

What Kind of Fruit is on Your Branch?

Posted by Scott Habeeb on February 29, 2012

John 15:4-6 (NIV)

⁴ Remain in me, as I also 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.

⁵ "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. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

In saying this, Jesus is communicating that everything we do should be done with his strength instead of our own. In some ways this verse is simply a more descriptive picture of the message of Proverbs 3:5-6. Just as the vine depends on the branch, we are supposed to remain in God and trust in Him instead of relying on our own strength and ideas. Jesus' use of the fruit analogy, though, adds an important component to the idea of trusting God. It explains the WHY.

Why does Christ want us to remain in Him? Is it for safety? Is it for control? He wants us to remain in him so that like a productive branch, we can bear fruit. We are branches designed to bear the vine's fruit. End of story. The branch exists for no other reason than to produce the vine's fruit. Branches don't have lives of their own. They don't have their own worries, fears, goals, and desires. They bear fruit because they are attached to the vine. Without the vine they are useless.

So what does it mean to bear fruit? As a young child we sang a song at church based on this verse. As Jeff shared this passage this morning my mind went back to my childhood, and I remembered an image I had at the time of what it meant to remain in Christ and bear fruit. As a child I envisioned "remaining in Christ" as "hanging out with Christians and going to church," and I envisioned "bearing fruit" as "not sinning and living a moral life."

My childhood views were incorrect because they fell far short of God's wonderful fruit-bearing plan for us. I wonder how many of us adults also set our sights below God's plan? Fruit is nourishing and is meant to be eaten by others. Branches bear fruit to give it away. Christianity is far more than going to church and not sinning. In fact, Christianity as practiced by Christ is almost completely different. If our fruit is nothing more than our own morality, then it is wasted. Not that morality is wrong - obviously God calls us to live moral and holy lives. But our own morality doesn't nourish others. It's like fruit that stays on the branch too long. After a while it rots. We are called to be branches that bear nourishing fruit. In other words, just like Jesus, we are called to live as missionaries and to give ourselves away to others.

What sort of fruit are you bearing in your classroom? Are you even bearing fruit? Sometimes I wonder what exactly it means to remain in Christ. I wonder exactly what it looks like to trust and lean on God for everything. How is that done in our normal everyday lives? I'd love to hear your thoughts on those questions, but here's one thing I know. If we are truly a branch on Christ's vine, there will be fruit and that fruit will be given away to others.

Are you interested in remaining in Christ while teaching in your classroom or working in your school? Start by asking God to show you how to give away your fruit. Ask him to make you aware of your colleagues and your students who need nourishment. Then obey Him and give yourself away.