5 Abiding In Christ… A Divine Partnership

I believe that Walking in the Presence and Power of Jesus leads to a life of Unbelievable Impact.
With the wind of the Holy Spirit moving us to places where we can make a real difference.

Today in our passage we will see Jesus is painting a new picture for his disciples…
A picture where he is no longer physically present with them, but a picture of a life of great purpose and eternal impact!
It is:

- A Divine Partnership
- A life of supernatural power far beyond human capacity
- A life of significance, that could change the world around us.

We find the secret to this Divine Partnership in a Jewish Vineyard.
The day before Jesus goes to the cross, he's in the upper room having the last supper with his disciples, Sharing crucial last minute lessons with them.

It's like he saved the best for last!

At the end of the meal, Jesus gets up and says, "Come now, let us leave."
I believe it's very plausible that they all left the Upper Room and were walking together through a vineyard when he began to share with them the truths in John 15.

It's among the grapevines we find the building blocks of *A Divine Partnership*

I. The Building Blocks of the Divine Partnership (15:1-2)

A. The Vine, The Branches, The Gardner, and Fruit

John 15:1-2

[15:1] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. [2] He cuts off every branch in me ***that bears no fruit,*** *while every branch* ***that does bear fruit he prunes (kathairo)***
so that it will be even more fruitful.

(5) I am the vine; you are the branches.

Jesus is the Vine, The Branches are Us, The Father is the Gardner.

Why does God, the Gardener, prune the fruit-bearing branches? To help them produce **more fruit**…

Look at v.5
(5) If you abide in me and I abide in you, you will ***bear much fruit;***

The Divine Partnership we are talking about today is this interaction of the branches and the vine to bear **Lots of FRUIT!!**

In v.8 ***Jesus says*** *This is to my Father's glory that you* ***bear much fruit;***

I think it safe to say that Jesus has a bias for fruit, for high impact, for making a difference.

Now, I'm not saying he was a fruitarian or a vegetarian.

Look at Mark 4 to see a similar idea and value Jesus held dearly, in the parable of the Seeds and the Sower. The farmer plants his seeds and they fall on four kinds of soil.

3 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow/plant his seed.
4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.

8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

Notice down in v.20
20…Seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop (karpos)
—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

What we can observe here is that God did not call us to have
an "average" impact on people around us,
on the world around us.

He has called us to experience a Divine Partnership that is UNBELIEVABLY FRUITFUL!!!

When this DIVINE PARTNERSHIP is working well –what happens? What results?

Let's look ahead at the **Outcomes** of the Divine Partnership…

II. The Outcomes of the Divine Partnership

John 15:4-5, 7
*[4] Abide in me, as I also abide in you. No branch can **bear fruit** by itself; it must abide in the vine. Neither can you **bear fruit** unless you abide in me.*

*[5] "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, **you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

No option of bearing any fruit without Jesus! He says it 3x! There is no Plan B!

Jesus is describing A PROCESS of 'bearing' or 'producing' fruit in our lives.

One of the main outcomes of the DIVINE PARTNERSHIP, of Abiding in Jesus is:

1. Fruit Bearing… Much Fruit!!! Producing Boatloads of Fruit!

Now the question is, What do you think he means by "Fruit?"

2. What Does Fruit Looks Like?

What kind of fruit is he talking about?

I believe he is talking about Spiritual Fruit, *NOT* Fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5.

Sometimes we too quickly jump to the Apostle Paul's description of the "Fruit of the Spirit", but I don't think that's what Jesus is talking about here.

What fruit are we supposed to produce and display when we are Abiding in Jesus?

Four Facets of 'Spiritual Fruit' in the Gospel of John:

#1. The Fruit is Demonstrating you are a Follower of Jesus

John 15:8 (Much Fruit!)
*[8] This is to **my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit,***
showing yourselves to be my disciples.

