

John 15:2, 6 – When we're fruitless



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l scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: *Fruit, fruit of the spirit, Gal. 5:22-23, Acts 2, bearing fruit, John 15, branches of the vine, cut off, removed, cleansed, lifted up.*

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Summary: *Many of us have unfruitful times in our lives. What will happen to us, in truth, when that happens? Isn't God committed to finishing what he started in us (Phil. 1:6)? But John 15:2 seems to say we'll be cut off. And how do John 15:2 and verse 6 differ? Listen carefully. You will be encouraged.*

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If you become fruitless in Christ's eyes, what does Jesus say will happen to you? This teaching today can encourage you and change your lives if you're depressed from lack of good fruit visible in your life. This is going to be a deep dive with additional thoughts I didn't get to cover in the previous sermon, the video on "HOW to bear fruit of the Spirit."

Please watch and study that video on "How to bear the Fruit of the Spirit" before this one, and then this one will mean so much more to you. And please print out this sermon first and have it in front of you, as it will help you see verses faster and keep up with me. Put a marker at John 15.

I think this teaching is going to give you a lot of food for thought. *I think many of us have had times in our lives where we were fruitless -- without fruit spiritually. **John 15:2 seems to say we are going to be cut off**, taken off the vine, if there's no fruit. Is that what it really says? Hang on, I think you'll find this thought-provoking.*

Maybe in your fruitless times you were going through a super tough time in your life, and you just couldn't focus on much else. *Maybe you were going thru a divorce, or had been put out of your church, or had just gone through a series of deaths of loved ones in your family.*

And you became fruitless. Many would say that would be understandable.

What is to become of us, in our times of fruitlessness? Will we be taken off, cut off, and thrown to the fires? Is that what John 15:2 really says? And what about John 15:6. That seems clearer in verse 6, but how are verses 2 and 6 different.

Did Jesus really say unfruitful branches IN HIM would be removed and discarded as John 15:2 SEEMS to say in most translations?

What does the original Greek actually say?

Listen carefully. You will be encouraged and surprised. So today I need us to study John 15:1-8 more deeply – so it doesn't contradict other scriptures.'

I TOUCHED on John 15:2 last time, but there is a deep theological issue at stake here that I need to address. *I think what I'll show you today will leave many of your very PLEASANTLY surprised, I hope.*

I also covered last time how Yeshua loves finding fruit. Remember he cursed a fig tree that didn't have any evidence of any fruit, even not-yet-ripe ones. (Matthew 21:18-19) He also gave a parable about how an unproductive fig was being given one more year to see if they could prune, clean, fertilize it to produce fruit (Luke 13:6-9).

It's absolutely true that Yeshua/Jesus wants to see FRUIT on us – we are the branches that are part of him.

I'm Philip Shields. We appreciate you coming to our website. **Please register as well**, and that allows you leave comments and ask questions. It also helps our positioning on YouTube and other venues. It really helps us to get the word out if you register and make comments. And let others know about this website please, if you find that it blesses you and helps you.

FRUIT OF GOD'S spirit – NOT you or your spirit

I hope you will watch the last video on this topic – HOW to bear Fruit of the Holy Spirit. Remember *the fruit we are to bear is not our OWN fruit.* We display the fruit of GOD's nature, HIS spirit in our lives. The fruit is the Spirit's fruit, not *my* fruit, not *YOUR* fruit. That's why it's called "the fruit of the spirit." Very important we understand that. So please hear the previous video sermon.

The FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: It's ONE fruit with 9 components like one apple has at least 6 components – stem, skin, flesh, juice, core, seeds, and so on.

In Gal. 5:22-23, the word “fruit” is singular – “the fruit of the spirit IS”. It doesn't say “the Fruits of the spirit ARE.” **All nine components of this one fruit all show up together. Kindness can't decide to have a day off** when God's other components are working. They all work together. Someone full of Love will not be unkind or have no joy – as a way of life.

In the same way, the fruit of the vine comes from the VINE producing fruit in due season. The branches – remember that's us (John 15:1 – “I am the vine, you are the branches...”). Branches DISPLAY the fruit and provide it to feed others like the deer and people who harvest.

