

Union With Christ

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Preacher: Ronnie Perry

[0 : 00] Amen. Amen. Good morning, New City. I guess as the trend is, you may have your seats now. I'll have you stand up again in a minute, but you can sit for now.

We'll wake y'all up and have y'all stand up and sit down a few times so y'all don't fall asleep on me. Nah, but it's good to be back. Good to be back. It's a second home.

I want to thank Pastor Kevin Smith and his actions, Pastor Billy for having me here and hosting me. It's good to see everyone. As Y Plummer mentioned, I'm in West Palm Beach, Florida, planting a church, New Song Church in West Palm.

And I also work for the city of West Palm Beach part-time at a community center kind of in the inner city. So working with kids and seniors and we did a summer camp.

So I had a I've been hearing sexy red all summer and I'm tired of hearing sexy red. That's a rapper. And and it's good. I mean, good to see the urban camp video. That was the last thing I did at urban camp.

[1 : 06] So it's just great to be back home. But today I want to turn our attention to the word of God. And we're going to be coming from the Gospel of John, chapter 15. I'm going to read the first eight verses. I'm reading from the ESV.

And now, if you would, will you stand with me as we read from the Gospel of John? After we read, I'll pray and we'll get in.

Gospel of John, chapter 15, verses one through eight. Hear the word of the Lord. I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away.

And every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine.

Neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

[2 : 14] For apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this, my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

And Isaiah says the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God endures forever. Amen.

You may have your seats and will you bow with me for a word of prayer. Father, we pray now that you would just make our hearts good soil.

Remove the cares of the world. Remove the unbelief. Remove apathy. Anything, cynicism, anything that would choke out the word in our hearts and make our hearts good soil so that we can receive the word of God and bear fruit 60 and 100 fold of faith, of righteousness, obedience, of fruit that will glorify you.

I pray that I would decrease now and you would increase, that people would see you and not meet a vessel. And we pray for your anointing to come that makes preaching and hearing of the word easy.

[3 : 25] It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I am the true vine. I want to speak to you. I know it says the union in Christ today, but I want to speak to you today from the subject I am the true vine. I am the true vine.

Keep it simple. And when we touch this passage, mainly talking about growth and the process of growth in the Christian life. And when I think on this topic, I think of a passage of Dr. Martin Luther King as he wrote in his book, *Strive Towards Freedom*.

Dr. King, as you know, when he, as you may or may not know, when he was pastor of Dexter Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, beginning to voice, bus boycotts, his, his house was bombed while his wife and kids were in there.

And they barely made it out in time. And as, as, as after coming to the scene of his bomb house, he sat and what was left was just their little dinner table with one chair.

And as Dr. King sat at that dinner table with one chair, reflecting on his life and what just had happened, this is what he writes in his book, *Strive Towards Freedom*.

[4 : 31] And I quote, I was ready to give up with my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me. I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward in a state of exhaustion when courage had all but gone.

I decided to take my problem to God with my head in my hands. I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud. These words I spoke to God, the words I spoke to God at midnight are still vivid in my memory.

I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I'm afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership. And if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will fail and falter.

I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone.

Any of you ever been in a place like that before? And then King writes, at that moment, I experienced the presence of the divine as I had never experienced God before.

It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying, stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And God will be at your side forever. Almost at once, my fears began to go.

[5 : 47] My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything. Some people describe this almost as King's second conversion, return back to some of his black church roots after he was studied in Protestant liberalism and seminary.

But I think we've all been to the place where we feel like I can't do anything else in my own strength. I need you, God, or something greater than me to give me life, to give me strength.

Now I'm going to falter. Any of you ever been there before? And this is what we come to today.

Jesus here, this is the last of his I am statements. And he says, I am the true vine.

And we know the key of any vine is that it is the source of life for the branches and the fruit that will blossom for that vine. But without the vine, there's no life.

There's no vitality. And Jesus is saying today, I am the true vine. Any other source of life, any other source of strength will falter. But I am the true vine. And so if you're going to grow, if you're going to be fruitful, if you're going to thrive, you need to learn how to depend on me.