When you and I bear fruit in our lives we
demonstrate ourselves to be disciples of Jesus

Let's look at similar verses and compare to see 2nd facet of fruit…

#2. The Fruit that comes from Loving Others as Jesus Loves Us

Back in the Upper Room, Jesus gave them a New Commandment…

John 13:34-35
*34 "A new command I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must **love one another**. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you **love one another."***

Notice how John expands and clarifies this Love in I John 3…

I John 3:18
*(18) Dear children, let us not love with words or speech **but with actions** and in truth*."

Humbly serving each other.

Loving each other in very concrete ways.

Be willing to go out of our way to serve others… --Linda Calfee funeral impact

Can you see here that Loving one another is also very similar to Fruit Bearing?

Could obeying this command be considered "fruit"? Or an aspect of fruit?

*[8] This is to **my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit,***
showing yourselves to be my disciples.

1. Bearing fruit demonstrates you are a disciple
2. Loving one another ALSO demonstrates you are a disciple

*35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you **love one another."***

This fruit of **"Loving Each Other"** is one of the greatest billboards, greatest advertisements for the legitimacy of Christianity.

Illust: Branding example: In marketing new products & services today the aspect of "Branding" is critical

Branding is more than a logo or a slogan
It involves reputation, image, quality, and culture surrounding the brand.

Brands are associated with wealth, beauty, quality, coolness, athleticism, outdoorsy,
Biking pants story: one brand of biking gear I like is Pearl Izumi. I've had a pair of Pearl Izumi winter biking pants for years and they work great. Couple years ago was coming back from a bike ride and stopped to grab the mail from our mailbox up the street from our house. And as I reached over to grab the mail, while still sitting on my bike, I did a cow tipping maneuver and lost my balance and just tipped over. Embarrassing, but no blood was shed, I did get a big hole in the knee of my favorite biking pants!

Last year in Oregon, I was wearing the pants and getting self-conscious that I had a big hole in the knee. So I looked online to buy another pair and I didn't want a cheaper brand. When I saw how much they cost now, I got the bright idea to take them to a Taylor and have them sewn up instead. So I spent about $20 instead of $120. In my mind, the "brand" did matter because it represented quality.

What Jesus is saying to us here is that <u>Love is our Brand!</u>

Love is our Distinguishing Mark… a Selfless, Other-Centered kind of Love.

Getting a hold of this truth is critical to building a Divine Partnership with Jesus.

Experiencing the love of Christ AND giving that love to each other.

Examples: *visiting someone sick or homebound who can never give in return.* **Chuck was in his early 30's, in our young adult's group who was in a motorcycle accident in ten years earlier, that left him wheelchair bound for life. Every Sunday a shuttle would drop Chuck off at church and then pick him up after church was over. But often our group would go out to a nearby restaurant for brunch after church. If that was the case, one of us would have to take him with us and then take him home afterwards.**

Charlie was a lieutenant in the Air Force training as a navigator to fly B-52 bombers at the nearby airbase. Every Sunday we ended up going to brunch, Charlie always brought Chuck with him in his car and then brought him home. It was a ton of work to have to lift Chuck in and out of his wheelchair into the car and back again. With no fanfare or drawing attention to himself, Charlie clearly displayed the Fruit of Loving one another!

There is another similar passage referring to fruit-like results back in the Upper Room

#3. Fruit could be <u>Mega Works</u>, Doing Great Things for God

<u>John 14: 12-14</u>
(12) I tell you the truth,
***anyone** who has faith in me <u>will do what I have been doing</u>.*
<u>What was Jesus doing?</u> Proclaiming the Gospel, Healing the sick, Casting out demons

He is saying we will do what he did <u>and more!</u>

*He will do even **greater things than these**,*
because I am going to the Father.

Greater Things = "Mega Works" in Greek
Doing Mega Works sounds a lot like bearing MUCH fruit!

Could these be synonymous? Mega Works & Bearing Much Fruit?

So we see three of the four aspects of Fruit are"

#1. The Fruit is Demonstrating you are a Follower of Jesus
#2. The Fruit that comes from Loving Others as Jesus Loves Us
#3. The Fruit could be Mega Works, Doing Great Things for God

There is a fourth aspect of fruit related to these Mega Works or Greater Things.