Now GOD comes to live inside you and me by His spirit (John 14:23), and **what we display and what our tree produces reveals what we are: God's children.** You don't have to be able to describe an apple tree or pear tree to know it's an apple tree once you see apples on branches of a tree. You immediately know it's an apple tree when you SEE apples on the branches!

People will also know you are a child of God when we display and hold up the FRUIT of God's nature, of his spirit.

The previous sermon on HOW we bear the spirit's fruit covers far more. I also covered John 15 last time, but there's so much yet to say – that I didn't say before on John 15:1-6, 8 – so let's focus on that now and the theological issue I said it poses.

Now let's get into John 15.

John 15:1-4 NKJV

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit **He takes away**; and every branch **that bears fruit He prunes, 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, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

I want to focus now on verse 2. Remember what is most important are the actual words Yeshua/Jesus used. And therefore what the Greek here says.

Now John 15:2 again: (and keep your thumb or marker there)

“Every branch IN ME.” Did you notice that before? **He's talking about believers who are IN HIM, in Christ.** The only way you and I can be “IN Christ” is when we are immersed in him by baptism into HIS name and then an ordained elder lays hands on you asking for Father to send his Holy Spirit into you – which baptizes you, through God's spirit, into Christ's one body as Romans 6:3 and others say.

It's vital for us to grasp that these branches in verse 2, he says, are “IN ME”. Don't miss that.

Here are scriptures showing when we are baptized, we are immersed INTO Christ Jesus – Yeshua our anointed one:

Romans 6:3

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”

At baptism, we were baptized into Yeshua. Into Christ. Read on your own these verses – **Acts 8:16; Acts 19:4-6;**

Galatians 3:26-27

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of **you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**”

Here's the theological issue with John 15:2 seeming to say we are taken away, cut off - - even if we are IN Christ if we're fruitless:

when God gives his holy spirit to you, he is **committed to finishing** what he started in you. The Holy Spirit begets you into the family of God, and John says therefore “NOW are we children of God...” in **1 John 3:1-2.**

The GUARANTEE, the down payment (Gr: arrabon), of the Holy Spirit, like an engagement ring (Greek: arrabona).

Ephesians 1:13-14

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the **gospel of your salvation**; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Philippians 1:6

“Being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you WILL COMPLETE IT** until the day of Jesus Christ;”

Hebrews 10:14 – God has perfected us by his one offering, for God sees end from the beginning.

The DILEMMA: how can God remove the unfruitful branches that are still said to be “IN Christ” [“In ME”] – without contradicting all the guarantees I just read?

John 15:2 again:

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit **He takes away**; and every branch **that bears fruit He prunes**, *that it may bear more fruit.*”

The words “takes away” sounds like cuts off, removes, hacks off. He’s done with this fruitless branch of the vine. And almost every single translation out there has it like that: “cuts off, takes away, removes.”

But here are the problems with that:

- **It goes against the promised guarantee of the Holy Spirit** and the promise that God will be sure to finish what he started in us.
- **The Greek for “takes away” is “airo” and is often translated “picks up” or “lifts up.”** My NKJV has an asterisk by the words “takes away” and it says “Or, lifts up.” So does the NET (New English translation).

Examples where the Greek AIRO is the same word that’s translated as “pick up” or “lift up.”

John 8:58-59

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

*59 Then they **took up** stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

“Took up” is once again the same word in Greek – ‘airo’ --#142 – the same word used in John 15:2 that unfruitful branches are “airo” – lifted up.

John 5:8-9

*Jesus said to him, "**Rise, take up** your bed and walk." 9 And immediately the man was made well, **took up** his bed, and walked."*

Also Mark 16:18 – they shall “**take up** serpents...and not be hurt.”
The Greek for those and more is the same Greek word “airo” #142.

There ARE also examples where “airo” is used in the sense of “move” or remove, such as when Jesus said to move the stone at Lazarus’ tomb (**John 11:39**). Same word – airo. Examples of “airo” being translated as “take away” could be **John 11:48** – the Romans could take away our position.

But when you look at the doctrinal issue – I do not believe we would be cut off or removed when we are fruitless but are still in Christ. Instead Yeshua works with us. Look what he did with Peter, in spite of 3 terrible denials of his Christ, we find Yeshua restoring him and working with him. He works with me and you too, when we are fruitless. He props us up, lifts us up, and helps us become fruitful again.

