

Title: God's Wonderful Purpose

TEXT: John 15:11-17

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Take your Bibles, please, and turn to John chapter 15. The Gospel of John Chapter 15. I want to begin where I left off last week. We were looking at THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BELIEVER TO JESUS in the parable of THE VINE, THE VINEDRESSER AND THE BRANCHES. Of Course Jesus is the vine. And God the Father is the Vinedresser. And Christians are the branches. And we are told to abide in the vine in order to be all that God wants us to be.

Now, building upon that principle we come (7B) TO OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER..

John chapter 15 verses 11...READ VS 11-17)

#### PRAYER

In our study of John's Gospel, we are in this section dealing with (2A) THE INSTRUCTIONS OF JESUS TO HIS FOLLOWERS. In other words, we are learning about discipleship. What it means to be a follower of Jesus. And what Jesus really wants us to do *and Believe*

(7B) NOW, I WANT TO LOOK AT OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ONE ANOTHER under the topic: GOD'S WONDERFUL PURPOSE.. And there are three principles, here, that I want you to get a hold off....

(1C) FIRST OF ALL, IN VS 11, WE FIND THE PURPOSE FOR ALL THE COMMANDMENTS THAT OUR LORD GAVE TO US. His purpose. Our Lord tells us many things in these chapters that we ought to do as Christians. But, what is His purpose? Why does He want <sup>us</sup> ~~us~~ to do and act a certain way? WHAT IS THE REASON BEHIND HIS COMMANDMENTS.?

Look at Vs 10.. Jesus said, "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. Then in Vs 11, Jesus says, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full." There it is, dear friends, God's wonderful purpose for His commandments. ~~T~~ There is one simple word which describes why Jesus commands us to do something. And that is the word "JOY." GOD WANTS US TO HAVE JOY. ISN'T THAT GREAT?

Now, 'joy' is much more than simply being "happy." The word "happy" is always dependent upon circumstances. You know, if everything is going the way I want it to go---no big problems...then I am happy.

But, a Christian's joy is much deeper than that. Whether trial or blessing, sorrow or happiness, or whatever, the Christian still has a sustaining 'joy.'

To understand this principle, there are two things that I notice about this joy in His purpose.

(1D) One, the character of this joy is stated as being 'CHRIST'S JOY.'

Jesus said in Vs 11, "that my joy maybe in you." And the point is that without the joy of Christ in you, you will never experience joy. The character of the Christian's joy is CHRIST'S JOY."

Now, the question that should be in your mind is: WHAT IS CHRIST'S JOY?"

There is only one verse which states clearly what His joy is. It is Hebrews 12:2, which says, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecty of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The picture, here, is a Christian race. We are to look unto Jesus who has began it and has already finished it. We are to have patience in that race. But, to understand how Jesus could continue in that race, to understand how He could have endured the cross, despising the shame which men brought upon Him, to understand how He could go through all of that is to know HIS JOY.

In John 15, Jesus is talking about the conflict and persecution that we face in the world as we share our faith and seek to bear fruit. The point is that Jesus also faced the same thing. He was persecuted, he was mocked and put to shame and killed. The joy of Christ which was able to endure all of that is to be in us. And that is the only way we can endure the conflicts of the world. That is the whole point.

Now, what is the joy? Hebrews 12:2.."who for the joy set before him."

Dear friends, what was the joy set before Him? What was it that caused Jesus to go to the cross and put up with all that shame and pain?

ANSWER: His joy was the anticipation of the results of redemption. The simple fact that one day you and I would come to repentance and salvation. Isn't that wonderful? Think about it....Jesus went through all the mocking of shame of His trial, his crucifixion and death. He went through all of that, because He knew that one day you and I would be saved. *Wow! Humbling, isn't it?*

*and* And at the heart of all of this is the obedience of Jesus to the will of the Father.

In Hebrews 10 Jesus said, "I come to do my Father's will. In the Garden when Jesus prayed, he said, "NOT my will, but thine be done."

His joy was being obedient to His test and knowing the results of redemption. That you and I would one day be saved.

*and the opposite* ~~And~~ <sup>the</sup> same principle should be found in our heart. Our joy is not in the circumstances that life might throw our way. That is not what brings joy. Our joy is found in obeying the commandments of Christ. Our joy is doing what Jesus wants us to do. That sustaining joy of knowing that we are in the will of Almighty God. Jesus said, "my joy maybe in you. That is the character of his joy.

