

Sunday Morning Message

November 13, 2022 (Adapted from a message originally preached on January 15, 2012, and July 16, 2017)

Title – *Ask What Ye Will*

Topic – The Prayer of Fruit Bearing

Text – John 15:9 - 17

Congregational Reading – John 15:14 - 17

Introduction

Read vs. 1 - 8

We started last Sunday a series of messages about Fruit Bearing from John 15.

*"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)*

Review from last week:

The word, "ordain", means to set apart in a specific place or for a specific purpose. God has set us apart in this place for the particular purpose of bearing fruit.

Explain fruit – bearing

- 1 Making disciples. (Great Commission)
- 2 Manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in our lives

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." - (Galatians 5:22-25)

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." - (Ephesians 5:8-11)

As was said in the last message, I believe the context of John chapter 15 primarily deals with the fruit bearing of spiritual reproduction. However, I do not think that we are violating Biblical principle when we say that the "fruit of the Spirit" is in view here as well, especially because we know that being "filled with the Spirit" is pre-requisite for bearing

the fruit of reproduction (or winning people to Christ).

Last week we preached on the **power** of fruit bearing with the message - “Without Me Ye Can Do Nothing”. We focused on the word “abide”. We said that the word abide means to dwell in, and we talked about being plugged into the spiritual vine of Jesus Christ, and we also discussed persevering and persisting in order that we would become more proficient and productive in bearing fruit.

This morning, we are going to focus on prayer and how it relates to fruit bearing.

Introduction

One of the greatest mistakes that we can make as we try to understand the proper interpretation of Biblical passages is that we sometimes take a verse of Scripture and isolate it from its context. This passage we are studying today contains a verse that is often misinterpreted by many Christians:

*"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: that **whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**" - (John 15:16)*

People will often quote part of this verse and use it to try to prove that God will always give us whatever we ask for when we pray, which is certainly not true. Some have even come up with clever slogans such as “name it and claim it” to further support their position. The problem with that kind of thinking is that it simply isn’t the truth because it is based upon faulty Biblical interpretation.

People who have bought into this lie have become frustrated in their relationship with God, because as they have tried to apply this “name it and claim it” principle to their lives in a practical matter, it simply hasn’t worked. They didn’t receive what they asked for, and because they don’t get what they have asked God to give them, they begin to doubt the very existence of God. All because they have been misinformed about the true meaning of the principle.

Let’s look at the context of John 15 and try to get a better understanding about what God meant when He said: ***“whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”***

First – let’s look at the big picture. The sermon that Jesus gave the disciples in John 15 takes place after the Last Supper, and before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane.

During this time of a few hours, Jesus is preparing His disciples for the future. He reveals to them what is about to happen to Himself, and then He prepares them by helping them understand what lies ahead in their future. They (the disciples) will be the ones who will carry the torch now. They will be commissioned to carry the message of salvation (the message of fruit bearing) to the entire world. Jesus tells them that He will be sending the Holy Spirit to be their Comforter and Guide during this time. Jesus also prays fervently for the 11 disciples, and for all future disciples.

Now, let's look at the more immediate context of John 15:9 – 17:

Verse 9

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." (John 15:9)

This is a transitional verse that takes us from the subject of abiding in Christ and brings us to this discussion of prayer. Notice the word "continue". We discussed last week that abiding means continuing or persisting. Staying plugged into the vine, and continuing to receive the nourishment from His Word, which is a manifestation of His love for us.

Verse 10

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." - (John 15:10)

Notice now that Jesus states that keeping His commandments is how we abide in His love. Obedience is part of our love for God.

Jesus said:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." - (John 14:15)

Disobedience is rooted in a love for self. We do what we want to do because we love ourselves. However, a deepening love for God will yield a higher level of submission to Him.

Verse 11

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." - (John 15:11)

Obedience to God will bring joy. It's the way of the transgressor that is hard, not God's way. His yoke is easy. Living for the Lord out of love for Him will yield more joy and peace

than you could ever possibly have by doing things on your own.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." - (1 John 5:3)

Verse 12 – 14; 17 - Notice now, what commandment Jesus was talking about:

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ... These things I command you, that ye love one another."
- (John 15:12-14, 17)

Once Jesus was asked, which is the greatest or most important commandment:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." - (Matthew 22:37-40)

It's all about loving God and loving people. (Illustrate – J – O – Y acrostic)

Verses 15 – 16 – This brings us to the discussion of prayer:

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 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: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." - (John 15:15-16)

Notice that there is a colon after the word "remain". The statement "*that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you*" is not to be taken separately from the rest of the sentence.

