

John 15

The Fruit

Our Church stands on the Frontlines in the battle for life.

Planned Parenthood is only up the street working against everything that we are for.

Jess and I are constantly praying for the Lord to bring opportunities to our Church here where we can claim victories in this battle.

We have been asked to host Embrace Grace, a meeting place, a place of support for mothers who have little to no support and who may be vulnerable to the lies of Planned Parenthood.

Our church would come around these single mothers and help them with the struggle of pregnancy and early support with the raising of their children.

We hope that by offering this ministry here, these mothers will find a lifelong family of believers to come alongside them, to be shoulder to shoulder with them throughout life.

My wife is so excited, has built a team, and will call on us occasionally to help with baby showers, handyman services, mechanic services, diaper drives, and whatever other needs arise.

So be prayerfully ready to step up when the call for help comes.

Every mom who comes to us will have a unique story. They will feel overwhelmed; by themselves, and some will even feel shame.

But we will be here to share God's grace and the redeeming Love of Jesus with them.

Church, we don't want to be people who complain about the evil in our culture; we need to be a church of action, willing to get our hands dirty and do something about it.

This is another opportunity to do that... So please keep Embrace Grace in your prayers, and if you have any further questions, you can see my wife or give Anna a call in the office this week.

So, this morning, we will continue our verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of John.

Today, we are in John Chapter 15.

Let's pray, and we will get into it...

Last Spring, I tried something a little different in my home garden.

Because it is my Garden, I can do whatever I want... but that doesn't mean my experiments are always successful.

I have four grape vines that I have weaved between the chain link fence that borders my garden.

But I wanted to train them to go over a trellis that I set up over a bench so that Jess would have a neat place to sit, think, and do her devo.

Not considering we have six kids, she never got to go out and sit in her special place for her quiet time.

But that is not the illustration...

Because I wanted to train the branches to grow further and over the seating area, I did not prune them in the

winter, thinking the branches would continue and I could manipulate them around this trellis.

But that is not what happened... What I found is that if you do not prune back those branches. You let them keep growing like that year after year, they get weaker and weaker... and many of the branches, once the fruit starts growing, just broke off... or they were so far from the main vine that the fruit was so small and sour, it was unenjoyable, the squirrels didn't even fight me for them this year.

I found many worthless branches on the ground... good for nothing but to be thrown back into the soil for worm food.

The key is to keep those branches pruned, so when the new growth comes, it comes from that main vine, the stock... and that is where the good, big, juicy grapes come from...

So, I have to think of something else for Jessica's sitting area... I am thinking of climbing roses or something...

But the grape vines will remain small and sturdy to get the best fruit...

I wonder if, at some point during Jesus's last week, He had watched the viticulturists at work...

Those of you who have been to Israel remember vineyards everywhere we went.

And if Jesus is walking through the Kidron Valley at this point, as some people believe... He may even be looking at a vineyard being cultivated as He gives the following illustration.

We ended last week with Jesus saying, "Arise, let us go from here."

Jesus is heading to the cross of Calvary, but He will first go to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He will be arrested, taken to trial before Caiaphas, the high priest, and then to Pilate, then to Calvary to die.

Look now, starting at verse 1 with me... Jesus says...

The True Vine

15:1 "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.

Here, we have another of Jesus's great "I am" declarations.

"I am the true vine..."

In the Greek, it would be "I am the vine, the true."

This gives the idea that there is a false vine.

Jesus is the true vine.

In our Old Testament studies on Wednesday Nights, we have seen the prophets often use a vine as an illustration for Israel.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God said, **Jer. 2:21**

Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me
Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?

The prophet Hosea declared... **Hos 10:3**

Israel empties his vine; He brings forth fruit for himself.
According to the multitude of his fruit

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel was the vine,
God's vineyard.

Jesus even picked up on this imagery in **Matt 21:33-41**

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the

vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus is speaking of the Jews, the Nation of Israel, who were God's vineyard.

He desired fruit, and God sent prophets illustrated by the servants here...

But the religious leaders, who were supposed to be stewards over and cultivators of that vineyard, had become corrupted and rejected God's prophets.

So God ultimately sent His Son, who, of course, is Jesus... and Jesus spoke prophetically and foretold how the Jews would kill Him.

He asked what the vineyard's owner should do and what God should do with Israel.

They said, "He will destroy those wicked men miserable, and lease His vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to Him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus here boldly says that He is now the true vine.

And His Father is the vinedresser.

Understand that Israel has rejected Jesus, and the Church has become God's Vineyard.

You and I, here this morning... We will become the branches...