[6 : 51] And so as we look in this text, I just want to look at three things, three points. I'll give them to you in front. I'm going to try not to keep you all too long. I joke at my church during the greeting time, the longer you all take to stop talking, that for every minute I have to wait for you all to stop talking, that's three minutes to the sermon.

And they stop talking. It works. They stop talking. So I want to give you three points. So we're going to see the vine in verses one through three.

We're going to see the branches in verses four through six and the fruit in verses seven through eight. One, the vine in verses one through three. Two, the branches in verses four through six and three, the fruit in verses seven through eight.

I'll kind of let you all know where I'm going for some of you people who like a little organization and then we'll go there. But first we see the vine or even the qualified at the true vine.

And look at verses one through three again. He says, I am the true vine and the father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit.

[7 : 57] Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Amen. Jesus begins by saying he's the true vine and obviously he's entering into the realm of metaphor. He's describing a metaphor here and he describes himself as the true vine or the true root.

If you want to use the tree analogy, he's the true life source of life. And just to set it up and he says that the vine dresser or the gardener is the father.

Right. Right. And then you know who the branches are. Right. The church. Right. Right. Just to set up the metaphor. And this vine metaphor is very significant in Scripture because throughout the Old Testament, in many places, the people of Israel, the people of God, they were referred to as the vineyard of God.

Right. Right. The place where you want to find God at work, where you want to see the fruit of the presence of the work of God in earth, working towards righteousness and justice, because the Bible says righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

You will look to the church as his vineyard. That's where he plants. That's where he does his work. Right. And so he's saying now as the true vine, if I'm the true vine, then if you really want to be the true people of God, if you really want to be the true vineyard, you have to depend on me for your source of life.

[9 : 19] Do you follow the analogy so far? And this is what he is saying, that if you want to be the true people of God, if you want to be the true place where my presence is at work, it's not a reflecting on necessarily alone what you may do.

But it first starts with from whom you draw your life, whom you draw your vitality. And John 14, Jesus says, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No man comes to the father except what? By through me. Amen. And so this vine analogy is deep. In fact, the Old Testament portrays Israel's God's vines, a very popular scripture.

Isaiah 5 says because Israel failed to bear fruit, they they felt they got caught in ethnocentrism.

They failed to share the gospel with the Gentiles that God was rejecting them as his vineyard and he was going to and he was going to destroy that vineyard and create a new work.

But today, because Jesus is a true vine, we are his true vineyard. And if people are going to see the work of God, if people are going to see the grace of God, if people are going to see God's grace, mercy, justice, righteousness, truth at work, they're going to have to look to the people of God.

[10 : 35] If an unbeliever is going to see God at work, he should be able to look at you. But here's the problem. So much in the church, so much in the church, so much in our lives, what people see is us, our strength and our effort and not him.

You know, as we get into a political season and you could go on whatever your politics, just remember politics are important and they have a place. We should be passionate. But what they really, but don't let them just see our vote at the cost of our discipleship, our evangelism, how we pray, how we love our neighbor.

They need to see more than just our politics. If we're not praying, but we're voting for one election every four years, we're not being the vineyard fully that God calls us to be.

Are you following me? I'm going to move on from that point because I don't want to go and start a bunch of trouble and then leave Pastor Kevin to clean up the mess. And he said, why did I let him back? But this analogy also should expand our imagination to the possibilities of what God can do in and through us.

If Jesus is the vine and we don't, I don't think we don't question Jesus ability as a vine and the father is the gardener. And I think most of us don't question God's ability as the gardener.

[12 : 03] Then we ought to have great faith and expectation of what God can do in and through us in spite of all our brokenness and sin. Because I don't know, I'm not the best at anything particular, but I know God is excellent as a vine and a gardener.

And so if my fruit is dependent on him, I'm in good hands. If my fruitfulness and my value and my contribution is dependent on him, I'm in good hands.

And that's the thing about a vine that makes it different from other plants that the roots of the vine spread out. So it's fruit and it's work is actually not made to just be stationary, but it spreads out. And actually, if you know, and I'm going to stop here because I'm not a botanist. I'm not a doctor in a botany. I don't know why I'm getting tongue twisted here. But the natural thing of a vine is they always move towards sunlight.