(2D) But, I also, notice in Vs 11, the completness of that joy. If His joy is in us, then our joy will be made full. What a tremendous thing. Wouldn't you like to be filled up with joy? The kind of joy that would sustain you no matter what the circustances of life might be? Then it is Christ's joy in you that produces that effect. A complete joy in your life. Filled up with God's love...and purpose, and prorities..

Isn't that wonderful? ~~Is that lieing in front of you? JOY setting out there in front of you?~~ And as you think about all the differenct things in your life, the idea of JOY will sustain you. That will be the constant reassurance that you are on the right track. *AND) Regardless of what life might throw your way*

(2C) Now, let's come to the PATTERN OF LIFE THAT GOD REALLY WANTS TO SEE TAKE PLACE IN OUR LIFE. This pattern of life is found in Vs 12 and 13. In Vs 12 Jesus restates a commandment that He gave back in chapter 13. He tells us to LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Then in Vs 13 he give to us a tremendous illustration.

(1D) So, first of all, Jesus says, Vs 12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another." That is God's pattern of life for every one of us. We are to love one another. ~~that is our joy~~ *that is our joy* NOW HOW? HOW CAN WE DEMINSTRATE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER?

(2D) Vs 13..Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life <sup>For</sup> ~~over~~ his friends."

WOW ! That is pretty tough. Is Jesus really sincere? Am I to lay down my life for my friends? What does that mean?

Isn't that kind-off neat to know that we are "friends" of Jesus? We are no longer slaves bound by our sin. Christ has set us free. And now we are His friends. The contrast, here, is so striking.

So, Jesus is saying "you are my friends," if(notice the condition) "if you are doing what I have commanded you." You see, the real test of love or friendship is obedience. Doing what the Lord has commanded us to do.

(2E) Then in Vs 16 we find the word "chosen." Jesus said, "you did not choose me, but I chose you." You know, dear friends, it is kind-off wonderful to know that Jesus chose us. It gives you that warm feeling down inside.

The word "chosen" is the word "elect." I HAVE ELECTED YOU. And it literally means "to elect out of something." You see, Jesus chose us "out off something." Namely..the whole stream of humanity. Jesus said to his disciples and to us by way of application..OUT OF ALL MANKIND, I HAVE CHOSEN YOU. WOW". Think about that. [You feel a little low..You self-esteem is a little below average..Then think of your position in Christ. You are a friend of Jesus. And out off all mankind..he chose you.

(2D ) Now, there are four principles <sup>Concerning</sup> ~~which explain~~ in our position in christ.

(1E) Number one, the reason why Jesus chose us. What is the reason? Jesus said in Vs 16, "I choose you so that you should go and bear fruit."

Dear friends, Jesus chose us to bear fruit. There is no other reason. And did you notice that the text says that "YOU SHOULD GO." Did you notice that? The word means "depart." You should depart...leave here...and then bring back fruit.

In I John 3:16 we read, "We know love by this, that He (meaning Jesus) laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Now, is Jesus telling all of us to be martyrs?...NO....I Don't think so. Because the death of Jesus was not the act of a martyr. So, I don't think that Jesus is asking us to be a martyr.

In fact, the word "life" in Vs 13, is the word "soul" or, "personality." And that, I believe, is where we find our meaning. The supreme test of a person's love for a brother or sister in the Lord is His or Her willingness to lay aside his <sup>we</sup> personality....all of his desires and ambitions and ideas, and sacrifice them for the benefit of the one he says he loves.

So, often we want our own way. And we even try to do that when we say that we love someone. But, dear friends, that is not the supreme example of Christ's command.

You see, the pattern to follow is to lay down your life for your friend. Meaning, to lay aside your goals, your dreams, your plans, your desires and to say: HERE AM I, HOW CAN I SERVE YOU." That is love. That is the love of Christ in action. And that is the pattern of life that God wants us to follow.

O.K. WHAT IS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER? First, following God's commandments will produce joy. Second, we are to lay down our life for each other.

(3C) Now, third, Vs 14-17, OUR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER IS BASED UPON OUR POSITION IN CHRIST. Our position in Christ.

(1D) Dear friends, we have a wonderful position as believers in Christ. And there are two words in these verses which explain <sup>that</sup> wonderful position.

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(1D) First of all, in Vs 14 and 15 we find the word "friend."

Jesus said, "you are my friends, if you do what I command you." You see, friendship with Jesus is based on obedience to Jesus. The little word "friend" is the word "lover" from which we get the word "philadelphia." Philadelphia means "the city of brotherly love." It is the Greek word "Phileo." Translated.. "lover" or "friend." In this passage it is translated "friend."

