

Bearing Fruit for Others

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[0 : 0 0] Now, before we're going to look at that passage that Sarah read, but I'm going to read two short passages as well, which are linked. So today's a kind of thematic sermon, rather than a tight unpacking of one passage. I'm going to read, first of all, Matthew chapter 7, and a section there from verse 15 to 23. You'll get the picture that's about trees and fruit and fruitfulness and stuff like that. Matthew chapter 7, it's not on the screen so you can either just follow me or fear of a Bible, it's on page 812. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognise them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thorn bushes? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognise them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, we'll enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and cast out demons in Your name and do many mighty works in Your name? And then I will declare to them I never knew you, depart from me you workers of lawlessness. And then one verse from John chapter 15 and verse 8. So the whole passage of the vine and the branches, which is again an illustration

Jesus is using that we've been looking at in some ways. John chapter 15 and verse 8, just one verse. By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. And now the passage in Galatians, which if you have a Bible with you, you can keep open at that or if a Bible in your phone or whatever, if not it should be easy enough to follow. If you're visiting with us today, we've been doing a series over the last number of Sunday mornings about discipleship because we are introducing a new kind of framework for one to one discipleship and looking after and caring for one another in the church primarily through the work that we do in city groups, big church, small church. And so we've been looking at the whole idea of fruitfulness as Christians. Rooted and living in Christ is the card that we have connected with that. And there's four things that we've been looking at and one or two others. And the last one, which is on the left hand side is bearing fruit for others. And that's what we're going to be looking at today in this series. There's plenty of these cards if you want to take them away, they're quite handy just to look at and to remind ourselves what we're doing. So it's really about as we bear, as we are rooted as our lives under what we don't see, the roots of our lives, where we're faced, where we're directed, in other words to the living water to a relationship with Jesus, then it bears fruit on the outside of our lives and how we live. And that's really what we're going to look at today. And there's one more sermon, a couple of weeks, Thomas is going to preach one more sermon on this series. So today, but I really need you, talking about participation, I really need you to participate today, because I'm going to be asking you to use your imagination quite a lot, based on the word, of course, but I'm going to use a lot of pictures and metaphors and illustrations today, which I hope will make sense of what

I'm trying to say from this passage in Ephesians, which is a very famous passage which speaks about the fruit, sorry, Ephesians Galatians, which talks about the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh. And it's a very well known passage to many of us. So we read from chapter 5 and from verse 13, and it's about keeping in step with God's Spirit.

So I'm going to use quite a lot of pictures today to get across what I'm trying to say. So I'll be using different pictures. What I'm going to be saying is you're not a potato, and then I'm going to be saying you're like a garden. And then I'm also going to say that you're kind of like an unconscious peach, not a thistle or a thorn. Okay, so that's really where we're going with the pictures today. So you're not a potato, but you are a garden and you're an unconscious peach, not a thistle. Okay, and that's all grounded in the passage.

Well, maybe not the first one, but the first one by the fact that it's not in the passage. Because the point of this series that we've been looking at is the importance of other Christians in your life. That is really significant. It's not just an added extra, it's hugely significant. The work of the Holy Spirit in your heart and in mine as a Christian should in a sense be like a spiritual magnet. It should attract us to others and others to us in the church, in our relationships with one another. And it's loving one another, which is key to what we're thinking about, loving God and loving one another, because that's really the whole of, that's the whole of the law of God, loving, that's why we're lost and hellbound without Christ because we can't love God perfectly and we can't love one another perfectly. And we need Christ's forgiveness and Christ's grace and grace strength to help us to do that. So really Christianity is God's way, becoming a Christian is God's way of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth. And every one of us, every single one of us are key players in that. There's no kind of hierarchy. Every one of us are key players in the Kingdom of God as Christians of bringing heaven to earth. And so we're looking at how that should be significant relationally both inside the church together here and outside of the church. I'll mention that as well because that's very important.

