

**Three Clarifications (14:25-31)**

**14:25 "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.**

**14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."**

Verses 25-31 provide clarification to what has already been said in the earlier part of Chapter 14.

In verse 25 Jesus reminds the disciples that though He has been speaking in terms of a continued relationship with them, His departure plans have not changed. As He speaks, He is abiding with them, but He will not always be around as He is now. He also reminds them that He has left them with a wealth of information that they needed to remember, teach, and apply. To help them He will pray that the Father send the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will come in Jesus' name, as Jesus' representative, taking His place, exercising His authority, and continuing His work (Plummer, 281). He is an emissary, not simply a substitute (Carson, 505). The mission of the Holy Spirit in relationship to the glorified Redeemer is analogous to the mission of the Son in relation to the Father (cf. 5:43; 10:25; Plummer, 281, + Carson, 505).

It is repeatedly mentioned in the gospels that the disciples failed to understand much of what Jesus had said (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; Mk. 7:14-18; 9:31; Matt. 16:6-11 etc.). But when the Holy Spirit came, He served as their interpreter and teacher (Bruce, 305). He reminded the disciples of Jesus' teaching and helped them understand the significance of it (Carson, 505; cf. Lk. 9:45; 18:34; 24:8; Plummer, 281). It is upon this fulfillment that the apostles become adequate witnesses of all that the Lord did and taught, and consequently, the authenticity of the gospel narrative is grounded (Alford). John's purpose in including this information is not to explain to readers at the end of the first century how they may be taught by the Spirit, but to explain to the readers at the end of the first century how the first witnesses, the first disciples, came to an accurate and full understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ. The ministry of the Spirit wasn't to bring quantitatively new revelation, but to fill out the revelation brought by Christ (Carson, 505).

In summary, the promise of the Holy Spirit was meant to alleviate fears. Jesus is sending them another teacher who will remind them of all He had taught. Secondly, the Holy Spirit would illumine for them the things that they didn't yet understand; He would teach them the significance of Jesus' words and the events that took place.

**14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."**

"Peace" (*shalom*) was the typical Jewish greeting (+ Carson, 505), but Jesus offers something deeper and more lasting. "My peace," He said, "I give to you." In addition to the Holy Spirit, this is the second gift that Christ gives His followers.

The *pax Romana* (Peace of Rome) was won and maintained by the sword. The Jews also thought that messianic peace would be gained by the conquering Messiah. Instead, peace was secured by an innocent man who suffered and died at the hands of sinners.

Jesus' peace is a concept that is pregnant with meaning. It is a peace that the world cannot give, but is characteristic of the dawning kingdom in the Old Testament (Num. 6:26; Ps. 29:11; Is. 9:6,7; 52:7; 54:13; 57:19; Ezek. 37:26; Hg. 2:9) and is fulfilled in the New (Acts 10:36; Ro. 1:7; 5:1; 14:17; Carson, 506). At the individual level, this peace secures composure in the midst of trouble and dissolves fear, as the final injunction of the verse indicates (Carson, 506).

Three kinds of peace can be identified and Jesus' peace includes them all.

1. Jesus secures peace with God. Romans 5:1: Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. He creates peace among men. Colossians 3:15: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body
3. He creates personal peace. Phil 4:7: And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Theologically, the lack of peace in all three cases is tied to sin; the cure for sin is the same in each instance as well.

***14:28 "You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.***

***14:29 Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe."***

Throughout the chapter Jesus has been dealing with the disciples' troubled hearts relative to His coming departure (starting from verse 3). He now returns to the same subject, but this time, however mildly, He goes on the offensive. Their failure to understand and trust Him is also a failure to love Him. If they loved Him (condition used here implies they didn't), they should have been glad to hear that He was going to the Father.

### ***The Father is greater than I***

At a popular level, those who believe that Jesus is less than God often cite, "the Father is greater than I" as evidence for their belief. But such an understanding flies into the face of what John has already said about Jesus; Jesus is both equal to the Father (1:1, 18; 5:19-20; 8:29; 12:48-49) and the *mediator* in creation, revelation, and redemption according to the Father's will (1:3, 4, 14, 18; 3:17; 5:21-27). When interpreting the Bible it is never right to deny one truth in Scripture by appealing to another.