That's why vines climb. You know, they always go up. And as long as you can still move towards the sun, the chance of fruitfulness in your life is great.

[13 : 15] Because here's the thing about any kind of plant. We're dependent creatures. We're dependent not on, I don't care, you could be the best gardener, but the sun don't shine.

You ain't getting the harvest. You can have a green thumb. But if the sun don't shine, if it don't rain, if it's not good soil. So while skill is important, you're still depending on the sunshine, the rain.

Are you following me? And so this brings us to the question of growth. And if we are, if Jesus is our vine, how do we grow? And how do we draw from him as our vine so that we can grow and bear fruit?

Well, here's the thing. You can grow two ways. You can grow on behalf of yourself or you can grow on behalf of the gardener. If you grow on behalf of yourself, sometimes you'll try hard.

How many of you said, this year, I'm going to read through the Bible every year. I've got my Bible plan ready. And then you hit Leviticus. Y'all know what I'm talking about?

[14:24] That's probably the bad thing about going through the Bible chronologically. You'll just skip past Leviticus. So spread Leviticus up. That's one word of wisdom I'm going to leave with y'all.

Or you'll try real hard and then you'll mess up and you'll be frustrated. You'll be so caught on yourself. What happens is you're so frustrated with yourself, you get mad with God, and you stop fellowshiping with him.

You stop believing. You get more cynical. You sit and think, oh, I'm so messed up. Shame comes in. And you begin to lose expectations of what God can do in you.

And through you. But he says, abide in me. Maintain your fellowship. Remain in me. There will be seasons where it seems like God isn't doing anything.

There will be seasons where it seems like God is in silence. But he says, remain because no season lasts forever. And you will bear fruit. See, what a vine does in winter season, its roots sometimes go 20 feet deep into the ground because they need to draw those nutrients in winter as sunshine and sunlight decrease.

[15:31] And so it goes deep into the ground. And look, some seasons of life for you, God is just saying, go deeper in me and draw and be prepared. Because here's the reality. If you want the change, the outward change happen first, the inner change has to happen.

And when you truly change and when God is truly at work in you, it will tell on you outwardly. How many are in a relationship? And let's say a marital relationship.

To clarify, when you are in a marital relationship and if you are intimate with one another, in the most literal sense of intimacy, it will tell on you at some point if God blesses you.

The wife will begin to have a little stomach. And I'm not talking about gaining weight. Y'all get the point. And so we can't grow on behalf of ourselves, but it's on behalf of the gardener.

But that means we must submit to the wisdom of the gardener in order to grow. Are you following me? How many of you know, sometimes we all doubt God as a gardener.

[16:38] What did he say in the text? He says, every tree and me that does not bear fruit, he throws away, right? And I'm not going to stay there.

And look, we all go through seasons of strut, but it's talking about permanent rejection. I hope that's true of none of you, but the ultimate, those who never bear fruit will be thrown away.

But again, there are seasons. And you may have a dry year, but I don't mean you're not in him. All right? But he says, look, even those that bear fruit, he prunes that they may bear more fruit.

Right? Pruning refers to when you take the tip of the grapes in this one and you would trim the edges because oftentimes the first fruit that comes in the harvest season isn't going to be the best qualitative fruit.

So you cut a little bit of that fruit off and what happens is it'll grow back before the season's over, but the grapes will be even bigger. How many of y'all like those big old grapes? I'm assuming they're not made in the lab, but you know, those good grapes.

[17:49] I mean, I used to work in produce at Publix, so all y'all be just eating all our grapes for free. We probably, you know, y'all walking around the store eating grapes, when you picked it up, it was three pounds by the time you check out, it's about a pound.

I know what y'all be doing. But, but, but, but, but he, he cuts it back and he trims it because look, here's the reality.

Sometimes if a branch gets too heavy, it'll be destructive for the growth. The weight of the grapes could even make a divine falter and break fellowship. Sometimes God has to prune us, but it looks like he's cutting me and destroying me, but he's really preparing us for more fruit.

What am I saying? Sometimes, and this happens with a lot of pastors, we see too much outward fruit and we get big headed and it hurts us. We start praying good every day.