[6 : 25] So the first thing I want to say is that we are not potatoes. Okay, that's an important point. Now I love potatoes. Potatoes are my staple diet. I'm a potatoes and meat and two veg guy. Okay, I love potatoes. But there's nothing in the Bible about potatoes. No, there's no mention. It's never used as an illustration. Not because potatoes are bad or sinful, but because it's the wrong kind of picture that is giving in terms of using illustrations for what our Christian life should be. See, we've talked about being rooted in Christ, what happens underground. But that rooting in Christ reveals itself in the fruit that we bear as Christians. But potatoes are different and they grow underground. And they stay underground till that last great day of harvest. They never see the light of day until they're ready to be eaten. And I think some of us as Christians think like that, our Christian lives. It's about just merely surviving underground as it were, privately and personally having a walk with God that doesn't bear any fruit outwardly in terms of our love and commitment to other people. And we just think we're to survive like that until that last great day of harvest when Jesus comes to take us home, when the role is called up yonder. Kind of living in the dark, living away from other people, just living that private life of faith that we don't think has any responsibility above ground as it were with other people.

And we just love Jesus. It's all about my soul and God. It's all about the privacy of my own relationship with God. Yet, you come to a passage like this that we read in Galatians and indeed anywhere else throughout the whole of the New Testament, and you'll find all these kind of words like brothers and sisters, one another, love your neighbor, each other's mentioned four or five times, someone, someone else, share, all people, family of believers.

And so there's this huge significant element of our faith which is personal and individual and real, which reveals itself in the love and commitment that we have to the church, to other people, to other Christians. It's not an added extra. It is fundamental and crucial to our understanding, as we'll see. So we're not potatoes. Rather, I think, we're like... I'm going to broaden the picture a little bit. We're like a garden, okay? Not just a fruit tree, but a garden. And I think we're... I want you to imagine that you've been given a garden, okay? It's an imperfect illustration, I know. All illustrations are.

And I thought it was great when I started doing it. And then as I've gone into it, I've realized, oh, there's so many failings in it. But anyway, just go with me here because we're in a garden. You've been given a garden, okay? You've been given the title deeds of an absolutely beautiful garden. Can you imagine that? And that's a bit like the gift of faith that you've been given. And you have everything you need for this garden to really flourish.

You've given all the equipment. You're given books that tell you how to deal with everything in the garden. You've got... It's planted with beautiful flowers. You've got fruit trees. There's bulbs and seeds. You've got a bank account that you can just buy anything you want that will make that garden beautiful and keep it beautiful. But that garden, which you've been gifted the title deeds to, it will need tended, will it not? It will always need tended. However beautiful it is when you get it, if you ignore it, it will become a wilderness very, very quickly because gardens still grow weeds and there's work to be done.

[10:11] There's things to be nurtured and pruned and cared for and looked after. And then people will know that it's a garden that's cared for and as living as it were and as significantly looked after. I was walking, I was going to visit someone along London Road this week and I was coming towards the junction of London Road and Easter Road. And there's a beautiful big church there right on the corner of Easter Road. And it doesn't seem that long ago since I had a lot of work done on the outside of the building and it was really a lot of, a bit like ourselves, the work that was done outside of the building. But since then the church has been closed and it's not been used. It's derelict. And there always used to be lovely trees and stuff outside and garden stuff outside along with the paving stones.

And now these paving stones, it was really very obvious. These paving stones are all just, there's weeds just bursting through all the crevices and all the edges of the paving stones all the way around it. And the first thing you think is dereliction. It's been abandoned. Nobody cares for it anymore. And that's the kind of picture that I'm trying to get across here with the use of this illustration of a gardener or Christian life being like a garden that needs to be tended. Even though we are gifted salvation by God, it's a free gift, we need to work our relationship with God and with one another. Because in this garden that we've been gifted with the title deeds, there's a stipulation in the title deeds, and this is what I hope relates it to the way, the title of the sermon which is loving and bearing fruit for others. The stipulation in the title deeds of this garden says this is a garden that's to be opened and enjoyed by all. It's to be opened and enjoyed by all. So the flowers are to be picked, the fruit is to be eaten, the benches are to be sat on in the sun and have a nice glass of Beaujolais or whatever. And kids are to be allowed to play in it. It's to be a great place, an open place. It's not to be a museum garden or a display garden or the kind of gardens you see in great country houses that you're afraid to walk on. It's to be a garden. It's not to be a locked garden with a no entry sign. It's to be an open garden for everyone is to enjoy and take part. And what does that mean? What does that mean in gardening terms? And I'm not a, I'm no gardener, but it means that you'll need to not just work hard at the weeds, you'll need to do a lot of repair work and you'll need to take the stones that the kids have taken and thrown into the flower beds. You'll need to pick them out and put them back in where they are intended to be.

