

# 2/6/22 - John 15:1-17 "The Solution to Our Proneness to Wonder"

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm not going to say good morning. I think everyone at this pulpit said good morning this morning. So we're going to be an afternoon before we know it. Good day.

It's good to be here today and to have God's word within our hands and to preach through his word and to learn from it and to see exactly what the Lord had in store when he said, keep his word.

As the famous 18th century hymn sings, I won't sing it, I will say it, it says, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. Those words always just grip me when we sing that in the song because there are no better words to describe what we experience in times of hardship, in times of uncertainty, turmoil, and despair.

And we're reminded of a similar backdrop in the text today and in the impending absence that the disciples are soon going to be experiencing.

[ 1 : 29 ] Thus far in Jesus's farewell discourse, he has answered a number of the disciples' questions, hasn't he? He has addressed the emotional turmoil of Peter.

He has addressed the directional turmoil of Thomas. He's addressed the confirmational turmoil of Philip and the manifestational turmoil of Jude.

All of which are questions that we can identify as fruit that this hour of uncertainty produces, even in our own lives.

Last week, Jesus made it clear of our proneness to wander and has arrived at a point last week that he promised a helper.

He would only promise a helper to people who need help. And if you're like me, you need a little bit extra help at times. And this enables the church to know the true God, the living God.

[ 2 : 44 ] In all our emotional turmoil states that sometimes these experiences can hinder our thinking at times.

And to love God properly in these times is to keep his word. The helper has given us a way to agree with the very inspiration of the text of which the Holy Spirit inspired.

It's the measuring stick of what is true, what is false. We don't take away, we don't add to. It is the perfect measuring stick of absolute truth.

But why is Jesus saying all of this? Why is he saying all of this? What's the motive behind it? I think we have to consider the direction of Jesus' words within the context.

Look ahead in your Bibles today. I hope your Bibles are still open to what we just read. Look ahead a little bit to the beginning of chapter 16 as to why he is saying all of this, which will actually drive the context of our text.

[ 3 : 56 ] It says in verse 1 of chapter 16, I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

Prone to wander. Today's message is the solution to our proneness to wander. There are 372 words in this section, 17 verses.

I'm going to break it up into two sections today, and we will have one unified main point. Let's dive in. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word and something that we hold on to what is true.

And in our holding on to what is true, we hold on to you. Father, help us to know you, to experience you today. The refreshment, the delight that you bring to us in our walks by the power of the helper that you've given to us.

To know you, and we pray that your powerful word goes forth today and does only the work that it can do. We pray it in Jesus' name.

[ 5 : 07 ] Amen. Amen. So the first section as we look into this passage is our expectation in the field of God.

Our expectation in the field of God. Considering the two concerns as the undercurrent of the text today, I'm going to talk in beach language today because I have been thinking about the beach since three weeks ago when the single-digit degrees have come and encroached upon our warm-weather fanatics like me.

So undercurrent of the text today. There's two concerns within the undercurrents. There's the disciples' concern all throughout this text of Jesus departing from him.

And now we're being opened up to Jesus' concern. Is the disciples from departing from him?

Having Jesus already address the disciples concerning of why it is better for him to depart, that for this reason the Son of Man must be lifted up, that's the theme throughout the entire Gospel of John thus far, why it's necessary for him to depart.

And Jesus enters into an analogy in this first section between verse 1 and verse 8 before he goes into an application. Read with me in verse 1 again.

[ 6 : 40 ] It says, I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 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.

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 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. And so a quick overview. We meet a farmer, a vinedresser.

We meet a vine. We meet a branch of the vine, and we meet fruit. All these items brought into this analogy.

And the focus seems to be on the true vine, and the vinedresser at this time, and the fruit that's being for.

[ 7 : 40 ] The emphasis of this section seems to focus solely upon dependency of the desired fruit that is to be produced. Fruit is at hand, right?

Remaining in Jesus Christ. And we can't detach what Jesus is saying here, and just so quickly just say, we got it.

Remain in Jesus onward. We have to remember that Jesus, his work on this earth changed history. And the very words that we sing of the blood that has pardoned our sin is by no means just something that happens like that, and we just move away and say, oh, onto our breakfast or lunch reservations, right?

We have to understand what he's meaning here. Why does he say the true vine? Why is he saying in here, I am the true vine? Is he saying that there's a false vine? What is going on?

[ 8 : 46 ] Well, all throughout biblical text, this whole story of God's love for humanity, he has been referred to as a vinedresser.