We start understanding the Bible a little bit and, and it's dangerous. Y'all know what I'm talking about? Yeah, some of y'all, and it shows on some of y'all social media accounts.

[18:53] Boy, y'all get a little, y'all get a little Bible knowledge, y'all get a little blessing. And they go crazy. But then the hard times, y'all go into social media silence.

Can't see nothing from y'all. But I'm gonna stop right there. But, but God sometimes has to prune us because we will think it's about us. We will think it's about ourselves. But growth is always the result of his work in us.

And his work, he will cut us. He will deal with things, but allow God to deal with your character first because if not, you'll find yourself in circumstances where your character cannot match the blessing or the gift that God may give you and you'll find yourself in trouble.

That's why so many pastors falter because if you're young and you get this big church and you have this great platform and it's great, but they're not mature enough to handle it, and so many pastors as we're seeing are faltering.

and let God do the work inside because a soft heart is so much more conducive to the work of God. A soft heart and tough circumstances is much more conducive to the work of God than a hard heart and good circumstances.

[20 : 09] See, we want God to change our situations. God wants to change the soil of our heart. Which brings us to our second point, the branches. I'm trying to be fast, so y'all start egging me on and y'all get me going.

It's not football season, but it's only one service now, so I don't have to rush. Priest to Jesus, come back. But I'm not going to do it.

Verse 4, it says, Abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. Verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. I'll stop right there. But, but, but, but, and so now we come and, and, and the branches are us and what happens is God will prune us as his branches as I mentioned and he will cut us and it will seem like, man, God is killing me.

Remember what Job said? Job said, man, don't he slay me. He like, God is slaying me. But yet I'm still going to trust him. Amen. And I'm going to bless him. Y'all know what I'm talking about?

[21 : 20] And it'll seem like time, God, you're trying to kill me. God, okay, God, I get it. I need it to be humble but the humble season is over. Can I get a blessing? Can I get a good season now? Can I get something good?

Now, any of y'all ever wrestle with God like that sometime? Are you fine? But he, again, he wants to deal with our heart because a lot of us, we can go through the grind of life and have a lot of success and a lot of blessings in our heart are never open really to God and open to people.

And you see that any Christian who say, I don't care how you vote, I don't understand how you could vote this way and be a Christian. You may have good truth but you have a hard heart.

Do you care about people enough? Is there something about Jesus that you see in that person enough that you can find unity with them even if your politics is different? If we are attached to the same vine for life and vitality but we can't love one another even over politics, what does that say about us?

Because some of us, we feel more camaraderie over football teams and politics than we do over being united in Christ. And look, I play football, I love football but it compares nothing to the unity we have in Christ.

[22 : 39] political unity, racial unity, sports team unity, even Olympic unity as the USA and my church is divided. I got a lot of Jamaicans. So over that track, oh man, there was, there were Noah Laws, there was some rivalry and I didn't know but apparently one of my Jamaican members told me Noah Laws girlfriend is Jamaican so she was giving our secrets away.

She was giving our secrets away to him. but, but, but, but, but it is about God working on the heart and branches that are aligned and realize they need to be connected to the vine that apart from the vine they can do nothing.

They learn and they relish in being dependent. Their boast and their confidence is not in what I could do for God but what God has done for me. He saved me, He chose me, He did it for me those two times way back then and if God chose me He saved me when I wasn't even asking to be saved.

He called me when I was looking to be called. He loved me when I was unlovable. If He would do that for me back then then my confidence rests not in my performance but in Him so I'm going to keep trusting Him.

I'm going to keep praying. I'm going to keep going to church. I'm going to keep expecting in faith for God to do things in and through me in spite of the difficulty because my confidence rests in Him.

[24 : 03] not in me. Are you following me? He says, apart from me you could do nothing. Do you really believe that? Because if you do you will learn to cry and depend on Him like you never have before.

You learn to love Him and appreciate. You know, I love God much more because He chose and saved me. He died for me when I wasn't worth dying for much more than anything I've done for Him.

Let me illustrate this and then we'll move on. I'm not going to keep you along. I got this story from Dr. Tony Evans and it goes that there were two dogs.