At least that is the Jesus I know and love.

Now look at verses 1-2 in the PASSION TRANSLATION, which in this passage I believe says it right!

John 15:1-2 from the Passion Translation

“I am the true sprouting vine, and the farmer who tends the vine is my Father.

2 He cares for the branches connected to me [“in me”] by lifting up and propping up the fruitless branches and pruning [or cleansing] every fruitful branch to yield a greater harvest.

Sometimes some vine branches grow downward or fall downward – and can get stepped on in the dirt, not get enough sunlight and become unfruitful when they're down like that. So the gardener can PROP them up, or tie them to a higher branch and get it out of the dirt, and give it more sun, so it produces again!

Now it's also interesting that in verse 2 and 3, the same word translated “prune” is also translated in verse 3, same word, as “cleansed” or “clean”. So if the Greek word is translated the same way in verses 2 and 3, it would have said in John 15:2 that a branch that IS producing fruit he prunes, **or cleans. The Greek word translated as “prune”**

or clean is the same word in the Greek -- KATHAIRO Strong's word # 2508 and 2513 – where we get our word “**catharsis**” from.

The KEY is ABIDE in Him

Now let's continue in John 15:4 NKJV

4 **Abide** in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, **neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**”

The word “abide” has to do with sticking with Yeshua/Jesus, dwelling in him, making him your abode. To bear fruit as a branch on a vine, we have to remain on the vine. So as we SEEK our Lord, we can start to have an intimate relationship with Him.

There's another kind of **fruit – the “fruit of the womb.”** I mentioned that last time. I just want to be sure you get one aspect of this though: there will be child, no fruit of the womb, without very close, very intimate contact - - lovemaking of the most intimate kind. Abiding in Christ – whom we hope to marry as the Bride of Christ – includes a very INTIMATE and adoring way of looking at him and interacting with him.

Notice how the Passion translation words John 15:4:

4- So you must remain in life-union with me, for I remain in life-union with you. For as a branch severed from the vine will not bear fruit, **so your life will be fruitless unless you live your life intimately joined to mine.**”

Folks, this is what the Song of Songs (Song of Solomon) is all about. It's very explicit about the intimacy about these 2 lovers. Let me say it: Yeshua/Jesus is my Lord, my Savior, my King – and I love him.

We must be found to be abiding IN HIM. Or as Paul says, to be “found IN HIM.” IN him. Abiding in him. We cannot be “in Him” and “abiding” in him and yet not be praying, seeking, and communicating and interacting with him several times throughout the day, each day.

Of all the things Paul could say about his own accomplishments, his own background, his own credentials – and they were IMPRESSIVE.... Well, let's read it and then see what His goals were changed to:

Philippians 3:3-11

“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, ***blameless***.

7 **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.** 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish.”

The Greek for “rubbish” here is **skubalon** – which can include any refuse, garbage, or even dung. **NT:4657**

that ***I may gain Christ 9 and be found IN HIM, NOT having my OWN righteousness***, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may KNOW HIM and the power of His resurrection**, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

That’s my goal now – **to KNOW Jesus Christ my Savior**, the Anointed one – as my OWN life, my OWN being. Yes we still fall short – but the closer we are to him, in him, knowing him- - the more fruit of his Spirit we will have. So I want to KNOW him, and be in Him as never before.

Just a note here: The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God the Father and of Christ (Romans 8:9). You’ll see how the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God the father and the spirit of Christ in **Romans 8:9-11**. It’s one and the same Holy Spirit. In fact **1 Peter 1:11** says the spirit of Christ was what was inspiring the prophets of old.

Give up your own accomplishments that Christ and what HE can accomplish become more evident in your life.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN John 15:2 and 6

At first blush, John 15:2 and verse 6 seem the same – talking about an unfruitful vine branch being cut OFF and thrown away. But they're not the same at all.

John 15:2 is about a vine that is still “IN ME.” That branch is not separated from Christ but is IN him still but just not bearing fruit. **The verse 6 branch is not said to be IN Christ, but is said to be separated from the Vine. Be sure you see that HUGE difference.**

Maybe that intimate, close relationship was never there for the verse 6 branch. If a branch of the vine lets itself be torn off or if we purposely separate from Christ permanently, then there remains only a fearful looking towards the punishment of fire.