“The language is ambiguous and must be treated carefully. For example, I could truthfully insist, ‘the president of the United States is greater than I.’ But such a statement would not be taken by anyone to mean that the president is more of a human being than I am, that he is ontologically on another plane. It simply means that he is greater in authority, position, rank, prestige, and in the honor accorded him’ (Carson, Farwell Discourse, 80).

In fact, one could even argue that Jesus’ comment if taken seriously could be evidence of His oneness with the Father. It would be meaningless for Jesus, as a mere man, to say “the Father is greater than I;” that is assumed of all men. He would simply be stating the obvious, and for what purpose? Why, in the middle of a sentence about His departure, would He blurt out that He is not God? It is easier to understand this as Jesus referring to the Father’s position. In Jesus’ state of humiliation the Father is greater in power, wealth, authority, influence, and renown. In other words, He is speaking in reference to His position as Messiah, not to His essential being (His essence; Tenney, Expositor’s, 148). This fits the NT pattern that insists throughout that the incarnation involved the acceptance of a certain subordination (Morris, 659).

This also offers a better explanation as to why the disciples should rejoice at Jesus’ going. If someone really loves another, there would be sympathy with Him in hope and purpose (Bruce, 306). If the disciples really loved Jesus, they would be glad that He was returning to the Father, for He is returning to the sphere to which He belongs, to the glory He had before the world began (17:5). “If you loved Me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father . . . because the Father is greater than I” (Carson, 507). That is, “You should be glad for Me that I am returning to the Father because My return signals that My condition of humiliation will end. You should be glad because at this point in time the Father is greater than I in glory, and if I return, I will return to the sphere of glory I once shared with Him” (Carson, 508).

In addition, the fact that Jesus is on His way to the Father is good news because it signifies that the work of the Father has been completed and His mission has been accomplished. Even from the perspective of self-interest, Jesus’ gain is theirs as well (Plummer, 282). After all, His going insured that He would come and take them to be with Him forever and grant them life and glory as well (Brown II, 655). This should be a cause for joy. But the disciples’ affection is utterly self-centered; they could not rejoice over His gain but could only mourn their own loss.

The failure of the first disciples, sad to say, is often repeated in history by the church. Christians have been far more alert to their own griefs and sorrows than to the things that bring their Master joy.

NOTE: Although the above interpretation turns on the distinction between Christ in His humiliation and Christ in His glory, it also attests to the pattern of functional subordination of the Son to the Father which extends back to eternity past. “The Father is the divine fountainhead in which the being of the Son has its source. The Father is God sending and commanding; the Son is God, sent and obedient. The focus here is on the Son in the humiliation of His earthly life, a humiliation, which now in His death, has reached both a climax and an end” (Carson, 508).

**14:30 "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;**

**14:31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here."**

The ruler of this world (Satan) is about to meet his downfall as Jesus predicted (12:31). Satan does not know this, for his plan is to bring down the holy one of God, but there is nothing in Christ by which he can gain an advantage. The outcome will be Messiah's victory (Bruce, 306).

### **John 15**

The allegory of the vine and the branches brings out the importance of fruit bearing in the Christian life and emphasizes that it isn't a result of human effort but of abiding in Christ. As Hodge says, "The point of analogy is the absolute dependence common to both relations. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. . . for apart from Me you can do nothing' (John 15:4, 5). We are here taught that Christ is the only source of spiritual life; that those out of Him are destitute of that life and of all ability to produce its appropriate fruits; and even with regard to those who are in Him, this ability is not of themselves, it is derived entirely from Him" (Hodge, Systematic Theology, II, 268).

**15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."**

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was often likened to a vine. In Psalm 80:8 the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt is described in terms of a vine being transplanted from the soil of Egypt to that of Canaan. In Isaiah 5 the nation Israel is likened to a vineyard that does not produce fruit. In Jeremiah 2:21 Israel is described as a vine that is sending out degenerate shoots. The vine had even become a symbol of the nation Israel. It was found on Jewish coins in the Maccabean period, and in the days which our Lord walked upon the earth, there was a huge filigree of a vine adorning the entrance of the temple of Herod.

