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(John 7:37-38; 15:1-17)

Intro. You don’t have to raise your hand for this question, but I wonder how many people really enjoy life? My guess is “too few of us.” Too many people go through life and just get in a routine or they ponder the meaning or purpose of life without pursuing what God had created them for. One man said, “The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it” (Richard L. Evans, *Bits & Pieces*, 3-4-1993, 2). Some of us are more like Flip Wilson’s outlook on life when he said, “If I had my whole life to live over again, I don’t think I’d have the strength.” By the grace of God, we have the strength to “*Live for Jesus.*” As we conclude our 3-part series on our vision of “Come. Drink. Live!” based on John 7:37-38, we turn to John 15 to see what he meant for us to “*Live for Jesus!*”

Theme: Vision

Background: John 15 is part of Jesus’ discourse with His disciples after the Last Supper on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Like much of his material, John is the only Gospel writer to record Jesus’ teaching here, which is surrounded by the mission of the Holy Spirit.

➤ Much like last time, I want us to see some basic truths from this text & then make some applications for our lives.

Basic Truths from This Passage:

1. You must abide in Christ in order to bear fruit (15:4-7, 9-10, 16)

- To abide in Christ or His love/teachings (10x in 15:4-10) is to dwell/remain in Him—connect to Him & live as a result of being connected to Him
- Abiding in Christ includes keeping His commands (15:10)

2. You must bear fruit in order to be pruned (15:2-3)

Illus: The summers after my junior & senior years of high school I worked for a man in my church at a tree nursery. One of my main responsibilities was to tie young trees to stakes & prune them. I learned if you didn’t prune a tree, it would reach its peak real soon & it often looked pitiful but if you pruned it, it could grow taller & be far more productive—God desires to prune every believer so they become more effective for Him

3. You must be pruned in order to bear more fruit (15:2, 5, 8, 16)

- The only way to be more effective for our Lord is to go through the pruning process—the most effective Christians are those who have suffered (been pruned by) for our Lord

4. Bearing fruit is a joyful mark of discipleship & glorifies God (15:7-8, 11-17)

- Once you are pruned (suffer), you bear even more fruit so that you are productive for our Lord & you are to do this joyfully, for your life of bearing fruit brings the Father glory

Note: Bearing fruit also includes answered prayer (15:7, 16; cf. 14:13-14; 1 John 5:14-15)—to ask Jesus anything is to pray in His name, which is according to His will, so the more you grow as a Christian, the more you learn to pray according to His will & when it is within His will, He is ready to answer your request

Notice the opposite of these statements:

1. If you don’t abide in Christ, you cannot bear fruit (15:4-5)

2. If you don’t bear fruit, you will be cut off & you will wither (15:2, 6)

3. If you wither, you will be cast into fire & burned (15:6)

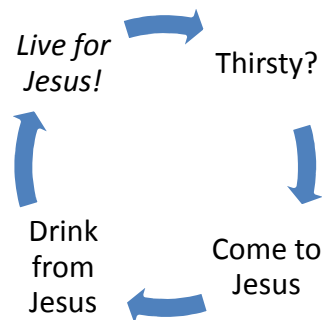
- The good news for the unbeliever is even though you aren’t abiding in Christ, the vine, you can turn from your sins & trust in Jesus & God will graft you into the vine just like He plans for many Jewish people (cf. Romans 11)

Application of “Live for Jesus!”

- 1. Regular Fellowship**—by meeting regularly with other believers—you can grow deeper through personal study but you will grow stronger through personal study with others
 - Be part of a SS class—the people who most often disconnect from FBS are those who either never got involved in SS or were involved at one time but quit coming & only came to worship. Then, when they weren’t getting their needs met (through relationships), they drifted away.
- 2. Faithful Stewardship**—people are not truly living for Jesus if they are not also giving to Jesus & His work. Now that rubs some people the wrong way because they don’t like preachers & churches talking about money & what they owned but did you know Jesus talked more about money & possessions than heaven & any other topic?

Illus: One common command in the Bible is “not to put the LORD your God to the test” (like asking Him to do something unique so you can discern His will)—the one time we are told to test the Lord is in our giving of tithes & offerings (Malachi 3), so go ahead, put the Lord to the test & give faithfully & see what He does for you in return.

- 3. Helpful Ministry**—part of living for Jesus includes serving Him & others & while we are called to serve our neighbors & communities, the primary reason He provides us with spiritual gifts is to serve in the church (see 1 Corinthians 12). If you look on the back of the Connection Card today, you will see numerous opportunities where you can serve. Would you check off where you have some interest (no commitment yet on your part nor on our part to plug you in there) so we can have the appropriate ministry department follow up with you?
- 4. Focused Mission**—this one brings us full-circle in Come. Drink. Live! “Come to Jesus” is our mission to invite others to Christ. “Drink from Jesus” compels us to worship, grow in discipleship from the Word & pray. “Live for Jesus” points to living in community through fellowship, being good stewards who invest in His kingdom & ministering to others, including the mission of calling people to come to Christ. I’ll be saying more about mission in the next sermon series, but make sure you are doing what God has called you to do in being on mission for the Lord



Conc. Many of you have heard the expression “Carpe diem” before—it means “seize the day” or “make the most of every opportunity.” I believe our Lord wants us to view our life in Jesus that way, so that we make the most of every opportunity in regular fellowship, faithful stewardship, helpful ministry & focused mission. Will you seize the day to live for Jesus? Maybe you aren’t living for Jesus, but you can turn from your sins & trust in Him & start living for Him.