Here are a few more verses ***from Passion Translation – John 15:5-6, 8***

5- I am the sprouting vine and you're my branches. ***As you live in union with me as your Source, fruitfulness will stream from within you*** – *but when you live separated from me you are powerless.*

6 – If a person is ***separated from me***, he is discarded; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire to be burned.

Notice in verse 6, the person is no longer IN Christ, or “IN me” and is not abiding in Christ but has become separated from Jesus.

This verse 6 branch is very different from the description of John 15:2 where it talks about a “branch IN ME” that is not bearing fruit – and needs attention. Not cutting it off, but propping it up, cleaning it off (the word “prune” or “purgeth” in the KJV – which means “to clean” in the Greek!

Several translations say “clean” or “cleanse” – *like ASV, GOOD News Version, American Contemporary version, and Fred Coulter's Bible*. Young's Literal Version combines both prune and clean. Young's Literal: “he doth cleanse by pruning it.”

Then verse 3 – you are already clean – the word “clean” is the same word for prune. So we are already pruned, or already cleaned, or already paid attention to – but my point is: Our Savior saves! He is not going to give up on you or me easily.

You know, 27-30 years ago when some were willing to give up on me, *my Savior did NOT give up on me but stayed WITH ME* and kept working with me. SO I continued to abide in him, and he showed me a new purpose for my life in him.

If you're separated from the vine, there's no chance at all of having any fruit. We learned that in verse 4 – that if we are not abiding in Christ, there's NO WAY we can have or bear any fruit of the Spirit! We have to abide in Christ!

So if you're not bearing fruit, streaming from within you, FIX the problem! **Return to Yeshua/Jesus, and to our Father**, beg forgiveness and ask to be made into a branch that is in him, abiding in him. We're told God does give us time and is patient. Keep your finger at John 15...

Yeshua wants to give us every chance to let God's spirit flow in us, bearing much fruit.

Jesus gave a parable of a fig tree that had borne no fruit for 3 years. Initially his first thought was to just get rid of the whole tree. In this case, it's not about being a branch on Him, on his VINE, but about a whole separate fig tree that is not bearing fruit, but look at what God does.

Luke 13:6-9

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a **fig tree** planted in his vineyard, **and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.**

7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'

8 But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"

If you want more fruit, and see little fruit of God, of God's spirit in your life, ask him to produce it in you. Ask Father – the "gardener" or "vine keeper" to work with you in his mercy, fertilizing, watering, digging around, feeding this fruitless tree that you are – and have mercy on you! He will!

Notice the wording in this translation on verse 5. "Fruitfulness will stream from within you." If we seek God diligently with all our hearts, He will bless and reward us (Hebrews 11:6). He will cover us with HIS own righteousness.

In fact, the fruits of righteousness are – from – are you ready? -- from Christ. He is now our life. It is HIS righteousness on display.

Philippians 1:11

being filled with ***the fruits of righteousness which are BY Jesus Christ***, to the glory and praise of God.”

Other scriptures show it is Jesus Christ who produces the righteousness in us, as a GIFT from God in fact.

Romans 5:17 speaks of us receiving God's GIFT of righteousness. HIS righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that WE might become the righteousness of GOD, IN HIM.”

And I've spoken many times about **Philippians 3:8-11; 1 Cor. 1:29-31** that the wisdom and righteousness we have is by and through Christ.

If you're unfruitful, but abiding in him ... He will work with you if you seek again to abide in him.

Let's wrap up with verse 8

John 15:8 Passion translation

“When your lives bear abundant fruit, you demonstrate you are my mature disciples who glorify my Father!”

KEY to fruit: abide in Christ. The MORE we abide in him, the more fruit we will have. It's not abiding in the prophecy time line flow charts you have. It's not abiding in more and more study without prayer time or spending time actually talking to him. Or listening to him as we pray, and as obeying his commands that come as strong feelings of things he wants us to do.

I hope this message leaves you encouraged. And please – spend more time seeking and abiding in Jesus Christ. And recognize we could be in the very end of the age, so repent of any lukewarmness and turn back zealously to our Leader and Master. He will never leave you or forsake you. Ask him for HIS fruit in your life.

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