Monday 8/17

Related Verses

John 15:1-8 (1-2, 4-5, 7-8)
1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.
2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit.
3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
6 If one does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.
8 In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.

Related Reading

The Branches, the Believers in the Son

No plant other than the vine tree can illustrate adequately the living relationship between us and the Lord. We are the branches of the vine. What kind of relationship does this suggest to you? The branches are good for nothing except to express the vine. All that the vine is and has is expressed through the branches. Individually, the branches are the regenerated ones. Corporately, they are the church, the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). The branches, the believers in the Son, are for the expression of the Son with the Father through the fruit-bearing.

The Fruit-bearing

The Overflow of the Riches of the Inner Life

What is fruit-bearing? It is the overflow of the riches of the inner life. Do not try to bring people to Christ by your own effort. Do not use schemes to win souls. Bearing fruit is a matter of the overflow of your inner life. We need continuously to enjoy Christ as everything to us. Then we shall have an abundance of inner life. Out of this abundance of inner life there will be a flow that will reach others, penetrating into their lives. This flow will bear much fruit. It is not just preaching or soul-winning; it must be fruit-bearing by the overflow of the riches of the inner life.

To Satisfy Man's Thirst

Fruit-bearing also satisfies man's thirst. The vine tree bears fruit—grapes. Out of these grapes either wine or grape juice is made to quench people's thirst. Today we must be so filled with the riches of Christ's life that we may be able to bear clusters of grapes that will produce either juice or wine to quench man's thirst. We all need to pray, "Lord, may Your life flow out of me to quench others' thirst."

By Abiding in the Vine and Letting the Vine Abide in the Branches

The fruit-bearing comes about as the branches abide in the vine and let the vine abide in the branches. In John 15 abiding is a crucial matter. Everything in this chapter depends upon the abiding. The real abiding depends upon a clear vision, a clear seeing, that you are a branch. Once you see that you are a branch, it will be difficult for you to stay away from the vine. You will want to remain in the vine. This remaining is the abiding. Do not try to abide, for the more you try, the more you will fall away. We need to pray, "Lord, show me clearly that I am one of the branches." I believe that one day the Lord will show you. You will see that you are one of the branches and you will say, "Praise the Lord, I am one of the branches." Then you will abide in Him.

As long as you abide in Him, He will abide in you. His abiding in us depends upon our abiding in Him. Our abiding is the condition of His abiding, but His abiding in us is not a condition of our abiding in Him. Nothing is conditional with Him, but with us, because we are so fluctuating, there is the need of a condition. If we do not abide in Him, there is no way for Him to abide in us. Although He does not change, we have many changes. We may abide in Him today and run away from Him tomorrow. Therefore, His abiding in us depends upon our abiding in Him. Our abiding in Him is the condition of His abiding in us. So the Lord says, "Abide in Me and I in you." If we abide in Him, He will certainly abide in us. If we do not abide in Him, we fail to meet the condition of His abiding in us. His abiding depends upon our abiding. This mutual abiding will bring forth fruit (Life-study of John, msg. 33, pp. 401-403).

Tuesday 8/18

Related Verses

John 15:9-17 (9-12, 14, 16)
9 As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.
10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
11 These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.
12 This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you.
13 No one has greater love than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
14 You are My friends if you do what I command you.

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15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all the things which I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.
16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.
17 These things I command you that you may love one another.

Related Reading

Being Pruned

"Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2).

If we want to preach the gospel and bear much fruit, we must be pruned. This does not refer merely to being pruned of things related to filthiness and sin; it refers even more to being pruned of everything that is not proper before God. God prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it can bear more fruit. Pruning is not merely a washing but also a cutting. Everything that is not proper, everything that hinders the branch from bearing more fruit, must be cut away. Although we need to thoroughly deal with sin in order to eliminate all filthiness, we must also receive God's dealing in order to eliminate everything that hinders us from bearing fruit or from bearing much fruit.