You'll need to maybe replant stuff that's been ripped up. You'll need to make sure that the garden itself gets rest and recovery and renewal. And so there, it's a busy place.

It's a lively place. It's an active place. It's a place that others benefit from, a place of blessing and happiness and goodness. And that is the picture of our relationship with Jesus Christ. If you take the idea of our lives as a garden, I'm going to make two applications from that, which, so what I've done is I've looked broadly at this passage. I'm not going to take one verse out of this passage, but we will be looking at verses in it. But it means, in terms of being disciples, that picture for us means that our Christian life, if we are going to be Christians who are bearing fruit for others, if we're going to love God and if we're going to love one another, it requires work from us as Christians. The passage that we read together says that we need to walk by the Spirit. Verse 16 of chapter 5, and then chapter 6, elsewhere it says, keep in step with the Spirit, and we need to recognise and do both these things. We need to keep in step with the Spirit, and we need to recognise the importance of our relationship with God. If we live by the Spirit, verse 25, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let's not come be conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. So you've got this reality in our lives, that eternal life is a gift, just like a garden, title deeds was given to us as a gift, through the penance and faith in Jesus Christ. You can't earn your salvation. This is not, I'm not saying if you do these things, God will be happy with you and you'll get to heaven. That's not the story at all.

The story is Jesus has done everything, and we accept that we can never make our way up to God, but God has made his way into our lives through Jesus Christ, and we accept that through repentance and faith that we are sinners who need saved by grace. And we realise and we know and we recognise no one can pluck that salvation from our hands, but we need to tend our spiritual lives. That's what's important here, is that we don't take this gift and then live as if it doesn't matter how we live, and it doesn't matter what he's given to us, because he has made us a new creation, and we recognise that what matters in the whole picture that we've been looking at is where the roots of our lives are going, where our strength comes from, where our life is being renewed by, and it is through an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. The fruit of the Spirit that you know so well that we've read about here, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and everything is exactly that. It's the fruit of the Spirit of God. It comes from communion with God. We don't work it up. It's not something that we can just try and do ourselves. It comes from relationship with Him as we learn about Him, as we pray to Him, as we understand the nature of grace, and as we have received that fruit ourselves.

[16 : 33] So Galatians chapter 5, which is a very famous passage, verse 22, the fruit of the Spirit is and all these different characteristics. That's what Jesus looked like when he lived on the earth, because he was the perfect human being as well as being the Son of God. He lived like that because we couldn't live like that. And that's the kind of characteristics that he shows to us in our salvation. He treats us with love and with joy and with peace and with patience and kindness and gentleness and goodness and faithfulness and self-control.

He does these things for us, and he treats us as saved sinners with that great love. And so the work of being a Christian is being in daily communion with this living God, renewing our minds and our hearts and our thinking, being conscious about learning about Jesus, about praying to Him, bringing our battles and struggles to Him, so that we can begin to love one another and love God His way. So it requires work. We've said that a lot.

You know that. We know that, and we know it's not a work that will earn us favor with God. It's just, it's a work of gratitude. It's like having that beautiful garden. It's keeping it tended because the weeds grow. And that leads to the second application, which is being a disciple requires work, but it also, it leads to conflict. There's a great deal of conflict in our lives because we are Christians. And I think that's a very important thing to say today, verse 17, for the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for they are opposed to each other, speaking to Christians here, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. If you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. Walk by the Spirit because there's a conflict in your heart and in your life and in obeying the living God. Don't, can I say to you, don't listen to anyone from the pulpit or anywhere else who tells you that to be a Christian is easy and it's a life of victory and it's fun. And if there's any problems, the problems are elsewhere with other people, I'm telling you they're false prophets. They shouldn't be in the pulpit and it's tough. And you should find that good to hear today that every one of us come here because we're struggling to be Christians and because it's a battle and because there's conflict. And you should hear that from your elders and you should hear it from me and you should hear it from the leaders of the church and you should hear it from one another as we disciple one another. That's one of the great things about discipleship because you don't come alongside someone who says, hoo-hoo, everything's great and easy.