We are those from whom God is looking for fruit to come.

It was taken away from those to whom God had given it, and now the Father Himself has taken responsibility for developing the vineyard; it is no longer the job of the religious leaders.

Jesus is the true vine, and His Father is the vinedresser.

Then Jesus says, “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.”

This is the pruning process... the cutting off of branches that don't bear fruit and have become worthless.

To bring this illustration to us... to understand the purpose of God for our lives... we must know that God desires fruit; this is pleasing to Him.

He takes away any branch that does not bear fruit.

But if you bear fruit, there is a cleansing process so that you can bear more fruit.

In verse 3, Jesus says, “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

The Word of God has a cleansing power.

It keeps us from sin and is a light unto our path in this dark world.

It gives us help that we might bear more fruit as the Word cleanses us.

Then Jesus said, in verse 4, “Abide in Me.”

This is the only way we can genuinely bear more fruit.

That fruit God is expecting from our lives is not something we can produce in our efforts.

Christians often push to do better and perform out of obligation to produce impressive works for God.

But performance is not Fruit...

Maybe you have noticed this, but before Paul lists what the Fruit of the Spirit looks like in Galatians 5, he gives a long and exhaustive list of WORKS of the flesh.

And he contrasts it with **Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

And you see Fruit is contrasted with works.

God is not interested in our performance or works, but He is looking for Fruit, which comes from Abiding.

Fruit that comes only from an intimate relationship with Him.

Abiding in Jesus... when we do this, the natural result will be that we will bring forth fruit that the Father desires.

It comes naturally, automatically, the outflow from us abiding in Christ...

Jesus goes on to say now in verse 5...

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Remember now that in the Old Testament, God planted the nation of Israel in cultivated ground, a noble vine.

Everything was there for them to bring forth Good Fruit unto God.

He nurtured that vine, cared for it, and even protected it.

But in the end, it only brought forth wild grapes.

Here, Jesus repeats and reinforces this new reality as He declares, “I am the vine; you are the branches.”

This responsibility of bringing forth fruit now is upon us, His Church, the branches.

Jesus repeats and reinforces how this is possible: It is only possible by abiding in Him and Him abiding in us.

This is how we will bring forth much fruit, which, again, is not works.

Fruit is something that naturally grows; work can be deceiving and manipulative.

Jesus says that apart from Him, there is not one thing we can do that is genuinely pleasing or even acceptable to God.

Notice the warning in verse 6...

If a person does not abide in Jesus, there is a considerable cost.

The nation of Israel did not bring forth the fruit that God desired.

Isaiah foretold what would happen because of this... As God spoke through the prophet...

Isa 5:5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;

There is no value in the wood of a dead branch; it is good for nothing and cannot be brought back to life...

The only thing left is to use it for fuel in the fire.

Jesus said, "If a man abides not in Me."

There will be consequences.

Is it possible for a person who was once abiding in Christ to no longer be abiding in Christ and cast out?

Well, it seems so, or Jesus would not have brought up the issue here.

But, instead of getting caught up in a theological debate about eternal security, Jesus gives the solution to all wondering minds in verse 7...

Abide in Me...

I know some of you love to sit and debate problems that can never be solved... and that is okay for you... but that has never been my jam... I don't like debates...

I just had a Calvinist Pastor ask to meet up to connect; then he started texting me and peppering me with questions on eternal security...

I thought he wanted a friendship but wanted an argument, so I denied the lunch request. I don't have time for all that.

It is so simple for me... Abide in Christ, and there is no problem... You don't have to worry if you have lost your salvation or if a person can be once in and then out again.

If you are concerned with abiding in Christ, there is no debate, fear, or worry.

We already know that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing...

He is our life, our everything, and abiding in Him is the most important thing we have in this life.

Notice how verse 7 ends, “and My words abide in you and you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

In this final discourse with His disciples, Jesus makes some broad promises concerning prayer.

We saw back in **John 14:13-14 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.**

When Jesus says, “Anything,” that is pretty wide.

But here, Jesus gets a little more specific...

“If, If, you abide in Me, and My Word abides in you, you can ask what you desire, and it shall be done unto you.”

Many in the Church take Jesus's broad promises to erroneous places, twisting and turning the Word of God to fulfill their hearts' desires.

They teach that you can have anything you want—bank accounts, cars, homes... wealth like you could not

imagine... ask every day, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Be bold in what you ask God... don't be shy... He wants to pour out wealth like you could not imagine...