Often we cannot bring people to salvation or bring more people to salvation because we have not received enough dealing from the Lord. The Lord desires to deal not only with our errors but also with our being. A person who tends trees must prune the tree's branches so that the tree can bear fruit or bear more fruit. Once the branches are pruned, the tree can bear fruit or bear more fruit. The fact that we have not brought anyone to salvation for a long time or that we have not brought many to salvation proves that we have not allowed the Lord to do a pruning work upon us. We should beseech the Lord to enlighten us and show us the areas that we need to allow Him to prune. The Lord wants to inwardly enlighten us through the Holy Spirit on the one hand and to outwardly deal with us through our circumstances on the other hand. If we receive the Lord's enlightenment inwardly and receive His dealing through our circumstances outwardly, we will be able to bring people to salvation or bring more people to salvation. A brother who comes to every meeting, reads the Bible, prays, and is irreproachable in his conduct may still not be able to bring anyone to the Lord. This does not mean that he has committed some sin; it may mean that he has not allowed the Lord to deal with him. Since the Lord wants him to bear fruit or more fruit, He may change the brother's circumstances. Perhaps He will cause him to lose his job, become sick, or have difficulties at work or at home. The Lord will deal with the brother through his circumstances in order to break him so that he can receive the Lord's pruning and cutting. After a new beginning he will be able to bring people to salvation. The number of people that we can bring to salvation depends on how much dealing we have received from the Lord. We have fresh power when we receive the Lord's fresh dealing. If we had power last year but not this year, we must receive fresh dealings in order to have fresh power to bear fresh fruit. We need to let the Lord prune what needs to be pruned and to break what needs to be broken in order to bear fresh fruit. We must receive the Lord's constant dealing in order to constantly bring people to salvation (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, pp. 509-510).

Wednesday 8/19

Related Verses

Acts 1:14
14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 2:42-47 (42)
42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
43 And fear was upon every soul; and many wonders and signs took place through the apostles.
44 And all those who believed were together and had all things common;
45 And they sold their properties and possessions and divided them to all, as anyone had need.
46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,
47 Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 4:31-33 (31)
31 And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.
32 And the heart and soul of the multitude of those who had believed was one; and not even one said that any of his possessions was his own, but all things were common to them.
33 And with great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 6:7
7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.

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Acts 12:24
24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Acts 19:20
20 Thus, the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Related Reading

The Reward of Preaching the Gospel

Receiving a Reward

"If I do this of my own will, I have a reward" (1 Cor. 9:17).

There is a reward for preaching the gospel. If we act according to the Lord's will, we will receive His reward. We need to be faithful in this matter.

Reaping in Joy

"Those who sow in tears / Will reap with a ringing shout. / He who goes forth and weeps, / Bearing seed for scattering, / Will no doubt come in with a ringing shout, / Bearing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126:5-6).

Those who sow the gospel in tears will reap with a ringing shout. Today we rejoice when we see people being saved and coming to the Lord as a result of preaching the gospel. In the future we will rejoice when we see the harvest that our gospel preaching has produced. Joy is a reward for preaching the gospel.

Receiving Wages—Gathering Fruit unto Eternal Life

"He who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto eternal life, in order that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (John 4:36).

The Lord promised that those who preach the gospel would receive wages, gather fruit unto eternal life, which is to gather saved souls into the heavens and keep them for eternity, and rejoice. These blessings are a reward for preaching the gospel. Many brothers and sisters are busy with the things of this world and do not pay attention to the gospel. They receive material wages, but they do not receive spiritual wages. They gather up much money on earth like a temporary night-blooming flower, but they do not gather up many souls in the heavens as fruit unto eternal life. They have an earthly joy today that brings only sorrow, but they will not receive the heavenly joy of glory. This matter is too important to ignore (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, pp. 516-517).

Thursday 8/20

Related Verses

Mark 16:15, 19-20
15 And He said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all the creation.
19 So then the Lord Jesus, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God.
20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the accompanying signs.

Matt. 28:18-20
18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.

Rom. 10:14-15
14 How then shall they call upon Him into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe into Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who proclaims Him?
15 And how shall they proclaim Him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the news of good things!"

Related Reading

The Call from Four Directions

The Lord's Only Commandment at His Departure Speaking Forth a Call from the Heavens Above

The call to preach the gospel and save people comes from four directions. The first call comes from above, from the heavens. It is according to the Lord's command, which He spoke immediately before His ascension. Although the Lord's call was given while He was on earth, His command comes to us today from the heavens. With regard to geography, He wants us to go into all the earth. With regard to race, He wants us to disciple all the nations. From the day of His ascension, His call from above has never ceased. Throughout the ages there have always been those who heard and answered His call. They have gone to every place under the sun to preach the gospel. According to His sovereign authority, the Lord effects changes among humanity that reflect the actions initiated by His calling. For example, the discovery of the new world by Columbus produced an east-west connection by sea that enabled many to answer His call to go to all the countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands, following the Reformation brought in by Martin Luther. As a consequence, God's gospel of grace has been preached to every race. The Lord will continue to sound His call, calling some to bring the gospel to those living in every corner of the earth. May some among us hear and answer His call and go and disciple those who do not know the Lord (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, p. 499).