You come alongside people who recognize and who will say that the battle is there and there in the midst of battle as well. That's why it's so difficult to be a Christian on your own because you think you're the only one that's struggling. Whereas discipleship and caring for and loving one another and bearing fruit for one another changes that.

It's about conflict. There's great conflict in being a Christian and that should be comforting today because there's weeds that grow up in our own hearts, sins and desires and longings that are against Christ and this, it's basically selfishness against Christ-likeness in our heart. So we find that conflict in our own hearts, don't we? I find that conflict, my own selfishness or pride or unbelief or lust that comes up in my heart and we don't do, we don't want to do sometimes what God wants for us. We're lazy. We would love God, we would love Jesus just to be a genie in a lamp. We would love Him to be like that who just gives us everything we wanted whenever we wanted to make life easy.

[20 : 29] But we know that the gospel is not like that and that the Christian walk is not like that for us. It's a battle, it's a struggle. We feel like giving up within the, we would rather relax and forget the fact that God is true because sometimes it's so hard to work through that. So we battle and there's conflict in our own hearts but there's also conflict in community. Let's be honest about that, isn't there? Great conflict in the Christian community as well. You know, love one another, we read in John as I have loved you. That's the hardest thing in the universe to do. In fact, it's impossible. That's why we need to go back to the living God. Love one another as I have loved you. It's not only tough, it's absolutely impossible. Some people we see or we think or we perceive are so unlovable, so selfish, so hurtful, they don't understand, they're demanding. If only everyone was like me, it'd be so much easier in the Christian life. So hard to give, so hard to be vulnerable.

We find that our love is unreciprocated from others and we're taken advantage of, we're tired. It's a struggle both in the church and maybe sometimes in the workplace we find that as well. But yet, within that, that relationship with others, what does it do? It drives us to where our roots are, to get the life-giving love and resources we need because Christ has won the victory. He is the one who went all the way to the cross for all those miserable enemies of Him who didn't know what they were doing and He went to the cross for them. He paid the ultimate price. He resisted the conflict. He overcame temptation and He prayed for those who crucified Him and was victorious and rose from the dead. And that power of Christ as we are rooted in Him is available to us to keep on loving one another because we're loving

God and that's usually significant. So the application of that picture of the garden is it requires work and that there's conflict. And then the third thing I'm going to say is, I'll do this more briefly, we are unconsciously peaches, not thistles. Okay? And that comes from the theme that we read in Matthew 7 where Jesus is talking about the same thing again.

There's lots of this right through the Bible when Jesus says, you know, you will know the fruit of someone. You will know that the kind of person someone is by the fruit they bear.

So you don't get grapes from a thorn tree. You don't get figs from thistles. So He's saying where your roots are, the kind of tree you are, and where you're rooted, it's the same kind of picture, it will be reflected in the fruit that you bear. In other words, a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. Now that's not saying being good in and of ourselves, it's saying as Christians we are rooted in Christ who is our goodness?

[23 : 39] Okay? And if we're rooted in Christ then we bear the fruit of Christ as Christians. In other words, Jesus is saying the reality of our faith in Jesus Christ and our dependence on Christ will become clear for other people to see when we live like Him. So we live like peaches and not like thistles because we bear the fruit that makes us like Jesus Christ, something that's beautiful and edible and smells great as opposed to a thistle or a thorn.

So the way we love one another as Christians is a window into our soul. And so with Jesus saying it does matter how you live as a Christian, it matters how I live, it does. The whole book of James is about that. It's all about faith without works, it's dead. And the reality is this, so, so, the Sermon, I'm not asking you to look at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 22 and look at it from the love, joy, peace, patience, and take them off and sort of say, I must try harder in these areas. I need to love better. I need to be more patient. You know, that's a council of absolute despair. It'll just leave you absolutely guilt ridden. What I want you to say, I want you to say, I need to be closer to Jesus Christ. And my roots need to be in Him because when my roots are within Him, I'll begin to bear that fruit. I can't do it away from Him, it's impossible.