This is the language God has used throughout the Bible as it is how he uniquely relates to creation. Not only that, Isaiah 5 reveals, I'm not going to bring out all this Old Testament passage.

We will probably run out of time today. But if you're on your own time, you go to Isaiah 5. Isaiah 5 reveals a story concerning a vineyard planted with love and tended with care.

However, the fruit produced within this vine was inevitable. Inevitable. Inedible. It was inedible.

It was stale. It was not able to be eaten. It grew wild. And in verse 7 in Isaiah 5, it reveals that this vine was Israel.

[ 9 : 52 ] And this is actually referenced over in Psalm 80, verse 8 through 11. And Jesus presents an additional biblically rooted reference found in Isaiah 5, but also in Ezekiel 15, detailing the prophetic uselessness of the vine, meaning Israel, and the destruction of that vine for its faithlessness.

You see, what Jesus is doing is huge. Here. It is so huge. And we can just jump right over this and then be on our way to our reservations.

Jesus, the guy who changed history, who split time, Jesus draws upon these Old Testament images of God and Israel to reveal that the fruits that were once intended for Israel to be produced are found in supreme fulfillment in Jesus Christ alone.

He's the true vine. And look in verse 5. It says, I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. And Jesus builds upon this redemptive reality in this passage and identifies the branches.

[11:24] Who are the branches here? The church. In other words, the relationship that God has had with Israel up to this point, we are now recipients of those blessings through God's Son.

God has planted Jesus Christ into this world, into this world, that by faith we might be grafted into the vine and recipients of salvation by our faith.

And by that reality, we are producing something in our lives that cannot be quenched. It cannot be hindered. It will have its faithful promise.

You can't tell a healthy tree to not grow. A healthy tree can do anything but grow. It can't do anything other than grow. And we are to be fruitful bearers of the promises of God to the world. And for those who have been receiving the sap of Christ in their lives, they are promised great care.

[12:40] In this life. For those who have received the sap. And our primary concern as sap recipients of Jesus Christ, this is to produce fruit in our lives for God's glory.

The farmer. The vine dresser. This is our expectation in the field of God. And look at verse 6 too. It says, If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers.

And the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burns. Jesus makes it clear that the opposite is actually true as well.

Prone to wander, right? Prone to wander, I believe Jesus Christ can feel it. How much more proneness this will become in times of uncertainty.

As these disciples will soon witness the departure of Jesus Christ. How much more prone to wander than in times of those uncertainty.

[13:59] The difference of knowing if you are a pile of sticks to be burnt and are prepared for the flame or steadfastly secured in the vine prepared for God's glory is faith in Christ's word.

That's it. If you remain in me and my words remain in you as verse 7 and 8 continue, you will have access to God.

Just as Jesus said in John 14, I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. This is a narrow road indeed.

But we have good news because we know the road. We know the path. We know the way. And we have access to God.

That we can ask the Father and He can give it to us. Something that is not available to those who are apart from the vine.

[15:05] And our fruit in our lives will be witness to it. There is a funny saying that goes in my family every spring that usually starts with me frantically going to my wife.

You killed it! You killed it! My wife was that one. And I point to the hydrangea bush.

You killed it! Look at it! It's just a little stump in the ground. She's like, No, no, I pruned it. I'm like, No, this thing is dead. There's no way this thing can come back.

And sure enough, in due season, it produces fruit. Today, there's many, there's probably been many seasons of our lives where we have been within, united into the vine, grafted into the promises that are ours in Jesus Christ.

And we look around and we see just, everything looks dead. Feels dead. Smells like death. Just look around, there's nothing really going on.

[16:20] Right? Maybe I'm the only one. But I don't think I am. Many of us have had the opportunity of walking through difficult seasons in this life, seasons of looking around and wondering when everything seems dead too.

Feeling alone after God has cut a toxic relationship out of your life. Feeling faithless after God cuts your security blankets away in life, whether that be addiction to substances, addiction to visual substances on the internet.

Feeling faithless as God cuts. It is by no mistake God would bring these seasons of uncertainty upon us.

Amid all of our questions that the church has asked, God has given us assurance to guide our troubled states. His words and his spirits guide us.

Upon these two, God's promises are true. It doesn't matter what you feel. It doesn't matter what your neighbor says. It doesn't matter what your own little mouse and wheel in your head says.