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THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL PRODUCING A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOSPEL

When we preach the gospel, we must have the spirit of the gospel. When our spirit is full of burden, it becomes a power within us and causes us to be so driven that we cannot help but preach the gospel. This is the spirit of the gospel. This spirit causes us to be eager to preach the gospel, to be consumed with preaching the gospel to the point that we care for nothing else and fear nothing else. Our only care is for preaching the gospel, and our only fear is that people would perish. When we have such a spirit of the gospel, we spontaneously have a proper attitude toward the gospel outwardly. We should pursue and ask the Lord for such a spirit (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, p. 505).

Friday 8/21

Related Verses

John 4:35, 38

35 Do you not say that there are yet four months and then the harvest comes? Behold, I tell you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are already white for harvest.
38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

Rom. 1:14-15

14 I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to foolish;
15 So, for my part, I am ready to announce the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

2 Tim. 4:2

2 Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching.

Luke 16:19-31

19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he clothed himself in purple and fine linen, making merry every day in splendor.
20 And a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores
21 And longing to be satisfied with the things falling from the rich man's table; moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.
22 And the beggar died, and he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.
23 And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham from afar and Lazarus in his bosom.
24 And he called out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this flame.
25 But Abraham said, Child, remember that in your lifetime you fully received your good things, and Lazarus likewise bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.
26 And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm is fixed, so that those wanting to pass from here to you cannot, neither from there to us may any cross over.
27 And he said, Then I ask you, Father, to send him to the house of my father --
28 For I have five brothers -- so that he may solemnly testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.
29 But Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
30 But he said, No, Father Abraham; but if someone risen from the dead would go to them, they will repent.
31 But he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead

Related Reading

The Cry of the Rich Man Speaking Forth a Call from Hades Below

These verses record the cry of the rich man who was suffering in the flames of Hades. His cry indicates that there must be many in Hades who have a desire that their relatives on earth would hear the gospel and be saved in order to escape the suffering of perdition. They are in Hades, and they are crying out concerning the need for their living relatives to hear the gospel. This is the second direction from which a call for the gospel comes. We should be moved by these pitiful cries and go to the living who still have a chance to repent in order to preach the gospel that can save them from eternal perdition (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, pp. 499-500).

Being Fervent in Spirit

"Being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus" (Acts 18:25).

The spirit of the gospel reflects a fervent spirit. If we want to preach the gospel, we must be fervent in spirit. Apollos was fervent in spirit, and he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus. If we want the gospel to be released and not be held back by us, we must be fervent in spirit. We must be fervent even to the extent that we appear to be crazy. We should become a "fanatic of Jesus" to the extent that we do not care for anything but announcing the Lord Jesus.

"His spirit was provoked within him as he beheld that the city was full of idols" (Acts 17:16).

The spirit of the gospel involves not only a fervent spirit but also a spirit that can be provoked when we see people sinning and perishing in

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darkness. When he was in Athens, the apostle Paul was provoked in his spirit because he saw that the whole city was full of idols. With his provoked spirit, he preached and released the gospel in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there, as if he were crazy (v. 17) (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, p. 505).

Saturday 8/22

1 Cor. 9:16-24, 26 (16-17, 22-24, 26)

16 For if I preach the gospel, I have no boast, for necessity is laid upon me; for woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.
17 If I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship.
18 What then is my reward? That in preaching the gospel I may present the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel.
19 For though I am free from all, I have enslaved myself to all that I might gain the more.
20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew in order that I might gain Jews; to those under law, as under law (though I myself am not under law), that I might gain those under law.
21 To those without law, as without law (though I am not without law to God but within law to Christ), that I might gain those without law.
22 To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. To all men I have become all things that I might by all means save some.
23 And I do all things for the sake of the gospel that I may become a fellow partaker of it.
24 Do you not know that those who run on a racecourse all run, but one receives the prize? Run in this way, that you may lay hold.
26 I therefore run in this way, not as though without a clear aim; I box in this way, not as though beating the air;

