



“Bearing Fruit” **Psalm 119:19-29; Matthew 21:33-46**

Introduction: Sweet tooth, created for fruit, as well as to bear fruit.

God's Vineyard

In this parable, Jesus shares that we are God's vineyard. In doing so, He is using imagery from the OT that had been applied to Israel. For example, In Isaiah 5:1-4, Israel was, *“a vineyard on a fertile hillside, He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest of vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then He looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit....What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it?”* Now the imagery shifts to the church as the New Israel. In both, God is the one who owns the vineyard. Note that God works hard to provide for and to prepare the vineyard, for you. God protects us, you: God puts a wall around us and builds a watchtower. God cares deeply about your well being. God has a purpose and a plan for our lives, which is to bear fruit. God has already done everything that needs to be done, that is, we are not lacking in anything necessary to bear fruit for Him. What excuses are you making in why you are not bearing fruit for Him? Are you wondering what God wants from you? Be full of life, bear fruit, give life to others.

Abraham Kuyper, a Dutch theologian and Prime Minister, once said, *“There's not one square inch in the whole domain of human existence as to which Christ who is sovereign over all does not cry out, “Mine!”* Charles Colson adds, *“the church has to call out, “His!”* We must echo this. The tenants mistreat His servants and His Son because they want to be equal with God, to be the ones in charge, to not share the harvest with the One who had made it all possible. How do you view His vineyard? We often mistakenly forget the focus should be on Him. What God needs is people who are willing to pour their hearts into His vineyard, seeing it as His, not ours, focused on giving Him glory for His perfect goodness, rather than focusing on the imperfections of those serving in the vineyard. Do you view the vineyard as yours or His?

Bearing Fruit

I want to revisit how we must bear fruit, for Jesus says in 21:43, *“therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”* God wants us to bear fruit, to be who He has created us to be, to enjoy the life He has given us and created us for, to be life giving to others. How can we do this? In John 15, Jesus tells us how, saying, *“I am the vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ...Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear*

fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing...You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last.” What we learn from Jesus is that we cannot bear fruit unless we abide and remain in Jesus, unless we are intimate with Him, walking and talking with Him, sharing every moment with Him. We cannot bear fruit on our own.

We can only do so as we seek to live by His Spirit. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:16, 22-25, *“so I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”* We can only be fruitful as we are filled by God's Spirit, by His presence and life. We cannot do it on our own. How are you living today on your own? How are you stressed or anxious? How are you impatient? How are you trying to be in control? Where are you living based on your own resources instead of by relying on Him?