

Lesson 27: ABIDING FRUIT

I Chose You, and Appointed You, That Ye Should Go and Bear Fruit, and That Your Fruit Should Abide - John 15:16

I. Introduction

- a. There are some fruits that will not keep. One variety of pears or apples must be used at once; another variety can be kept over till next year. So there is in the Christian life some fruit that does **not last**.
- b. There may be much that believers say and do that pleases, edifies, and entertains, and yet there is no **permanent** impression made on the face of the world or the lives of believers.
- c. On the other hand, there is work that leaves its mark for generations and ultimately for **eternity**. In it the power of God makes itself lastingly felt.
- d. It is this fruit of which Paul speaks when he describes **two** different styles of ministry:
 1. The **power** of the Spirit: *1 Cor 2:4 "My preaching was not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstrations of the Spirit and of power;"*
 2. The **wisdom** of men: *1 Cor 2:5 that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."*
- e. The more of man with his eloquence, wisdom and power, the **less** of eternity; the more of God's Spirit, the more of a faith standing in God's power; eternal. What is this fruit that abides?

II. The Attributes of Fruit That Remains

- a. In this passage we are instructed by our Lord that it is as we abide in Christ that the fruit we bear will also abide. This is the **purpose** for which He has appointed us. *John 15:16 I Chose You, and Appointed You, That Ye Should Go and Bear Fruit, and That Your Fruit Should Abide*
- b. It is produced in places and at times by **Divine** appointment of the Spirit of God and fulfills God's purpose for us. *Phil 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. KJV*
- c. While this fruit may take many forms, it will always have the end result of **glorifying** God. *Matt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. KJV*
- d. Fruit reveals the **nature** of the tree from which it comes. *Matt 7:17-18 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. KJV*
- e. Fruit that abides is that which is **eternal**; it does not perish in the material rubble of this life. *John 4:35-36 behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. KJV*
- f. Fruit that remains may be exhibited by thoughts, deeds or words, but its value is not quantifiable by any scientific method and yet is precisely **reckoned** by God. *2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. KJV*
- g. The results of this fruit may even be **unnoticed** or unappreciated by the one through whom it is produced. *Matt 25:37-40 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. KJV*
- h. The greatest impact of fruit that abides is expressed in the **spiritual** dimension rather than the physical realm. *2 Cor 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. KJV*
- i. Fruit that remains is **immaterial**, but has value and weight in the eyes of God. *Jer 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. KJV*
- j. While the outward manifestation is often identified as the fruit, the actual **essence** of the fruit is often imperceptible and operates within the person who exhibits fruitfulness. *Mark 5:30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? KJV*

III. The Essence of Fruit

- a. Since the fruit that remains is produced by the Spirit and is spiritual in nature, it is immaterial in its essence, how then can it be **perceived**? *1 Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. KJV*
- b. The Bible supports the notion that human experience consists of observable phenomena and the **immaterial** and unobservable. *Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: KJV*
- c. While behavior reveals the observable, the **essence** of that behavior which emanates from the immaterial heart is immaterial and is beyond perception. *Matt 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. KJV*
- d. The essence of an act would include the **inner realities** such as motivation, true intention, purpose, etc., and flows out of the heart of the individual, or in the case of the Spirit's prompting, from the spirit. *Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. KJV*

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- e. The essence of a person, an act, or a thing is never completely known by man, it is unknowable to him. It is however, completely **known** by God. *Ps 94:9-11 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, KJV*
- f. Since no material thing (like an act) is eternal; it occurs and then **vanishes** from perception; it is the immaterial effect that reflects the true essence of it. This is eternal. *Eccl 2:16 For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. KJV*
- g. It is the immaterial essence of an act for which God **judges** man, either for good or bad. Fruit that remains is eternal because it is produced by God. *1 Sam 16:7 for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. KJV*

IV. The Secret of Abiding Fruit

- a. What a blessed thought! He chose you, and appointed you to bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide. It was **never** His intention that one of His branches should bring forth fruit that does not abide.
- b. The deeper we enter into the purpose of His electing grace, the surer our confidence will become that we have been **enabled** to bring forth fruit to eternal life, for self and others.
- c. The deeper we enter into this purpose of His electing love, the more we will realize that the link between God's purpose from eternity and the fruit that remains lies in our **abiding** in Him. *Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, KJV*
- d. The believer has been redeemed for a purpose. That purpose was ordained from eternity **past** and is ultimately fulfilled only when we bring forth fruit that remains.
- e. While the redemption of the believer's soul is precious and cause for celebration, one's **redemption** is not the goal that God had in mind in bringing it to pass.
- f. He had a **greater** goal in mind. His greater goal involves the bringing forth of much fruit, fruit that remains.
- g. The purpose is His, He will **carry it out**; the fruit is His, He will bring it forth; the abiding is His, He will maintain it.
- h. The task for the believer is to allow all that is of human will and effort to be cut down short and **cleansed** away by the divine Husbandman.
- i. The more intensely our being withdraws itself from the **outward**, the more God may work in us by His Spirit; that is, the more wholly we abide in Christ, the more will our fruit abide.

V. Application

- a. There are many believers who overlook their own fruit bearing, thinking that fruitfulness is confined to those who are full-time Christian workers: pastors, evangelists and missionaries, etc.
- b. This is a terrible misunderstanding for it completely misses the high calling that we have upon our lives in Christ Jesus. *Phil 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. KJV*
- c. Let everyone who professes to be a believer, pause. Are you consciously anticipating the divine appointments that God provides to you as you go on your way to bring forth fruit that remains? *Matt 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^a the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." NIV*
- d. Are you seeing the spiritual opportunities to leave your mark for eternity on those around you who witness your surrendered life to Christ? *Matt 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. KJV*
- e. To what extent are you as a branch dwelling in the love and the certainty of His eternal purpose for you, that the power of eternity may possess you?