I think one of the most misquoted Psalms in the Bible by these types is... **Ps 37:4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.**

God is not going to give you the selfish, fleshly desires of your heart... unless He gets to the point where He hands you over to your debased desires.

But He will give you the desires of your heart...

He will put the right desires in your heart...

If you delight yourself in the Lord, He then plants His desires in your heart...

Do you see the difference there?

He will not let your heart lead and give you what you want...

He gives your heart the desires it wants... If you are in His Word, this is a natural process...

God will put His purposes and His Word in our hearts.

He makes His ways, His will, our longing.

Those things that please the Lord become our desires...

He plants the desires in our hearts.

I remember when Jess and I served at Calvary Chapel Apple Valley...

We would do a Costco run for a church event...

And we would drive through this neighborhood.

We would park at Center Street Park and pray over this neighborhood, this Church, and the incredible need here.

We did not know the pastor of the Church, but we prayed for him...

We have always discussed the opportunity to minister in Jesus' Name.

We did not know that God was planting His desire in our hearts.

We thought we wanted to stay in Apple Valley... My dad had put plans in motion to one day retire and hand

things over to me... that was comfortable and safe, that is for sure.

But there was no denying that Jess and I had a connection to this area years before we were ever called here.

The desire was being put in our hearts...

You see the difference there; God was not giving us what we wanted. He was giving us His desire.

When my father called me into his office and said, "There is this hurting Church in the town over that needs a Pastor; I think you need to go there."

There was a conflict between my want and God's desire in my heart...

It did not make sense to go... My family was being provided for... Our family had just started growing...

And we were being sent to a Church that could not pay its bills, let alone take on a pastor's salary.

Logically, it did not make sense... But Jess and I had such a pull...

And I will tell you, it was not easy...

There were those voices... A Church could never thrive in that neighborhood.

It is doomed to fail.

“I would never bring my family to that part of town.”

We had to work through all the naysayers...

Jess and I just had dinner with a couple who came around that time to Church...

And the conversation at that dinner triggered some interesting memories.

The gentlemen thanked me for getting all the homeless out of the buildings and clearing the encampment.

And I thought about his comment for a minute and thought back to that moment... I could have taken credit for it... “Yeah, you know, I did this or that.”

But what happened... I was pleading with God to send me back to Apple Valley because I did not know how to get the homeless encampment out of there.

I had no plan... “What do I do, Lord? Threaten them. The Police couldn’t do anything...”

Understand something: they were selling drugs, prostituting themselves, doing drugs in our Children’s Ministry building, and behind it...

The week before I started, I came in to kind get things ready, and one of the homeless ladies was beaten to a pulp, blood everywhere... her pimp/boyfriend beat her up...

It was wild... How was I going to get them out?

On my first day here, I drove in with a rock in my gut, a lump in my throat, and I was on the brink of tears...

I was the wrong man for the job; there had to be someone better for this...

But when I pulled in, every single homeless person was gone, inside and outside the building. Not only that..., but they cleaned up all their tents, trash, and mattresses...

There was no gravel at that time, but in the dirt, they had rake marks lined perfectly...

They were all gone...

There was only one man left, Curtis, who was a part of this church for years, and that woman who got beat up.

I said, "Where did everyone go?"

She said, "A rumor spread in the encampment that you were an undercover cop, and everyone got paranoid, packed up, and left..."

But they must have thought they were cleaning up evidence because they didn't even use our dumpster to throw all that trash away.

Now, the Lord gave me a promise when I came here...

Josh 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

He went before me that first day... and did something impossible, miraculous even...

But I did nothing to get them out... God did something supernatural... And I knew a Church could thrive in this neighborhood if God were in this.

Over the years, the homeless who needed or wanted help have come to us; we get to minister to them. We want to help... but we know that anything short of a relationship with Jesus will be a Band-Aid solution.

We hit the nine-year mark last week.

And listen, we still get the comments, “I can’t believe your kids go to Church in that neighborhood.”

But I think of what our kids have seen here in the last nine years. They have seen God in ways that a coloring page with a Bible lesson in a children’s ministry classroom could never show them.

They could have grown up in a different Church with fancy things...

I remember one week driving here with them all in the car.

A guy out of his mind on the road...

Jess said, "You have to help him."

I got him to the side of the road, and he started convulsing and then went back and stopped breathing...

A nurse pulled up... he had no pulse...

I told Jess to run to the Church and get the Narcan...

And by the time she got back, the guy was still not breathing, still no heartbeat... the paramedics were finally coming...

I could smell alcohol on him, so Narcan was a no.

But out of nowhere, he comes up with a giant breath and is back.