[17:36] God's word is true and it guides us. Church, might we be in a season of pruning? Might you be in a season of pruning? If so, we can hope only in keeping Christ's word alone by the power

of the Spirit to remind us and things like for forgetful people like us to take communion and remember God's promises are within your grasp as a church.

The witness of the church and God's glory is at stake depending on how well or how poorly we cling upon the promises of God in our lives.

A promise that tells us Jesus Christ is actually clinging tightly to us and will not lose his grip.

Up to this point Jesus has used a vivid analogy of that abiding remaining in him and he continues in this passage to drive forward in application as we will as well.

Probably have numerous questions as we enter the text at this point. If we dropped and went off to our lunch plans we'd probably say okay well what fruit is God expecting of me?

[18:58] What's this look like? How do we know that we're not just gathered in a brush of sticks ready to be burned? Because it really feels like it right? And so Jesus directs the disciples from the setting within the field the expectations within the field to the expectations within the family and we see our expectation in the family of God as verse 9 continues to 17.

It's pretty much simple. How do you know an apple tree is an apple tree? It has apples. How do you know a peach tree is a peach tree?

It has peaches. Mind you I'm a very big peach fan. How do you know a church is a church?

Because of its fruit similarly to an apple tree a peach tree.

It's distinct. It looks it's significant in its appearance. It doesn't look like anything else. It can't be compared to anything else. A completely different species in this life.

And just as last week if you love me Jesus said you will keep my commandments. Jesus moves into the application of what the church and the fruit within the church will look like.

[20:27] it appears as if its witness will rise and fall within the scope of our love for his commandments with last week and specifically our love for one another.

Broadly speaking last week his commandments encompass a wide range of encouragement of exhortations for our lives actions attitudes that we live out I named a few in Galatians 5 love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self-control and the children's song goes on and on and on right and I hope that's in your in your head for the rest of the day and weeks ago thinking about him giving the new commandment in chapter 13 verse 34 Jesus identifies here that this is no ordinary encouragement he's not just trying to pick you up so you can be a better you and everything he wants you to be a new species of living in this life it's the same old song or the melody within the text however a new pitch of the melody is introduced here our love for one another is the primary means of fruit to be produced within the Christian community our love for one another this is the litmus test of our abiding in the sap of

Christ your love for him his love for her everyone loves like a family and this is the expectations within the family what does it look like verse 9 says as the father has loved me so I love you abide in this how do we abide in this verse 10 if you keep my commandments just as Jesus keeps his father's commandments and abides similarly in his love why why is Jesus saying all of this verse 11 for the fruit of joy to spill out of the fruit baskets in our lives joy in us and joy full in verse 11 love within the church corporately confirms our assurance producing producing

God given full joy in our lives it's a manifestational expression rooted in our proximity to Jesus Christ and also our proximity with one another and boy COVID has hit right and it has scattered the church and I believe there are lots of people who are prone to be wandering because of it because God has designed his church to exist in close proximity in Jesus Christ and if in close proximity with Jesus Christ close proximity with one another not digital that won't cut it you don't know all the deep dark secrets of sin in our lives we don't know what's going on you can't do community by a screen but you can do it face to face you can do it by seeing each other not neglecting to meet together right you can hide your sin very craftily by not meeting together and in verse 12 it continues sort of talking about his introduction to the new commandment if you love one another he says this is my commandment love who are we to love

Jesus one another this is not to disregard love for our neighbor or any of those outward expressions Jesus saying if you want to be effective out there you got to be effective within first love one another the expectation within the family of God how how do we do this what is the fruit of our love for one another verse 13 greater love is sacrificial on behalf of another greater love is charitable greater love is surrendering dying to yourself for the sake and for the church name of unity a micro expression of Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross is observed through our relationships verse 14 this is a friendship right look with me friendship secured through Christ's sacrifice to us and similarly

it is also a friendship we secure through our sacrifice for one another verse 15 we're not even slaves

[ 25 : 52 ] God has not had us to wait on tables at this family gathering he has invited us to the table we're at the table of Christ's family no longer he calls us slaves love within the church corporately confirms our status by gathering we see one another and we mourn with one another we rejoice with one another this is the expectation in the body of Christ this is producing God given models of sacrificial living for emulation the constructs of the Christian community ought to be central it ought to be central within our lives and how we prioritize our lives the