Though Israel is the vine, neither Israel nor the church are the *true* vine. It is Jesus. The word "true" can be used of that which is real, ideal, or genuine; it almost has the idea of "ultimate" (see notes on 1:9; Carson). Jesus is the fullest realization of Israel's hope, expectations, and of what God intended her to be. Israel, the degenerate vine, failed to fulfill that which the image was intended to portray (Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15; 19:10; Hos. 10:1; Morris, 668).

The gardener - the vinedresser- is the Father (as in Mk 12:1; Ja. 5:7; II Tim 2:6. cf. 1 Cor 3:9 - God's field; RWP). The Father is the one who originated the relationship between the vine and the branches, and is the One who looks for and insures the bearing of fruit (Alford, 857). As is characteristic of the fourth gospel, the Father and the Son are seen working together (Morris, 669).

**15:2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit."**

John 14:20 has already mentioned the mutual indwelling of the believer and Jesus. Here, the same imagery appears. Fruit is not defined, but is undoubtedly the same as in Matt. 3:7-8; Gal. 5:22 ff.; Eph. 5:9; and Phil. 1:11 (Morris, 670).

Jesus refers to branches "*in Him*" that are taken away and burned (v.6). The question arises as to who these may be. What group of people were once in Him but then removed? Are they the Jews? Are they Christians who lose their salvation? I believe Carson is correct in saying that neither makes good sense (Carson, 515); both views are pushing the imagery too far. The transparent purpose of the verses is to show that all true Christians bear a measure of fruit. The alternative to a fruitful branch is dead wood, and to make the vine imagery make sense it is necessary that it is spoken of as being attached to the vine (dead branches from other plants lying around in the dirt would hardly make the point). The branches that bear no fruit have *no life* or they would have simply been pruned, *not cut off*. This is one of a number of verses that depict people who have some degree of connection with Jesus, but their connection is superficial; they fail to show the perseverance that testifies that the grace of God was never alive in them (Matt. 13:18-23' 24:12; Jn. 8:31ff.; Heb. 3:14-19; I Jn. 2:19; II Jn. 9; Carson, 515).

Although most translations translate the latter half of the verse 12 as "He *prunes* it" the verb is literally "cleanse" (καθαίρω); that is, "He cleanses it." It is a word common in the inscriptions for ceremonial cleansing (RWP), and shows that we have entered the spiritual sphere (Morris, 669). The connection of this verb with the next verse should not be missed.

**15:3 "You are already clean (καθαρός) because of the word which I have spoken to you."**

The last time "clean" (καθαρός) was used was in relation to the disciples in 13:10-11 where it says, "'You are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, 'Not all of you are clean.'" Remembering this connection clarifies the nature of the fruitless branches that are burned. These are branches like Judas who had been in close contact with Jesus but was not a true believer (17:12; Morris, note 10; 669,670). The disciples were already spiritually cleansed (13:10-11; Morris, note 11, 670) because of Jesus' word spoken to them.

The purpose clause in 15:2 ("that it may keep on bearing more fruit" [more and more]) specifically says that the purpose in cleansing the branch is to produce fruitfulness. Left to itself, a branch will grow a lot of unproductive growth. Pruning insures fruit bearing.

**15:4 "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."**

As the true vine, our Lord is the source of life and strength and fruit. There is complete dependence between the branch and the vine. The vine supplies life-giving nourishment to the branches. Apart from it, the branches have neither life nor fruit.

As the branches, we are the visible manifestation of the life of the vine. We are the instruments of fruit-bearing. Since our Lord's ascension into heaven, the church has been the body of Christ. The world is to see Him in us—we are His hands, His feet, and His mouth.

The only way to continue being "clean" (pruned) and to bear fruit is to sustain a vital spiritual connection with Christ (RWP); we must abide in Christ. Abiding is not maintained without a conscious effort of the disciple's own will, hence the urgency of the command (Bernard II, 481).