Related Reading

The Believers' Pressing, Heartfelt Responsibility Speaking Forth a Call from Inside of Us

It is a marvelous fact that once we are saved, we spontaneously feel that we should preach the gospel. If we do not preach the gospel, we feel that we have let people down, that we owe them something, and that our heart is empty and without peace. Whenever we preach the gospel, our heart is joyful, satisfied, and peaceful. Furthermore, the more we preach, the happier, more released, and more comfortable we are because the Lord has entrusted us with the stewardship, or responsibility, to preach the gospel. When we receive His salvation, we also receive His commission and spontaneously feel a spiritual responsibility. This stewardship is in our innermost heart, and through the moving of the Holy Spirit, it becomes a burden, a pressing voice, that compels us to preach the gospel. If we do not preach the gospel, we feel like saying, "Woe to me." Unbelievers think that Christians are zealous to preach the gospel, but actually this is a necessity laid upon us because we have an urgent, inward sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility comes from within. It is the third direction from which a call for the gospel comes. This inward call is an irresistible call.

The Desperate Need of People Speaking Forth a Call from Without

Paul, who was zealous for the gospel and active in preaching throughout the Mediterranean area, saw a vision and heard a call for him to come to Macedonia. This is the fourth direction from which a call for the gospel comes. It comes from people, and it speaks of the desperate need of those around us. Today these kinds of Macedonian calls are numerous and pressing. Regrettably, we often ignore them or do not even hear them, because we do not have a strong desire to reach others with the gospel, and our sense is quite dull. We should ask the Lord to operate and increase our desire so that our inward sense can be sharpened, and we would feel the desperate need of people for the gospel. Then we would hear their pitiful cries and answer their thirsty needs by going to help them with the gospel (Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 3, ch. 28, pp. 500-501).

Lord's Day 8/23

Related Verses

Acts 16:9-10, 25-34
9 And a vision appeared to Paul during the night: A certain man, a Macedonian, was standing and entreating him and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us.
10 And when he had seen the vision, we immediately endeavored to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to announce the gospel to them.
25 And about midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, sang hymns of praise to God; and the prisoners were listening to them.
26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken. And instantly all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened.
27 And the jailer, waking up out of his sleep and seeing the doors of the prison opened, drew his sword and was about to do away with himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.
28 But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, Do no harm to yourself, for we are all here.
29 And the jailer asked for lights and rushed in; and trembling, he fell down before Paul and Silas.
30 And leading them outside, he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.
32 And they spoke the word of God to him together with all those in his house.

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33 And he took them with him in that very hour of the night and washed their wounds. And he was baptized immediately, he and all his household.
34 And he brought them up into his house and set a table before them; and he exulted because he had believed in God with all his household.

Further Reading:
Further Reading: *Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 3, ch. 28

Hymn: #904

1 We have a most glorious King;
The heavens, He says, are His throne;
All worlds are His mighty domain,
All kingdoms His scepter shall own.
He dwells with His people below,
He loves in their trials to share;
We dwell with the King for His work,
His burden we willingly bear.

2 I'm dwelling with Jesus my King;
I've found where He dwells with His own;
I've opened the door of my heart;
He's made it His temple and throne.
Like Mary I sit at His feet,
Like John I recline on His breast;
His presence is fulness of joy,
His bosom is infinite rest.

3 I dwell with the King for His work,
I've part in His glorious plan
To bring in His kingdom to earth
And tell His salvation to man.
The world has its work and rewards,
I count them but folly and loss;
My business is only His work,
My message is only His cross.

4 I dwell with the King for His work,
The work, it is His and not mine;
He plans and prepares it for me
And fills me with power divine.
So duty is changed to delight,
And prayer into praise as I sing;
I dwell with my King for His work
And work in the strength of my King.

5 We'll dwell with the King for His work
And work thru each day of the year.
Perhaps ere it passes, the King
In glory Himself shall appear.
Oh, then in some closer embrace,
Oh, then in some nobler employ
We'll dwell with the King for His work
In endless, ineffable joy!

Churchwide Truth Pursuit of Genesis

Level 1—Sequential Life-study Reading
Completed for Genesis. Review prior materials on the church website.

Level 2—Topical Study
Completed for Genesis. Review prior materials on the church website.

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