Christian community ought to be the central expression within how our lives are prioritized how we structure things because love needs proximity all of this church intended to be seen in and through our love for one another in a corporate body and while the fruit of our word keeping is no ordinary encouragement we can also understand that this is also no ordinary warning I think you could imagine the dangers of seeing the other side of this coin the proneness to wander the yeah this live stream thing is pretty good in church yeah I can sit in my underwear and watch church right we're all human I know you do it I know you're doing it right now I don't know who you are but somebody's doing it in respect to the theological reality that we have been created by God and for God that's the fundamental of theological thought we have been created by God and for God that's the foundation of all these truths that we hold on to and our ordained purpose was intended to bear fruit and this speaks to our usefulness to God of bearing fruit but on the flip side this makes it true that the absence of fruit speaks to our uselessness to God just as the nation of Israel and this is challenging because this could apply to people today and so the most unloving thing that I can do to you today is just mask the weights of this the implications of this Satan wants to stir up fruitless Christians how's he do it he aims to detach you from the intimate proximity with Jesus Christ but also he wants to detach you from the corporate Christian community this is the primary expression of the love to be expressed towards one another right Satan stirs up he's been in the business a long time stirs up strife among the church he stirs up various small factions within the church pitting one against another divisions in the church gossip within the church why does Satan aim for dividing the church because our allegiance to God is expressed here and if he can attack the church he can attack God he's been in the business for a long time and in direct connection with the context of the passage today lack of love for one another will put us in danger of falling away this is the primary goal of Satan since the garden of Eden and in verse 16 we see sort of all this come to this funnel everything that Jesus has been saying of these expectations come into the funnel in summary in verse 16 for those who belong to God that have been chosen that everything we have has been given even our own salvation all of this fruit ought to be our vital concern what God intended to stir up within our lives is a relationship that the world sees the world can attest to and our father hears as he answers our prayers as he hears our prayers as we take part in that access with God God has placed us in each other's lives for a purpose so as we close we had a couple expectations today within the field within the vineyard the analogy we had expectations in the family of God friendship with God we're not slaves we're friends of

[ 31 : 31 ] God we're at the table we have access to God just as branches fruit testify to the sap of life received from the vine so to the church's fruit testifies to the sap of life received from Jesus this is the only way of remaining in Christ and not falling away do you hear me this morning if you're going to daydream don't daydream right now hear this just as a fruit a branch's fruit testifies to the sap of life received from the vine so too the church's fruit testifies to the sap of life received from Jesus Christ this is the only way of remaining and not falling away maybe you're not in Christ today maybe you have not been baptized you haven't been a believer we have a baptism class coming up pretty soon

I'd love to instruct you a little bit more about what that means and why it's vital in your life being a follower of Jesus Christ is not simply just a bunch of do's and don'ts this legalistic sort of shallow superficial mindset of I can't have fun anymore because the Bible makes me not have fun I don't know what Bible or translation you might be reading but it's deeper than that being a follower of Jesus Christ is a life that's captivated engulfed and propelled by love the love we receive changes us we become a new creation as the Bible said sealed and we bear that love in our lives towards one another think about it even as

Jesus Christ last act of love was carried out to Judas his betrayer who just before he left cultural symbol of love usually a morsel of bread left for the guest of honor Jesus Christ gives to Judas just an hour or so before he left to betray him that kind of love may today be that day for you unbeliever and let God Jesus shine a light into your darkness his desire is to make your life a vibrant garden of fruit you want to talk about a boring Christian life I on the contrary God is producing a vibrant life of fruit and our greatest purpose that we have been created by God and for God and that he will restore all things in him in the days waiting ahead as we see in Revelation 21 this is wonderful way of living so give your life to Jesus Christ today if you are not in Jesus trust in him place your faith in him talk to me after the service I could get you hooked up with some good resources to begin walking in that direction but for the Christian community I have warned us I have encouraged us of those who call this church body their church family this is nothing to take for granted look around you this gathering is like no other you can go to a football game and you can feel the energy when they score a down but none can compare to the energy the life that has been given through the corporate body of the church because what happens after that football game right it just kind of dies down you kind of sleep in the next day because you're exhausted from all the emotions right but within the church this is ongoing this is something that we pick up on our Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday all the way until our next corporate gathering this is something that should never be taken for granted this is look around the testing ground of your usefulness to God here and only here we are given hope of never struggling in our faith if only we could love one another if only we could bear with one another if only we could forgive one another encourage one another and teach one another all of which are expressions of our love for one another we might get various things wrong in life we might hurt people we might do something that offends people but we might get a lot of things wrong because we are imperfect but let us get this one thing right to love one another let's pray as we close you