John is fond of this word "abide." He uses the term (μένω) over fifty times in his writings, eleven times in this chapter. Underlying the meaning of this term is the idea of **belief and is tied to Jesus' words**. Negatively, this is seen in Chapter 5 of John's gospel: "And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent" (John 5:38; also see Jn. 5:24; 15:7).

Positively, it occurs in the sense of belief in Chapter 6: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Abiding, then, **requires a belief in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on our behalf**. It is a dependence upon His provision of life and strength that is emphasized in John 15:4. It is a belief and a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and His Word (John 15:7).

In addition, the idea of **remaining or enduring** is implied by the word abide. "The multitude said to Jesus, 'We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain (abide) forever, and how can you say, 'The Son of man must be lifted up'?" (John 12:34). This is clearly the force of the term in verse 16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). Thus, abiding is believing in Christ and His word, appropriating His death, and persevering in the faith. Abiding is essential for fruit bearing (Rosscup, Abiding in Christ, 27-28.).

**15:5 "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."**

Jesus repeats and applies the metaphor of verse 1.

The vine and the branches stand in much closer connection than the shepherd and the sheep (Jn. 10), or the Lord of the vineyard and the vines (Alford, 857); they abide "in" each other. Jesus' life is the life in the branches; this relationship is called a vital union.

Hodge states, “. . . the vital union between Him and his people is something more than that which may subsist between disciples and their master, — a union including merely trust, congeniality, and affection. The influence to which the fruitfulness of the believer is attributed is something more than the influence of the truth which He taught; however that truth may be applied or enforced. Their abiding in Him, and He in them, is something more than abiding in the profession and belief of the truth. Christ is the head of the Church not merely as its ruler, but as the source of its life. It is not I, says the Apostle, that live, “but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20) . . . It is from Him, as the same Apostle teaches us, that the whole body derives those supplies by which it lives and grows. (Eph.4:16.) “Because I live, you shall live also. (Jn. 14:19) “I am the resurrection, and the life.” (Jn. 11:25) “I am that bread of life.” (Jn. 6:48) “He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him.” (Jn. 6:56.) “This is that bread which came down from heaven: . . . he that eats of this bread shall live forever.” (Jn. 6:58.) “We shall be saved by his life.” (Ro. 5:10) “The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45) “As the Father has life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (Jn. 5:26) “You have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him.” (Jn. 17:2.) “Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.” (Col. 3:3, 4.) The Scriptures, therefore, plainly teach that there is a vital union between Christ and his people; that they have a common life analogous to that which exists between the vine and its branches, and between the head and members of the body. The believer is truly partaker of the life of Christ.” (Hodge, Systematic Theology, II, 697, 698).

The roles of Christ and His followers should not be confused (Morris, 671). Fruitfulness of the Christian life is not a result of human achievement, but of abiding in Christ. This is a declaration of the human helplessness apart from Christ. He who abides in Christ keeps bearing fruit in quantity (Morris, 668, 671).

***15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."***

The necessity of abiding is further demonstrated in verses 6-8. In verse 6 we are given the negative results of not abiding. In verses 7 and 8 we learn the benefits of abiding.

The one who doesn't abide in Christ is cast out (Alford, 858). Their fate is no mystery; the branch that is cut off from its source of life withers and is burned. This is clearly a reference to the future judgment and strongly emphasizes the necessity of remaining in Christ (Morris, 671).

Thus, failing to abide is more than just a hindrance to fruitfulness; it is a severing from the source of life. Not to abide leads to death and destruction (Rosscup, Abiding in Christ, 27-28.).

It is worth mentioning here that this is not insinuating that we are to remain in Christ by our own strength. In 15:5, Jesus had already said we can do nothing apart from Him; logically, this would mean that we cannot bear fruit or remain in Him apart from Him. He is the source of abiding power, not us.

From other passages we learn that perseverance in the faith is a work of God, not human effort (see notes on perseverance at [www.gracefellowshiphawaii.org](http://www.gracefellowshiphawaii.org) > study resources > theological studies > SIN/JUDGMENT/SALVATION > Perseverance). Verses which speak of the potential of falling away from the faith are part of the means by which God preserves the believer. "The God who unconditionally elects, preserves believers until the end, yet believers do not sail safely into the divine harbor without availing themselves of the means which God has supplied to do so. They heed the warnings so that they do not make shipwreck of their faith" (Schreiner, *Perseverance and Assurance: A Survey and a Proposal*). Jesus' words function to motivate the believer to abide in Him, accomplishing God's purposes in preservation.