One was a German Shepherd and one was a Poodle. And I don't know why y'all like to pay all those money for them Poodles. I love dogs. But anyway, my mom's from South Carolina so we had to farm during the summer.

So I have a different context from dogs. Dogs are for hunting and protecting. But no, I'm going to stop there because I don't want Peter on me. Peter on me. But there was a German Shepherd and a Poodle, right?

[25 : 05] And they were in competition with one another and the German Shepherd said with my strength I bet I could get inside that house before you. And the Poodle said okay, I'll take you on in this bed.

And so the German Shepherd goes first and the German Shepherd goes to the door and with his strength and his height he stands on his hind legs, right? And he puts his mouth on the door and he begins to turn and it takes him a while he has to angle it and pull his strength but in about three minutes he finally gets the door open and he says see, I told you I could get inside that door fast. But in the Poodle what the German Shepherd didn't know was that the Poodle that was his house and his owners. And so the Poodle just went to the door and the Poodle couldn't reach and touch the door and it didn't have the size of the shrimp but the Poodle just scratched the door and the owner saw the Poodle and let it in in less than a minute.

Are y'all following me? And you get the point of the story. Here's the point of the story. Our security, our growth depends on our relationship and our fellowship and connection to the vine.

Not on our works. We don't have to be able to do great things per se but all we have to do is know the love of Christ. And when we call upon him and when we look unto him because he loves us he will respond.

[26 : 28] He loves us unconditionally. He loves us in spite of our weakness. He knows your worst thoughts, those things in your head that you are glad no one ever heard. He knows them and he still chose you.

So allow him to grow. His work is slow. The growth is slow. The growth is seasonal. It's mostly internal but it will bear fruit inwardly in time.

But keep trusting. He says remain, abide, make your home in me. I don't know about all of you but we all need things to de-stress. I've been, I was talking with someone and they said, and dude, I've been dealing with anxiety all my life.

I was a nervous wreck last night. I preach every, almost every Sunday still nervous, can't sleep, wanting to edit and God didn't just magically take my anxiety away when I became a Christian but he's teaching me and I'm learning how to manage it healthily.

I have to talk to myself and be convicted, trusting God. Why are you worried? Is it about you or is it about me? Do I love my people enough to feed them the word? Yes. Well, abide in me and my people will be fed.

[27 : 38] And it's a slow growth. It's mostly beneath the surface for three seasons. But the fruit will come. But keep abiding. Are you following me?

But lastly, we have the fruit. Verses 7 and 8, I'll read it, then we'll go. John 15, 7 and 8. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. What's the number one mistake we make with fruit? We often mistake fruit with external success.

That's the number one mistake. When we think of fruit, we think of external success, don't we? Let's be honest. We think of fruit, we think of our bank account, we think of what I've done, and not to say there's a place from it.

I hope we grow in life, I hope we grow in health, I hope we grow financially, I hope we grow numerically, whatever that looks like for you, but fruit is, you can't measure all growth linearly.

[28 : 44] Right? You understand? Bible says, even if Jesus is a Hebrew, he learned obedience by the thing he suffered. See, a person who has suffered and who has been through like Dr. King and resolve, it changed their heart.

See, when I think of that story with Dr. King, how was he able to maintain hope in the midst of the opposition? How was he able to maintain love and a message of love in the midst of all the hate he received?

Both from blacks and whites. Both, even in the church, you know, there was a fight once with Dr. King when he was trying to win the nomination for his nomination that was so intense somebody fell off the stage and died a few years later.

I don't have time to go into that in debt. But it's the person who has been in a valley but didn't have been exalted like Joseph. Remember Joseph's life? He's low, he goes up, he's low again, he goes back up.

That's the heart that could truly be fruitful because it realized we're not entitled to any blessing. But God blesses us anyway. We're not entitled, the one that could know that rain or snow, sunshine or night, I'm going to love God, I'm going to bless him.

[29 : 53] That is the fruit because the fruit of the spirit, remember, is not money, numbers, successes, love, peace, gentleness, kindness. That's the fruit of the Christian life.

And so the fruit is not external success, it's a peace that passes understanding that could weather the seasons of life.

