give you four imperatives (musts – things that we will have to do) that will help you finish your course and keep you in the game until the Lord takes you home to Heaven.

I We will have to remain disciplined in our devotions

We must stay plugged in to the power source.

We must abide in the vine.

- 1 Bible
- 2 Prayer
- 3 Church
- 4 Soulwinning

All these things are sources of strength to the believer.

Illustrate – Melissa Dilley's Bible – filled with notes and outlines.

II We will have to remove the distractions of this world.

The pursuit of the world's pleasures and possessions (materialism) will distract you.

The principles of the world's philosophy (humanism) will destroy you because it puts you at the center of the universe instead of God.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." - (1 John 2:15-17)

III We will have to learn to recognize and resist the devil

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." - (James 4:7)

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." - (1 Peter 5:8-9 KJV)

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:" - (Luke 22:31)

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." - (Ephesians 6:10-12)

IV We will have to learn to rebound from discouragement

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." - (Acts 20:22-24)

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" - (2 Corinthians 11:24-29)

The Christian life can be very **Perplexing** and discouraging:

Physical **Pain** will discourage you

Difficult **Problems** will discourage you

Illustrate – A missionary society wrote to David Livingstone and asked, “Have you found a good road to where you are? If so, we want to know how to send other men to join you.” Livingstone wrote back, “If you have men who will come only if there is a good road, I don’t want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all.”

Hurtful **People** will discourage you

There will be a lot of discouragement as you walk this earth fulfilling the will of God for your life, but don't let the discouragement keep you down.

Illustrate – some do well if they are on top side, but the minute some negative thing happens, they get discouraged, and then throw in the towel.

Quit quitting!

Illustrate - When David and his men were off fighting someplace, the Amalekites came to Ziklag, where David's family was, and took David's family captive along with the wives and families of all of David's men:

"And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." - (1 Samuel 30:6)

Conclusion

Illustrate – Adoniram Judson sweated out Burma's heat for 18 years without a furlough, six years without a convert. Enduring torture and imprisonment, he admitted that he never saw a ship sail without wanting to jump on board and go home. When his wife's health broke and he put her on a homebound vessel in the knowledge he would not see her again for two full years, he confided to his diary, "If we could find some quiet resting place on earth where we could spend the rest of our days in peace..." But he steadied himself with this remarkable postscript, "Life is short. Millions of Burmese are perishing. I am almost the only person on earth who has attained their language to communicate salvation."

We have an opening – an employment opportunity here at the church. We need people who will get saved, get baptized, get discipled, get and stay in the Word of God, get and stay in their prayer closets, stay in Church, and keep serving God; even when you get to the place where you don't feel like it. We are looking for people who will stay faithful to the Lord until the Lord calls you home to Heaven; people who will become more zealous for the Lord and will continue bearing fruit even when they are old. Are you interested in the job? The hours are long and earthly pay isn't so great, but the fringe benefits are out of this world.

Some of you need to get started – you have yet to begin fulfilling God's will for your life and allowing the Holy Spirit to bear fruit through you. Some of you need to get back at it – you have quit a long time ago. You may not think so, because you're still attending church, but it's been a long time since you have been fruitful – get back in the game.

This is a New Year. Let's determine that we are going to be fruitful and remain fruitful throughout all of 2023, or better yet, until the Lord calls us home.