**15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.**

**15:8 By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."**

In verse 4 Jesus said, "Abide in Me, and I in you." In verse 5 He said, "He who abides in Me, and I in him." Now in verse 7, instead of using the pair, "If you abide in me and I in you," Jesus says, "If you abide in me, and *My words* abide in you." Abiding in Christ is in part, abiding in His word. If someone is truly abiding in Christ, then Christ's words will abide in him (Morris, 672). When the words of Jesus abide in us, we hear them and respond to them as living words from the mouth of a living God.

The promise of an absolute answer to prayer is tied to this (Westcott, 200). The one who has Christ's words abiding in him asks for things in conformity to His will (Carson, 517, 518). As A.T. Robertson says, "This astounding command and promise is not without conditions and limitations. It involves such intimate union and harmony with Christ that nothing will be asked out of accord with the mind of Christ and so of the Father "(RWP). God designed prayer to give his disciples the joy of bearing fruit while God Himself gets the glory. We can see this in the connection between verses 7, 8, and 16. The words of Jesus must abide in us if our prayers are to be effective.

The prayer is tied to bearing fruit that is glorifying God. In other words, the fruit that is borne is that which comes from prayer in Jesus' name and gives glory to God, including obedience to Jesus' commands (v. 10), the experience of Jesus' joy (v. 11), love for one another (v. 12), and witness to the world (vv. 16, 27; Carson, 517). John 15:16 says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit . . . that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you." The end for which we seek to bear fruit is not just our own joy (v. 11) or to benefit people: it is that God the Father might be glorified.

Piper applies this well. He says,

1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence which we have before him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, He hears us." Prayer is not for gratifying our natural desires. It is for gratifying our desires when those desires have been so purified and so saturated with God that they coincide with his plans. "If we ask anything according to his will."

John puts it another way in 1 John 3:22, "Whatever we ask we receive from him because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight." In other words, prayer is not for gratifying natural desires. Prayer is for satisfying the desires of people who are devoted to God's desires.

James put it yet another way in James 4:3, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." Prayer is not for gratifying natural desires. Prayer is for fruit bearing.

If we want to have power and effectiveness in praying, we must devote ourselves to getting our desires into alignment with the fruit that God means to produce through us—and that fruit always has to do with the hallowing of his name and the coming of his kingdom and the doing of his will the way the angels do it in heaven. (Piper, Sermon, 1/10/93)

***The imagery of the vine and the branches becomes clearer when one realizes that verses 9-16 serve as a commentary on the metaphor in verses 1-8 (Carson, 511).***

***15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.***

***15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."***

Yet another dimension of abiding in Christ is introduced in verse 9. We are commanded to abide in Jesus' love. Verse 10 explains "how" we do this: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His Love" (John 15:10). Jesus' life was marked by a total submission and obedience to the will of the Father (John 8:28-29). "True discipleship [is] cherishing and attracting the continuance and increase of Christ's love; and this, He adds, was the secret even of His own abiding in His Father's love!" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

***15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."***

One result of our obedience to our Lord's command is joy.

Lest the constraints of the unqualified obedience mandated by vv. 9-10 seem grey and joyless, Jesus insists that His own obedience to the Father is the ground of His joy; and He promises that those who obey Him will share the same joy – indeed, His very purpose in laying down such demands is that their joy *may be complete* (cf. 1 Jn. 1:4). What is presupposed is that human joy in a fallen world will at best be ephemeral [transitory], shallow, incomplete, until human existence is overtaken by an experience of the love of God in Christ Jesus, the love for which we are created, a mutual love that issues in obedience without reserve. The Son does not give the disciples joy as a discrete package; He shares His joy insofar as they share His obedience, the obedience that willfully faces death to self-interest (12:24-26)" (Carson, 521).