I mean, I know here y'all have seasons and y'all have, in Florida we have like wet and dry season and we have another season, you know, it's called hurricane season in Florida. And that's about it. But, but, but, but it's the seasons. Remember New Edition, they said sunny days, everybody loved them, but can you stand the rain? Is that too data, is that too disconnected of a reference?

All right. All right. And then lastly though, not only do we often mistake fruit with external success, here's what anchors our soul, here's what anchors us in fruit.

[30 : 53] Look at what it says in verse seven again, John 15, seven. It says, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

It's about the word of God inviting us. And there are a lot of things the word of God does, but one thing it does is it gives promises. Here's the reality. A lot of us, our expectations of God are based on our appetite, our, our natural appetite for the life we want and the circumstances we want. But when we receive the word of God, it should begin to reorient our hearts and with that, it reorients our appetite and when we begin to desire for ourselves what God desires for us, our prayers begin to align with God's promises.

And then we begin to want God's promises and then what happens is God then, as that aligns, he begins to give us a measure of faith in his promises and we begin to pray for those promises. If there's two areas where the church has been kind of unfruitful, if we discuss, we talk about one thing, we talk about prayer and evangelism.

One, most of us are scared to share our faith, let's be honest. In these times, why are we scared to share the faith? Because we don't want to look dumb. We don't have confidence that God, through us sharing the word of God to an unbeliever can change their hearts.

[32 : 15] And we don't want to look socially unacceptable. We don't want to look intellectually foolish because the world thinks the gospel's foolishness. How many of y'all know what I'm talking? Can't even y'all can relate. We don't have confidence and so a lot of times we don't share our faith and then we say, God, we want, and we can pray and we should pray for salvation but at some time, somebody got to share the gospel with them.

And I'm all for relational evangelism and we should build relationships and I don't think it's going to be a one-time thing but at some time you got to say words. Right?

It's so funny, I'm working with kids now and I've been dealing with 35 middle schoolers five days a week for the whole summer. So my brain is, yeah, at least 35, some days more.

And what's so weird about kids now, they don't ask girls for phone numbers no more. They be like, let me get your Snapchat or your Instagram. And not only that, they go and they be like, hey, bro. They call the girls, bro, hey, bro, let me get your Snapchat. That's all. And the girl be like, oh. And she gives it to them and then they come to me, Mr. Ryan, see, I told you, man, I got that motion.

[33 : 22] Look at Mr. Ryan, look at me. Look at me. I'm making y'all laugh but communication is a lost art and we have to know to say the word of God to people and we have to know how to

communicate our words to God.

It anchors our heart when we begin to pray for what God wants for us. Are we receiving the word of God enough for us to begin to pray the word of God back to God and see God change us? And sometimes, I mean, God, give me courage. Give me boldness to share my faith. God, break my cynicism. I lost faith that you can do things and so I've given up on speaking encouraging words to people.

Do it again. God, a lot of us lost faith in this country and we're looking for a certain salvation out of this election and I think we should thrive and I think elections do matter but salvation doesn't come from either candidate.

It comes from the Lord. Revival doesn't come from either party. It comes from the Lord. Amen? Amen. And so as we pray, I don't know what you're going through in life but remember this command of Jesus.

[34 : 30] It's a simple command. He doesn't say do 20 Hail Marys or flagellate yourself or beat yourself. He just says remain. Depend on him.

That's the one command that's entitled. Depend on me. Draw from me. Look to me. And in time you will bear fruit. Amen? Let me pray for us and we'll get ready to go.

Father, we thank you so much for your goodness and your faithfulness. Father, I confess mine. We confess our unbelief that many times we find it hard to believe in the simple things of the faith.

Lord, we pray that Father you would give us a greater measure of faith to believe you for the simple promises of the gospel which are yea and amen in Christ and that we would bear fruit in our lives.

That we would have more love, more joy, more peace, more gentleness. That we would be full of your spirit and not of our anxieties, our fears and that you would be glorified in us and that you would renew, Father, our families, this church, churches across the world, this nation, even as you renew us in the fruit of the gospel as we depend on you, our one and only true vine.

[35 : 42] Remove all the false vines we may depend on in life. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you. Peace then.