And so there's an almost, you're almost an unconscious peach because you're not working to bear that fruit as an end in itself. You're simply wanting to be in relationship with Christ as you're rooted in Him and you will bear that fruit almost unconsciously because you're learning and growing in Him. So there's an element of self-forgetfulness in it. So the good fruit, what does it look like as we rely on Christ? We've read in the passages and I haven't spent any time looking at that. Serving one another, loving your neighbour as yourself, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, loving towards others, restoring others who have sinned, carrying each other's burdens, not comparing ourselves with others, sharing good spiritual experiences, doing good. In other words, it's recognisable. If you're a Christian, if your roots are in Christ, if you're in relationship with Christ, the fruit you will bear is recognisable, you can see it. We can see it in ourselves, we should be able to and see it in others. Because the bad roots, or the bad fruit, or the thorns, or the thistles, they're also evident and it reveals where our heart is or where our heart isn't, isn't it? Because they're the same. You know, thorns and thistles are stabby, defensive, sharp and hurtful and damaging.

And the passage speaks about it here. If you're biting and devouring each other, you're being sexually immoral, impure, debauched, idolatrous, dabbling in the occult, hating, divisive, jealous, wild-tempered, selfish, argumentative, cliquish, envious, drunken, conceited, provocative, proud.

You know, you look at that and say, well, not all at once. That's a demon. Yeah, okay. But it's the fruit, isn't it? It's the direction of our lives. Is it selfish and self-centred, which all these thorns and thistles reflect? Or is it Christ-centered, which the good fruit reflects? And that is how we are to look at our lives. Because Matthew 7 that we read, Jesus says, you know, when people ask, well, when did we see you like that? When was there someone naked? When was there someone in prison? And Jesus says, when you care for the least of my family in love, it's just like you're loving Jesus himself, because it's the evidence of a changed heart. And that passage in Matthew, Jesus is saying, you can say, oh, you're like, oh, I love Jesus. Oh, Jesus is great. I love him. And I'll sing about him all day. And I love the songs and everything about Jesus. I love him. Nah. Christian love is much, much grittier than that. It's much grittier than just saying, Lord, Lord, which is what Jesus exposes in that passage in Matthew. It's much more visible. It's much tougher and grittier and stronger than that. And there's evidence of it, because we are not potatoes. Because if we are potatoes on the judgment day, the Lord Jesus might well say to us, look, I never knew you. Depart from me. You wicked workers of unrighteousness.

[28 : 21] So it's a very solemn, it's a very real thing. It's about our eternal destination. It's not just about a lifestyle choice. It's not just about, this is the kind of Christians we want in St. Columba's, you can have different kind of Christians anywhere else. This is about how Jesus, the gospel of Jesus and the truth of Jesus transforms us into being new creations.

And we can't just sit as if he's some kind of genie in a lamp. He is empowered us by His Holy Spirit in our hearts through grace to be renewed and to be changed and to be transformed so that we don't bear thorns and thistles with other people. And when we do, we seek forgiveness from them and from God. Two final questions. I realise that I haven't really dealt with this passage in great detail. You could preach 40 sermons from this passage.

So I've kind of tried to give an overview. And I've thought there's at least two questions that I thought I hadn't even begun to deal with in this passage. First is, what about my needs? You know, you're talking all about giving and serving and loving others and loving God and sending your roots out. But what about me? What about my own needs? You're always so demanding from the pulpit, Derek. The Word of God's always so demanding. That's why I want to give up, because it seems so demanding and so tough and so difficult. What about my needs? Well, I think as we understand grace and we understand God, we recognise what God has done for us. And also we recognise that this is not a one-way traffic. We are to one another, each other. It's about receiving as well as giving. It's not just about always giving and loving. It's about being loved. There will be times when the garden needs to be shut, just to be refreshed and renewed. There's times we need to receive.

There's times when there's a garden owner, you're going to go to someone else's garden and sit in the sun and have a bojalee. Because you need refreshment and renewal and you'll get that in relationship with others. You know, there's times when we'll take a break.

When you will lean on other people rather than being leaned on. When you will be cared for and loved rather than caring and loving. When you'll be helped and spoiled. St. Columbus free church should be a place where you're spoiled as a Christian. That you come to and you don't feel guilty and constantly always having to give and give and give. But we'll receive the fruit of other people's Christianity. We'll eat from their riches and their spirituality.

[31 : 07] We will be loved and we will be protected and forgiven. And we will be, you know, there's times in your life when you can't pray and you're embarrassed by that. You can't pray.