“As Jesus’ supreme joy is in His relationship of obedience to the Father, so the Christian’s supreme joy lies in his relationship of obedience to the Son” (Carson, Farewell, 99).

**15:12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.***

**15:13 *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."***

Verse 12 now gives a concrete example of what abiding in Jesus’ love looks like. Our love for Christ is expressed by loving others as He loved us. The ultimate demonstration of love is about to be witnessed by the disciples. Christ will lay down His life for His friends. If the love of Christ is to be shown in His disciples, they must be willing to give themselves to and for others (Deffinbaugh, <https://bible.org/seriespage/abiding-christ-john-15>).

**15:14 *"You are My friends, if you do what I command you.***

**15:15 *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 things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."***

The distinction between being a slave or a friend is not one of obeying or disobeying; Jesus tells us that we are His friends if we obey. Rather, the distinction is in what is revealed. A slave is obligated to obey whether he knows what is going on or not; Jesus tells His friends all things that he has heard from His Father and makes them known to us. As friends we are not called to simply obey, but we have been given insight into the Master’s plan and purposes. This is another element that explains what it means to be a branch that abides in Jesus.

**15:16 *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."***

Jesus insists that they did not choose Him, but He is the one who chose them, and He chose them in order that they bear fruit.

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. . . we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

“The logical connection between the two parts of this verse are tremendously important. Jesus says that he chose and appointed his disciples that they should go and bear fruit that remains . . . "that [in order that] whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He may give it to you." Shortened down it says, "I have given you a fruit-bearing mission in order that your prayers might be answered!" This only makes sense if prayer is for fruit-bearing. . . You would expect the verse to be just the reverse: God will give you what you ask in order that you might have a fruit-bearing mission. But Jesus says it the other way around: I give you a fruit bearing mission in order that the Father might answer your prayers. The point:

prayer malfunctions when it is not used in fruit-bearing. If you are not devoted to fruit-bearing, you have no warrant for expecting answers to prayer" (Piper, Sermon, 1/10/93).

If Jesus chose us to bear fruit, then we can be sure he will exert all his power to make us fruitful.

Additional notes on verse 16:

No one more frequently asserts the divine sovereignty than our blessed Lord himself. He speaks of those whom the Father had "given Him." (Jn. 12:2.) To these He gives eternal life. (Jn. 17:2, 24.) For these He prays; for them He sanctified Himself (Jn. 17:19.) Of them He says, it is the Father's will that He should lose none, but raise them up at the last day. (Jn. 6:39.) They are, therefore, perfectly safe. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (Jn. 10: 27-29.) As the sheep of Christ are chosen out of the world, and given to Him, God is the chooser. They do not choose Him, but He chooses them. No one can be added to their number, and that number shall certainly be completed. "All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." (Jn. 6:37.) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (Jn. 6: 44.) "Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (Verse 45.) "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (Verse 65.) With God it rests who shall be brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13:11.) "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matt. 11:25.) In Acts 13:48, it is said, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The Scriptures, therefore, say that repentance, faith, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are gifts of God. Christ was exalted at the right hand of God to give repentance and remission of sins. But if faith and repentance are the gifts of God, they must be the fruits of election. They cannot possibly be its ground (Hodge, Systematic Theology, II, 347)

To act in the name of anyone is often to act by his authority, and in the exercise of his power. Thus our Lord speaks of the works which He did "in his Father's name;" that is, by the Father's authority and in the exercise of his efficiency. And of the Apostles it is frequently said that they wrought miracles in the name of Christ, meaning that the miracles were wrought by his authority and power. But when one asks a favor in the name of another, the simple meaning is, for his sake. Regard for the person in whose name the favor is requested is relied on as the ground on which it is to be granted. Therefore, when we are told to pray in the name of Christ, we are required to urge what Christ is and what He has done as the reason why we should be heard. We are not to trust to our own merits or our own character, nor even simply to God's mercy; we are to plead the merits and worth of Christ. It is only in Him, in virtue of his mediation

and worth that, according to the Gospel, any blessing is conferred on the apostate children of men (Hodge, Systematic Theology, III, 705).