The paramedics get there, and I get back in the car...

I said that was wild, he was dead...

And all my kids started telling me how they were watching and praying for him... and that is when he shot back up.

And they believe they saw the power of God in that moment.

That is one of many incredible things they have seen... and I think it will make God more real to them than just coming to a Church where they color a paper, sing a song, and that's that.

Those things are good; we do them... but there is much more to know about our God.

And this is the point... God puts His desires in our hearts... Our lives align with His desires, often battling against our fleshly wants and thoughts...

Then we will ask according to His will whatever we desire because our desires are His desires; He planted them in our hearts... Then He will do what we ask...

Then, in verse 8, we see why... "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit."

What is God's Will for your life... that you bear fruit unto Him and bring Him Glory.

This is how we will know we are His disciples.

In the following sections, Jesus repeats much of what He has said to these guys, so I will move a little quicker through them...

Starting in verse 9...

Love and Joy Perfected

9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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.

We are to abide in His Love, that Christ-like Love.

His commandment was to Love another, and if we keep that command, then we will abide in His Love.

Then, in verse 11...

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

Before this, Jesus promised His Peace to them... Now, He is telling them how to have His Joy.

Jesus is about to face a cruel death on the cross... He knows what is ahead... He knows His betrayal is taking place, and death is coming for Him.

While walking through all this, He is talking about "My Joy."

The Book of Hebrews tells us... **Heb. 12:2 who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,**

Here, Jesus tells the disciples that His Joy can be their Joy, and their Joy can be full... this is beyond circumstances.

Joy is greater than happiness and euphoria... Joy, real and lasting Joy, comes from Jesus.

Jesus comes back to His command... verse 12...

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Again, we are to love one another as Christ loves.

Well, to what degree was that... We already see that this type of Love was expressed even toward Jesus's enemy and betrayer, Judas...

We are to Love our enemies.

But Jesus gives us another level to climb in this Christ-like Love.

We are to lay down our lives for one another.

In our faith... we consider ourselves last..., and our life comes second to others.

This is the precedent Christ set... He laid down His life for our eternal life; He died so we did not have to.

He tells us this is part of the highest Love's duty...

If we are to bear pleasing fruit unto the Lord... we consider ourselves last...

The Fruit of the Spirit is Love... a Love that dies to self...

A Love described by Paul as being manifest in **Gal 5:22**
joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

Some people are only willing to serve the Lord with conditions... I won't serve with them, I won't serve with him, I won't serve if they do that...

It is always self that is considered first...

Other saints... you don't care... You want to use your gifts for the Glory of God... You will serve with Old, Young, with him, with her, with this... as long as you get to serve Jesus.

To me, that is a person who is abiding and obeying the commandments of Christ...

Again, apart from Him, we can do nothing; a branch of itself cannot bear fruit.

If your life is fruitless and barren... the first thing to check is if you are even abiding in Christ...

It is never them or her, or because of that, you are not producing fruit; it is because you are not abiding.

When we abide, the work of the Holy Spirit transforms our lives, and our Love for Jesus and one another naturally produces fruit.

It will mean that we lay down our lives for one another...

That is not only in death... but in all things. We will serve one another, and the conditions of our service will go away...

We no longer say, "I will do that 'if' something." No, we will serve out of genuine Love, Christ-like Love.

Look now at verse 14...

14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Jesus makes a declaration of friendship here.

They would no longer be His servants but friends...

Interestingly, later, in their own writings, they refer to themselves as slaves, servants, bondservants, and bond slaves of Jesus Christ.

But the Lord said, "I will call you friends."

Jesus was grateful for His friends on His final evening before the cross.

Jesus reveals something that even the greatest scholars still go back and forth with... Divine Election.

Verse 16...

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 the Father in My name He may give you.

Remember, Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, and He saw two men washing their nets, and He said, "Come and follow Me."

Then, He went a little further down the way, and two more men were mending their nets.

And He said, "Come and follow Me."

They left their nets and followed Jesus... Jesus chose them.

He walked by Matthew at his tax booth and said, "Follow Me."

Matthew got up and followed Jesus...

Jesus says here, "I chose you."

But you see, there is the other side of this debate: the disciples had to choose to get up, leave their nets, and follow Jesus.

Matthew had to choose to leave his life behind and follow Jesus.

And there is where we get into this area that has been debated for centuries.

And again... I don't like to debate...

It is simple to me... the Scriptures are clear...

The invite is to all... in **Rev 22:17 Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**

John 3:16 tells us that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

The invitation is to all.

Broad...

