

## “PRUNED TO BLOOM”

John 15:1-8

Prayer of Consecration

### I. Introduction

**PRUNED TO BLOOM!** That is the message that Jesus taught to His disciples. And this is the word of the Lord that God has for us this day. We have all heard several messages based upon John 15 in our Christian journey, some good and some not so good. Have you ever wondered why Jesus’ stressed the importance of bearing fruit as a disciple of Christ? Why so much emphasis on our witness? Today, God wants us to understand that if a Christian is not a bearing fruit according to the character traits of the Holy Spirit and Christ, then that Christian should ask themselves, “Am I really connected to the True Vine? Have I been converted by the power of Christ?” Do I have genuine relationship with God?” When the pandemic hit this world and particularly, our nation, one of the dynamics that I noticed was the focus on food insecurity. It was oftentimes one of the main topics on the news. Why? Because people were not working. Several essential workers were not coming to work for various and sundry reasons. Many businesses failed due to the length of the pandemic and our world is still trying to find the normal. When people were in crisis, it demonstrated to me the importance of our Christian witness. We may not realize it but there is a **FRUIT INSECURITY** in our world. People are looking for Godly fruit in our world and it is more difficult to find. Could it be that Christians are not allowing their fruit to be seen, tasted, and experienced? Could it be that their Christian witness is not prominently broadcasted? Could it be that Christians are not inviting God to prune the dead branches and dead fruit from their lives? Or could it be that Christians are not connected to the True Vine like each needs to be? For when a Christian is connected to God, he/she will bear the fruit that comes from God because they have been **PRUNED TO BLOOM!**

## II. The True Vine

Let me share a story with you. There was a NY taxi driver and a preacher who lived their lives and then died in the same moment. They were both standing before the judgment seat of God. The preacher listened and watched the taxi driver received his reward and his white robe. He thought to himself well I don't have anything to worry about if this man entered heaven and received a white robe. Then as the preacher stood before God. God listened to his life story as the preacher told how he preached God's word and joined the church. Afterwards, God said to him, ***"I don't know you. Be cast into outer darkness!"*** The preacher was shocked by God's judgment of his life and he asked God why did you let that taxi driver enter heaven and receive a white robe but you casting me into outer darkness? God responded, ***"You never asked Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of your life. You joined the church but never joined Christ. You did not do anything to help people know Jesus. You never reached out. You never shared the gospel outside of church. No one knew that you were a Christian except those in the church where you preached. And when you preached you put everyone to sleep."*** The preacher didn't fully grasp what God said. So God said, ***"But the taxi driver asked Jesus into his heart and when people got in his cab for a ride every person in his cab was asked, 'Do you know Jesus as Lord and Savior? Have you repented of your sins? Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Many who heard his message cried out, 'O Lord, save me!'"***

This is a story with a powerful point. The preacher was convicted and realized he missed God's will and purpose for living the Christian life. This preacher recognized that he did not bear God's fruit in the world because he was not connected to the True Vine of God. He did good things for God and in God's name, but it was all in vain because he never surrendered his life to Jesus. The preacher may have said all the right things and done all the right things, but he did them for the wrong reasons. He tried to earn his way

into heaven and his works were never enough. When instead, he should have given his life to Christ and let his life and work be a response to the gift of God, salvation that was free.

On Saturday, we laid to rest my cousin, Carolyn. During the service, several family and friends share the impact that Carolyn made upon them. My cousin, Jana, shared her testimony about the time when she was ten years old. Her mom had died, and she was wrestling with unforgiveness. Carolyn ministered to her and shared Christ with her by leading her to the Lord. She gave Jana a PTL Bible and Jana's life was forever changed. Jana's testimony was a testament to the Carolyn's faith and how passionate she was about serving the Lord. Carolyn was a praying woman, a woman who studied the Word of God, and a woman who constantly witnessed to others about the goodness of Jesus. I would dare say that Carolyn's prayer to God was Lord, I am ready to be **PRUNED TO BLOOM**. Jana shared how Carolyn's fruit fed and nourished her soul and she is now paying it forward to those to whom she interacts. The world needs more "Carolyn's."