Because the branch didn't need to go any where to bear fruit, friends. If it is simply the attitudes which I know that the bible says the fruit of the spirit is love...joy...peace/.. But, listen, if those characteristics are in your life you are going to be attracting people to Jesus.

The point of this is not the fruit of the Holy Spirit operating in your life. But, the idea of going out..going forth.

In the same message, a little later on, he is going to tell <sup>us</sup> them that he is sending <sup>us</sup> them out into the world to win people to christ. At the end of this chapter he says "you are going to bear witness of me."

This chapter and bearing fruit is dealing with <sup>evangelism</sup> evangelism.

<sup>Hanson:1</sup> Now, let me emphasize this to you as a believer. I believe that the basic reason why God is leaving us here on this earth <sup>after we get saved</sup> is for evangelism. I don't think there is any question about that. I don't believe that God has left you <sup>and me</sup> on the earth so that <sup>we</sup> you will enjoy life.

We certainly do as christians. I believe that christians have more fun... per square inch..than any non-christian. I mean it. We have lots of fun. We are not down in the mouth. We are excited. And it is a ball being a Christian. There are tests...there are problems...But, listen, it is fun. It is exciting. *I Love Being a christian - I Love Being With christians*

But, I don't believe that is why God left <sup>us</sup> you here. If I understand the purposes of God correctly, if it wasn't for evangelism, the simple plan of God ought to be that when you get saved you ought to die.....BANG...GET <sup>Bill</sup> him out of here....take him home to heaven so that he doesn't mess things up...

So, why has God left you here? ~~He hasn't left you here to raise a family. Or, to see your grandkids, as someone suggested to me.~~

~~The unbelievers can do that. Why has God left believers here?~~ Jesus says, I want you to get out their and bear fruit. The whole subject is WITNESS... WITNESS....WITNESS... (*Invite a Friend Sunday - March 29*)

<sup>ant</sup> Now, you must put the whole passage together. For example..you can go out there and witness and forget John 15:1-10 which is "without me you can do nothing." And if God's word does not abide in you you will not bear much fruit.

The point is that discipleship is related to productivity. But, listen, don't run all over the world trying to interpret what "bearing fruit is." It is clear. It is a matter of witnessing for Jesus Christ.

And because you led somebody to Jesus Christ doesn't mean that you led them to Christ. WHY? Because the vine is the source of power and strength. The branches are simple tied into the vine. They bear fruit because of the strength that comes from the vine. The reason people are saved is because of the life of Christ. Not because of y our skills. We are branches tied into the vine, in order that we would depart and bear much fruit.

(2E) And secondly, the results you can expect. Vs 16 says, "Your fruit should remain." Isn't that great?

WHAT IS THE POINT HERE? Lasting results. Forever. Because the people wone to Christ live forever. Man! You talk about ~~fruit abiding~~ <sup>a legacy</sup>. There it is. You can be involved in a lot of things that are good. But, they are not eternal. They don't last forever. Only what is done for Christ last forever.

(Ex--Military)

(3E) Number three, the last phrase of Vs 16, notice the request we can make.

If we understand God's purposes, it says that "we can ask whatever we want from the Father in my name, and He will give it to us." WHAT A BLESSING!

In the context of this passage, I take that to mean "bearing fruit."

You can ask whatever you want to and the Father will give it to you.

Listen, dear friends, if God really designed us to bear fruit, don't you think that He wants that to happen in your life? Sure He does. He probable wants it to happen more than you do. What ever you ask of the Father He will give it to you. WHY? Because He has designed us. He has choose us for himself that we would go and bear fruit.

People need to be saved

our friends } pray - God will answer  
our family }

Now, if you are not bearing fruit, you had better study John 15 a little bit more carefully. And depend upon the vine. Especially where it says "without me you can do nothing." Very, very important.

I like what one man said: "I don't have any great talent. But, the difference is that I really believe that "without Christ I can do nothing." And people with great talents and abilities ~~do~~ do not believe that and thus do nothing." (4<sup>2</sup>) And then, finally, in vs 17, he ties this whole passage together by bringing us back to the COMMANDMENT. That we love one another. Loving the lost enough to go out and share Christ with them..inviting people to come to Christ and His church.

Dear friends, that is our calling...that is the purpose of the church.. that is God's will for your life.

And so I ask you..and I ask myself...Will God find us bearing fruit this coming week?

LET US CLOSE IN PRAYER