There are not some of humanity selected and others not.

All have the opportunity... but not all respond...

So, how do you know if you are chosen? Well, it is simple, really. You need to choose to respond to Jesus.

Jesus said He is the Way... You say I don't want to go that Way... Well, He is the only Way...

You cannot blame Jesus for not choosing you; you rejected the offer...

You wanted to stay busy at your nets or your tax booth... you never got up to follow Him.

You see, you can solve the whole problem of your Eternal Security this morning... by choosing Jesus as your Lord and Savior...

Then Jesus says this in verse 17...

17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

And listen, we will need this Love here... because here is another reality about following Jesus.

He gives the contrast now...

Verse 18...

The World's Hatred

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If

they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Notice that Jesus never sugarcoats what being one of His Followers would be like.

From the beginning, the disciples were told it would cost to follow Jesus...

It will cost us because this world will not like us. After all, we will not be like them.

We won't indulge in the fleshly things of the world... we will stand out as we stand for righteousness...

And this is an offense to this world...

Do not be surprised when this world hates you.

Jesus continues to warn in verse 22...

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else

did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25 But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

Jesus returns to a critical thought we have seen throughout the Gospel of John.

It was not until Jesus came into the world that the world had the opportunity to really know God.

When Jesus came, God's Voice was heard, His Life was lived before them, His teachings were plainly given...

His miracles were demonstrated and recorded by both secular and religious historians.

Jesus gave this world, especially those who saw Him in first-century Israel, a clear and dynamic witness...

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And when Jesus came, He exposed sin and wickedness. He told people about the things that grieved God.

He put the True Way before humanity...

And ultimately, He provided a remedy for sin in Himself...

He exposed sin and gave the solution for sin.

But the Jews refused Him and His message... they refused the Way God provided... and they would have no excuse for their sin.

All of humanity now stands exposed before Christ...

And we can embrace all that He was and is... and believe unto salvation...

Or we can reject Him and be among those who have hated Him without cause.

To disregard Jesus is to live in hostility to all that He came to do and accomplish here on earth.

So now, Jesus turns from the hostility of this world and turns once again to our Helper in this hostile world...

The Coming Rejection

26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds

from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

When the Holy Spirit comes, His witness to you will be of Jesus Christ.

Remember, the Holy Spirit's purpose is to bring Glory to Jesus, to testify of Jesus...

He is the Helper...

When I am typing my sermons at my home office, my kids come in and chat with me from time to time.

Daisy came in, and when she comes into the office, she likes to read...

So she starts reading my sermon and reads, "But when the Helper comes."

I asked her if she knew who the Helper was...

And we got into a discussion about the Holy Spirit.

I said, "Do you ever have that voice inside you, telling you, 'Daisy, don't tell that lie,' or 'Daisy, you shouldn't do that.'"

She said, "I think so."

I said, "Do you ever feel bad, like sorry and sad, conviction after you do something you shouldn't have?"

She said, "Yes, I do."

I told her that that voice guiding her, not only when she is doing bad but also when she is making other decisions, is the Helper promised by Jesus.

When she gave her life to Jesus, it was promised to her that the Helper would come into her life.

Jess and I talked about the Holy Spirit the other night in bed...

She said one of the greatest evidences of her salvation was that the Holy Spirit had changed how she thought and felt about things in this world.

I remember right after we got saved... She took a trip to visit family...

And she called me the second night she was there just balling... weeping... saying she felt so ashamed.

She had smoked a joint with a cousin...

She tells me, “I just feel so bad. I feel like I let the Lord down.”

I was not yet walking with the Lord, and I remember thinking and telling her, “We have done some terrible things together... wicked things... smoking a joint is a little thing...”

But she was a New Creation now... and that did not fit into the new life that Jesus had given her.

She told me the other night that in her entire life, all the evil things she did, the bad things she did, breaking the law, the fighting, the drugs, all of it, she had never once felt conviction before that night when she smoked that joint after giving her life to Jesus.

It was the first time in her life that the Helper was grieved, and she was grieved...

She said she will never forget that moment because she knew that she was different now that Jesus was in her life...

She had the Helper... and He has never once left her...

So, this morning, we have Jesus here giving His final instructions...

It involves abiding in Him and keeping His commandments. He also deals with prayer and bearing Fruit, which involves Love.

Love is the greatest sign... it is the most incredible experience; it is the greatest evidence.

Love is the greatest witness to this world.

Church He is looking for Fruit in our lives... Love for one another...

May we endeavor to keep this our main focus and goal in our Church.

Amen?

Let's pray...