That's fine. Let someone else pray for you in these times. But that obviously requires the relationship and the loving one another which allows for vulnerability and allows for people to understand the battles and the struggles and the difficulties that you have.

We are all root to be rooted in Christ and there's times when our roots will feel just rubbishy and far away and we will lean on and repent and help and the grace and the love and the belonging of another Christian beside us. That's why it's so important.

We don't only seek to give out grace, we seek to receive grace and the generosity of others. You know, there's nothing nicer than being generous, is there? It's a great thing to do and if we can, it's a marvelous thing. How difficult do we find it to receive generosity from others? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, please, no, I couldn't possibly. I'm independent and I'll do my own thing. I'm struck. That's a mark of grace is to be able to receive the humble help and support and prayers and love of others and the generosity of Spirit towards us as well as giving that out. It's false humility and it's pride to not do that. It's a misunderstanding of grace. So what about my needs? And then lastly, very briefly, Brian, I'll be glad to know it's very briefly, what about unbelievers? What about unbelievers?

So I saw, you know, is this not all about self-centered and kind of gazing inwardly towards ourselves, navel gazing, what I was looking for? Is it not all about Christians pampering each other with love and grace and there's a lost world outside and we don't really care about that?

[33 : 12] Absolutely not. Absolutely not. First of all, because it's important simply because God teaches it so powerfully in His Word throughout the Bible, it's His way. And if you ignore that way of living, then you may well reap destruction. It's the true grit of grace.

There's nothing gooey about it. There's nothing insignificant or self-indulgent about it in this slightest. It's God's way. It's His only way. But it's only, it's also the way we love everybody. So as we love one another with the love of Christ and being rooted in Christ, that will spill over into the way we love every single person that we know. Chapter 6 and verse 10 says, So then, as you have the opportunity, let us do good. Who to? To everyone. To everyone. And especially to those who are of the household of faith. To everyone.

So our grace-filled roots as they're in Christ will be reflected in the way we love people who are not Christians and that will be the start of them coming to know Jesus Christ.

That's how we will display Christ likeness to a lost world. Our lives will be a window through which they will look and see Jesus when we are loving one another and learning as we are rooted in Christ to live that way. It's absolutely and entirely missional to use a buzzword for ourselves today, okay? Because Jesus said in John chapter 13 verse 25, This is how all people will know that you're my disciples if you love one another.

That's the most missional statement in the whole Bible. And that's how people will know. It presumes, Jesus presumes we will be seen and we will be known by other people by the love we have for one another. That means it presumes that other people who are not Christians are aware of your Christian community and that you interact in your Christian community with one another with people who are not Christians. That's hugely significant living out that life. You know we pray and we pray for our friends, we pray for our three friends, we do it for years and years praying for our three friends, praying that they'll come to Christ, praying that they'll know them. That's how they will come. That's at least one way that they will come. It's when they meet our Christian community and see how we love one another and see how we love them within that. That's hugely significant. You know it's rational isn't it? Jesus wouldn't really send lots of unbelievers to a church that is full of thorns and thistles. Bitter and angry and divisive and stabby and oversensitive.

[35 : 57] Why is it not going to take many people in there is he? Because they're not going to last very long because they're going to be judged and thrown out. It's a loving, redemptive, tough, gritty grace that God wants us to live out together so that people who don't know Jesus will find that magnetically powerful and God we pray will work in their hearts.

So may we be rooted in Christ so that we are then living for Christ. Let's pray. Father God help us to live your way. The Bible is so full of that picture. We sung it in Psalm 1 and in Psalm 92 and we read about it in Matthew and in John and then in Galatians and there are many other places where this illustration is used of fruitful living. And we know that we're not saved by works. We know we're saved by grace, by faith in Jesus alone. But we know that faith is never without works that are as new creations we are different and we change and we start to want to love God and love one another because it's life and we're created to live that way. Lord we pray that you would break down the deception of the evil one and the lies that he sometimes sows deeply into our heart about how we can just live any way we want or we can just live thinking about ourselves and help us to receive grace from Jesus but from one another and recognize and know that there are times when we simply must receive and it's all that there is for us to do and may we be discerning enough as Christians to know when that is both for ourselves and for others. So bless us and help us to sing our hearts out as we close our worship and praise to you for who you are and for what you've given to us. Amen.