

Hopewell Baptist Church

Sunday, August 17, 2024

Welcome/Introduction Statements
Recap Beach Camp @ Fort Caswell

Many camp wide decisions were made in our the week of camp.

34 salvations

205 call to repentant

45 Called to ministry

Recap Senior Trip to Honduras.

There is a reason that I am taking about these trips so much. I am setting you up but we will get to that later.

Turn to John 15:1-8.

Let's stand for the reading of God's Word.

Read John 15:1-8

Prayer

Here's a fun fact: in the U.S., the top five most popular fruits are:

1. Strawberries
2. Pineapple
3. Grapes
4. Watermelon
5. Bananas
- 6.

They may taste different but every one of those fruits has one thing in common — they come from a living plant, tree, or vine. If the plant is healthy, it produces fruit. If it's unhealthy, the fruit is bad. If it's dead, there's no fruit at all.

We will either produce *good fruit, bad fruit, or no fruit at all.*

Jesus paints this vivid picture of a vineyard — with Himself as the true vine, God the Father as the gardener, and us as the branches. The health of the branch depends entirely on staying connected to the vine.

MAIN POINT 1 – Fruit Comes From Connection (vv. 4–5)

Jesus says, *"Remain in me, and I in you... apart from me you can do nothing."*

We live in a world that loves independence — "I can do it myself." But Jesus says the exact opposite is true in the spiritual life. The branch doesn't create life; it receives life from the vine

A lot of translations will use the word ABIDE and it's used 11 times in verses 1-11. What does that actually mean. Warren Wiersbe gives a great definition of this: *"To keep in fellowship with Christ so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit."*

Think of your phone and a charger. If it's plugged in, it's got the power it needs. If it's unplugged, it may run for a little while, but eventually it dies. The same is true spiritually — if we're not connected to Christ, we may look okay for a season, but we will not have what we need to bear fruit that lasts.

In the Bible there is a lot that could be considered fruit. Romans 1:28 tells us that winning people to Jesus. Romans 6:22 says growing in holiness and obedience. Roman 15:28 says that Christian giving can be fruit. In Galatians 5:22–23. These aren't just nice personality traits; they are supernatural evidence that the life of Jesus is flowing through us.

If we claim the name of Jesus, and call ourselves Christians, should we not look more like Him, Should be not be producing fruit that comes from Him?

Question for us today: What kind of fruit is coming from your life? Do you see fruit coming from your life? And who's your source? Are you connected to the true Vine.

MAIN POINT 2 – Fruit Requires Pruning (v. 2)

Jesus says, *"Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit."*

If you've ever watched someone prune a plant, it can look almost violent. Healthy-looking branches get cut back. The plant looks smaller, even weaker for a moment. But any gardener will tell you — pruning is not punishment; it's preparation. It redirects life and energy from what is wasteful to what is fruitful.

Sometimes that pruning feels painful. It may be:

The career door that unexpectedly closed.

The relationship that ended.

The ministry role you loved but had to step away from.

And in the moment, we might think, "God, why are You taking this from me?" But later, we begin to see that His pruning was making space for something better — deeper faith, more Christlike character, greater fruitfulness.

Hebrews 12:11 reminds us, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." God's pruning is always motivated by love and aimed at our growth.

Question for us today: Will you trust the Gardener's hand, even when His pruning shears cut close?

MAIN POINT 3 – Fruit Takes Time

Farmers know you can't plant a seed today and harvest tomorrow. There's watering, sunlight, time, and waiting involved.

And that's where many of us struggle. We live in a world of instant results, but spiritual growth doesn't work like that. God grows fruit in us at His pace, not ours.

Isaiah 40:31 says, *"Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength."* Waiting is not wasted time when we are abiding in Christ.

James 5:7–8 says, *"See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near."* Waiting seasons are not wasted seasons — they're often the times when God is building the character that will be able to sustain the fruit when it finally comes.

Here's the key truth: The longer the season of preparation, the sweeter the harvest often is. Don't pull up the roots before the plant has time to grow. Trust the Gardener's timing.

Question for us today: Where in your life right now are you waiting on God? Will you trust His timing, even if you don't see the fruit yet?

HOW DO WE REMAIN CONNECTED?

Jesus doesn't just tell us *what* to do; He shows us *how* to stay connected.

1. **Spend Time in His Word** – His Word is the nourishment for our souls. You can't know God's will without knowing God's Word.
2. **Pray Continually** – Prayer is not just a flare gun in emergencies; it's a lifeline of constant communion.
3. **Obey His Commands** – Jesus says in verse 10, *"If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love."* Obedience is proof of connection.

RESULT – Fruit That Glorifies God (v. 8)

Jesus says, *"My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples."*

When you're connected to Jesus, the fruit in your life isn't just for your benefit — it's a testimony to others. It's like a lighthouse on a dark shore — you may not say a word, but your life points people to Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Fruit doesn't come from trying harder — it comes from abiding deeper.

If you remain in Jesus, if you allow Him to prune you, and if you patiently trust His timing, you *will* bear much fruit. And that fruit will glorify God

GEN Z

Let's come back to Gen Z. I told you I was setting you up for something.

- Back on Easter, US Today had an op ed by Ed Stetzer that was titled. Not just at Easter, Gen Z is returning to Christianity, and the data proves it.
- Axios had a headline that said young men are leading a religious resurgence.
- The Wall Street Journal had a headlined, it said sales and bibles are booming, fuel by first time buyers.
- The Guardian in the UK had a headline that read: A revival was happening, Church hails resurgence among young in the UK.

GEN Z is stirring and waking up. There is a revival happening in Gen Z right now and it's amazing to watch. They are figuring out that they can't do it on their own. There is no where else to turn. They understand the part of John 15 when Jesus says apart from me, you can do nothing.

Closing Prayer