#4. The Fruit is New Believers, New Disciples

Notice John15:16
[16] You did not choose (eklego) me,
*but I chose you and appointed (tithemi) **you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last (abide).***
Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

What does this sound like?
This sounds very similar to Jesus' Great Commission "To Go and Make Disciples"

He says "To Go and Bear Fruit!"
What kind of fruit will last/abide? New Believers, New Disciples!

Remember John tells us the purpose of his Gospel in John 20:31
*But these are written that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*

Many Bible scholars hold to this view of that **fruit here is New Believers, New Disciples,** and it is consistent with the purpose of John's Gospel –**that people believe in Jesus.**

Also, back in John 4, after Jesus talks with the woman at the well, the disciples come to him and are confused. This scene in The Chosen series is really well done!

When he responds to them he uses the word "fruit" to refer to new believers, new followers of Jesus

[31] Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."
[32] But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."
[33] Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"
[34] "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.
[35] Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'?
I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

*[36] Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a **crop (fruit)** for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.*
Who experiences Eternal Life? --*New Believers!!!*

Four Facets of Spiritual Fruit:

#1. Fruit: Demonstrates you are a Follower of Jesus
#2. Fruit: of Loving Others as Jesus Loves Us
#3. Fruit: of Mega Works, Great Things for God
#4. Fruit: of New Believers, New Disciples

Another result of the Divine Partnership besides bearing much fruit is

3. Experiencing the Joy of Christ

*[11] I have told you this **so that** my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (overflowing!)*

This makes a ton of sense here…
Which is an easier state of mind from which to love others? Or to bear more fruit?
Being Joyful and Fulfilled? Or being Depressed and Unfulfilled?

This is all connected!

Results of the Divine Partnership, of Abiding in Jesus is a very satisfying life, A rich emotional life… of joy!

These are all great things: Bearing Much Fruit, Mega Works, a Life of Joy, etc…

But *HOW* does this take place?

If Walking in the Presence and Power of Jesus leads to Unbelievable Impact.
How do we start doing that?

Let's take a look at:

III. The Divine Partnership in Action

It comes from Abiding in Christ…

It comes from the branches (Us) Abiding/being connected to the vine (Jesus)

So How do we actually "ABIDE" IN Jesus?

Like being Filled with the Spirit, there are NO easy formulas to abiding,

Abiding in Jesus is like a "State of Oneness with God."

You know it when you're in it.
Sort of like those days where everything just flows well, when your in your groove.
Like athletes playing at peak performance and "being in the zone"

A Foundation Of Abiding To Build Upon
While John 15, the Vine and the Branches, is the key passage on Abiding, Jesus gets the disciples ready to hear it and receive it back in John 14.

[7] If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."
[8] Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

(9) Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?
(10) Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?
The words I say to you are not just my own.
*Rather, **it is the Father, living (abiding) in me, who is doing his work.** (11) Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*

The is the first picture of Abiding. The Father's words and miracles came through Jesus.

John 14:18-20
I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.
(After the resurrection, before the ascension)
*Because I live, you also will live. **(Our resurrection life in Christ!)***
On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me,
and I am in you.

This is a second picture of Abiding…

John 14:22-23
Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.
(This is Our Part: Living the Jesus way)

My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **(This is God's Part)**

This is a third picture of Abiding in Ch.14

A. Three Aspects of Abiding…
#1. Abiding Involves A Close Dependent Relationship With Jesus

John 15:4-5, 7
*[4] Abide in me, and I will abide in you. No branch can **bear fruit** by itself; it must abide in the vine.*
*Neither can you **bear fruit** unless you abide in me.*

[5] "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you,
***you will bear much fruit;** apart from me you can do nothing.*

Explain "Abide" (Meno): To dwell under the same roof/same house, remain, stay connected, to stay in one place with.

This Abiding is a picture of a strong vibrantly connected relationship between the disciples and Jesus:

Connection to the vine allows spiritual nutrients to flow to the branches which bear fruit.
Saying yes to Jesus and living for him, his way.

Staying close to Jesus, depending on Him –like branches and the vine…
Like "I can't do this without you Lord"!