In the gospel, Jesus used the example of a tree to make a very simple point since he was dealing with people who were agricultural. If God is the tree and we are the branches, then the life and fruit we produce is because of our connectedness and relationship to God. Someone may be asking the question, "How do we stay connected to God?" *We stay connected to God by:*

- getting into God's word
- reading God's word
- studying God's word
- digging in God's word
- living out God's word
- praying
- fasting
- loving God's people
- ministering to those who don't know God.

Remember if God is the tree, then we must bear the fruit of God's tree. An apple tree does not bear oranges and a banana tree does not bear peaches. What that means is that God's people cannot bear Satanic fruit and Satan's people cannot bear Godly fruit. They can do the works of one another, but they can't bear one another's fruit because it is not in the nature of the fruit to produce something that it is not.

Jesus also said that if a person does not remain in Him, then that person will wither away and die. In other words, if a believer disconnects himself/herself from God, then that person can look forward to a withered and dried up life. Have you ever seen a branch that is partially connected to a tree? What you will see is a tree whose leaves are yellowing and browning and on the path to dying. Why? Because the sap that gives the branch life, has been broken and the branch cannot fully receive the life-giving sap it needs to experience health life. God is asking, ***"How many of us are partially connected to the vine?"*** The sap which is the Holy Spirit provides the living water and the bread of life which every Christian believer needs. The sap of the Holy Spirit is not flowing in some and through some like it should and those Christians are slowly dying. God is declaring to each of us, "Regardless of where you are spiritually, it is time to get **PRUNED TO BLOOM.**" God is proclaiming to get fully connected so you will have **GODLY FRUIT, the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT!**

There is no excuse for Christians to be living among people who are experiencing **FRUIT INSECURITY**. As Christians, it is God's will that we bear much fruit because when we do, we bring glory to the Father through Jesus Christ. How do you bring glory to God? What kind of fruit do you bear? Is God's fruit or Satan's fruit? Have you joined Christ or only joined the church? Some people may not understand that so let me elaborate.

***When you join:*****CHRIST**

Your heart is changed.  
 Your lifestyle is changed.  
 All your life is worship.  
 You love your enemies.  
 You help the less fortunate.  
 You work because you love Jesus.  
 You forgive others and forget sins.  
 You have open arms of surrender.

**CHURCH**

Nothing is changed.  
 Your lifestyle stays the same.  
 Sunday morning is worship day.  
 You love those who are good to you.  
 You may shun the less fortunate.  
 You work for your salvation.  
 You remember and hold on to grudges.  
 Your arms are closed to God/others.

God is calling us to surrender our life to the Lord Jesus Christ and get ready to be **PRUNED TO BLOOM!** The world needs to see **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**, taste **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**, and experience **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**. O child of God, it's time to be **PRUNED TO BLOOM!**

**III. Practical Application**

Joining the church without having Christ doesn't do ANYONE any good. Remember the story of taxi driver and the preacher. Remember how Carolyn forever impacted the life of Jana. If you don't have **THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**, then what good is the fruit that people see. God is looking for those believers who want to be a part of the True Vine so that God's fruit can change people. Galatians 5:22 declares, ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*** It's time to get **PRUNED TO BLOOM** so that the Holy Spirit can flourish in the life of the believer. The process of pruning involves God cutting back last year's growth to remove any weak, tangled, or diseased fruit and stems. God leaves only the shoots that will produce even more fruit. When was the last time you experienced God cutting, chopping, removing things from your life that were not life-producing. Being pruned is not a fun process but it

is necessary so that every Christian believer can have **FRESH FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT!** Church, it is time for us to assess our relationship with God, to get connected to Jesus and stay connected to Christ the Lord. It is time for us to bring glory to God through the witness of Jesus Christ in our lives and in our world, not just in the church. God is looking for those with the spirit of John the Baptist, the Twelve Disciples, and Paul to go forth from this sacred space and fill the world with the **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**. God is looking for more Christians like Carolyn and Jana to share God's fruit. Don't let those you know experience **FRUIT INSECURITY!** Ask the questions, "Have you repented of your sins? Have you confessed that Jesus is Lord and Savior? Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb?" God needs us to be **PRUNED TO BLOOM** because there are souls which need to be saved and people need to know Jesus is the answer! Are you ready for the world to receive your **FRESH FRUIT**, the **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**? That can only happen when we are the branches and God is the True Vine. Amen.