This prayer promise has to do with fruit bearing. This verse is not teaching that God is a genie that is at our "beck and call" to give us whatever we want.

"God give me a million dollars – a new house – a new car – an expensive vacation – a new job that will pay me more money – etc."

God is saying here that He will give us what we need to accomplish what He has called us to do, which is "bear fruit".

Simply put our prayers need to be others centered, and kingdom centered or Christ-centered, rather than self-centered.

You may be thinking right now – “How am I going to get some of the things that I want?”

*"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." -
(Psalm 37:4)*

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." - (Isaiah 58:13-14)

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

Transition:

So what are we to take away from this study so far:

I. We Are to Get Plugged-In to and Stay Plugged-In to the Vine

Abiding in Christ is one of our power sources.

II. We Are to Pray for Spiritual Victory In Fruit Bearing

Prayer is another tremendous source of power:

Five Prayer Principles

1. You Must Pray

"...ye have not, because ye ask not." - (James 4:2)

2. You Must Believe That God Can Answer Prayer

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." - (Matthew 21:22)

Believing does not mean that God necessarily will do what you're asking, but that He can do what you are asking.

3. You Must Pray According to God's Will

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:" - (1 John 5:14)

4. Your prayers should be Kingdom-centered or others-centered

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." - (James 4:3)

5. Sin must be confessed and forsaken

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" - (Psalm 66:18)

In David's great Psalm of confession it states:

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ... Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. ... Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." - (Psalm 51:7, 9-10, 13)

There are other prayer principles, but these are five important ones, particularly when we are talking about prayer and how it relates to fruit bearing.

III. We Are to Participate by Volunteering to Be a Fruit-Bearer

This is the subject of next week's message.

Conclusion

Illustration - In his book *Sit, Walk, Stand*, Watchman Nee describes a preaching mission to an island off the South China coast. There were seven in the ministering group, including a sixteen-year-old new convert whom he calls Brother Wu. The island was large, containing about 6,000 homes. Nee had a contact there, an old schoolmate of his who was headmaster of the village school, but he refused to house the group when he discovered they had come to preach the Gospel. Finally, they found lodging with a Chinese herbalist, who became their first convert. Preaching seemed quite fruitless on the island, and Nee discovered it was because of the dedication of the people there to an idol they called Ta-wang. They were convinced of his power because on the day of his festival and parade each year the weather was always near perfect.

"When is the procession this year?" young Wu asked a group that had gathered to hear them preach.

"It is fixed for January 11th at 8 in the morning," was the reply.

"Then," said the new convert, "I promise you that it will certainly rain on the 11th."

At that there was an outburst of cries from the crowd: "That is enough! We don't want to hear any more preaching. If there is rain on the 11th, then your God is God!"

Watchman Nee had been elsewhere in the village when this confrontation had taken place. Upon being informed about it, he saw that the situation was serious and called the group to prayer. On the morning of the 11th, there was not a cloud in the sky, but during grace for breakfast, sprinkles began to fall, and these were followed by heavy rain.

Worshippers of the idol Ta-wang were so upset that they placed it in a sedan chair and carried it outdoors, hoping this would stop the rain. Then the rain increased. After only a short distance, the carriers of the idol stumbled and fell, dropping the idol and fracturing its jaw and left arm.

Several young people turned to Christ because of the rain coming in answer to prayer, but the elders of the village made divination and said that the wrong day had been chosen. The proper day of the procession, they said, should have been the 14th. When Nee and his friends heard this, they again went to prayer, asking for rain on the 14th and for clear days for preaching until then. That afternoon the sky cleared and on the good days that followed there were thirty converts. Of the crucial test day, Nee says: The 14th broke, another perfect day, and we had good meetings. As the evening approached, we met again at the appointed hour. We quietly brought the matter to the Lord's remembrance. Not a minute late, His answer came with torrential rain and floods as before.

The power of the idol over the islanders was broken; the enemy was defeated. Believing prayer had brought a great victory. Conversions followed. And the impact upon the servants of God who had witnessed His power would continue to enrich their Christian service from that time on.

(Roger F. Campbell, You Can Win!, 1985, SP Publications, pp. 35-36.)