Drawing strength from the Lord how? I think most significantly through prayer!

> *[7] If you abide in me and my words (rhema) abide in you,*
> ***ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.***

Abiding and praying are woven together here

- **Prayer calls in God's power to bear fruit**
- **Not our power/ strength or talent, or our own reserves**
- **In fact, we may even be depleted, but God can still work through imperfect people! He delights in it! We may be at the end of our rope, but God still uses us!**

Similarly, right after Jesus describes how we will be doing "Greater Works"
He says:

John 14:13-14

[13] And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14] You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

#1. Abiding Involves A Close Dependent Relationship With Jesus

Illust: Mary Burger…prayerful close walk with Jesus, she prays expecting great things from God.
She prayed a long time for her son Norm to have Christian friends in high school.
Instead, the Lord made me, his friend, a Christian, in answer to her prayers!

#2. Abiding Involves His Words Abiding In Us

[7] If you abide in me AND my words (rhema) abide in you,
Jesus' words dwelling deep within us, this is when we immerse ourselves in God's Word. Those words become a part of us.

When we get cut we bleed Bible verses!

Notice v.3

[15:1] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. [2] He cuts off every branch in me ***that bears no fruit,*** *(Judas branch) while every branch* ***that does bear fruit he prunes*** *(kathairo)*
so that it will be even more fruitful.

[3] You are already clean/pruned because of the word I have spoken to you.

How did the disciples become "already clean" or already pruned"?
Jesus' Words to us have a pruning or cleansing effect that help us become more like Jesus
--which leads to Bearing Much Fruit!

I John 2:24
See that what you have heard from the beginning Abides in you. If it does, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

The disciples had three years with Jesus, to learn his words, to see them in action…
so we have to really dig into God's Word ourselves.

To study it, to memorize it, meditate on it.

When I am studying, memorizing, and meditating on the Bible I hear from God a lot more.

#2. Abiding Involves His Words Abiding In Us

The third aspect of Abiding is that…

#3. Abiding Involves <u>Keeping His Commands</u>

Notice three times in John 14 Jesus says this.

<u>John 14:15, 21, 23</u>
(15) "If you love me, you will <u>obey what I command</u>.

(21) Whoever has my commands and <u>obeys them</u>, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

(23) Whoever has my commands and <u>obeys them</u>, he is the one who loves me.

We demonstrate our love for Jesus by how we live, *NOT JUST WHAT WE SAY.*
This is "Love-Fueled Obedience!"

*<u>John 15:14</u> You are my friends if <u>you **DO** what I command.*

<u>John 15:9-11</u>
*[9] "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now abide in my love. [10] <u>If you obey (tereo) my commands</u>, **you will abide in my love,** just as I have obeyed (tereo) my Father's commands and abide in his love.*

<u>I John 3:24</u> Those who obey his commands abide in him, and he in them.

For us to do what we know is right Obey/Keep. Do what you know Jesus tells you to do.
Taking the initiative to live the "Jesus Way."

<u>3 Aspects of Abiding in Christ:</u>

#1. Abiding Involves A Close Dependent Relationship With Jesus. --Grapevine, nutrients flowing from vine to branches to grapes
#2. Abiding Involves His Words Abiding/Dwelling In Us
#3. Abiding Involves Keeping His Commands

Abiding is a "State of Oneness" with God.
It is a Divine Partnership, *The New Normal*

Expecting God to accomplish amazing things in you, around you, and through YOU! That you and I Bear Much Fruit!

Roselyn: A former colleague of mine at Elmbrook Church, was a vivid picture to me of someone who is Abiding in Christ.
Our offices were next to each other, so we got to interact quite a bit.

She wore many hats over her years on staff at the church, but her last role was spiritual formation and care.
Ruth Cancer healing story: in the car on the way to pray for her, the Lord told Roselyn he already healed her but to go ahead and pray for her healing.

Today Roselyn, a widow in her late 70's, is leading neighborhood evangelistic Bible study…

Abiding and Walking In The Presence And Power Of Jesus
***Truly* Leads To A Life Of Unbelievable Impact!**