

October 27, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: John 15:4-5,8; Galatians 5:16-25

Message Series: Church: A Disciple-Making Community

Week 10: Drawing Near to Christ

Introduction:

1. We've been working together to see the church as what it is called to be: a disciple-making community.
 - a. That means that as a community of Christ-followers, we have one job – to glorify God by making disciples. According to Matthew 4:19 a disciple is someone that...
 - i. Has a relationship with Jesus through belief and repentance: "Follow Me"
 - ii. Is being transformed by Jesus: "And I will make you"
 - iii. And is living on mission with Jesus: "Fishers of men"
2. In digging deeper we see what Jesus taught in Matthew 11:28-30 and when we take into account the context and the audience that Jesus was speaking to it helps us understand the text much better. Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi and He called 12 men to follow Him as disciples. And 1st century Jewish discipleship was very simple.

Jewish Rabbi's had a "Yoke" that included their...

1. **Way:** practices or behaviors their disciples would observe and live out
2. **Truth:** teaching or interpretation of the Law their disciples would hear and take on
 - a. **The Way of Jesus** – throughout all 4 gospels you will find Jesus doing only 3 things in addition to eating and sleeping.
 - i. **Living on Mission** – going into spaces to redeem unredeemed things – in His teaching, healing, ministering, feeding, bringing hope. But He would

take time away from mission to spend time in biblical community. We talked about Living on Mission last week.

- ii. **Spending time in Biblical Community** – There was no conflict in the heart of Jesus to not heal everyone and teach everyone in order to spend time with those that were His true family. As important as this is, Jesus did take time away from mission and biblical community in order to draw near to, or spend time with the Father.
- iii. **Drawing near to the Father**

b. **The Truth of Jesus**

- i. The Word of God
- ii. As His life and teaching
- iii. Fulfilled the Law & Prophets

3. **Throughout Jesus' instruction to His disciples He said we that prove to be His followers/disciples if we...**

- a. **Abide in His Word** – John 8:32-32 (His Truth)
- b. **Take up our cross** – Luke 9:23 (living on mission)
- c. **Love one another** – John 13:34-35 (Biblical community)
- d. **Bear Fruit** – John 15:8 (Drawing near to Christ)

- 4. We've walked through the first two practices of the way of Jesus in living on mission, Biblical community. We use the phrase "caring as family."
- 5. As important as mission and community were for Jesus, He would take time away from both to spend time with His Father, our Father.
- 6. In our own lives, the best thing we can do is draw near to Christ.

7. That sounds nice and spiritual, but the hope is that we will see our ability to obey Jesus and bear the fruit He commands of us are only possible as we continually draw near to Him.

Read John 15:4-5,8

8. In John 14 and 16 Jesus teaches about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In John 15 Jesus teaches about abiding in Him and bearing fruit.

9. To read and apply those chapters independently would be a mistake.

10. Jesus tells the disciples that He is about to leave them but promises the Holy Spirit will come and lead them.

11. Then He tells them to abide in Him, but keep in mind He's leaving, and that they must bear fruit as proof that they are His disciples. No pressure, but it sure would be good to know exactly what fruit should be produced in their lives.

12. Then He tells them again that He will send the Holy Spirit who will guide them in all truth and that He doesn't speak on His own authority but will glorify the Son by taking what is Jesus' and declaring it to them.

13. All that to say, in thinking of Jesus as a Rabbi, which He is so much more as Savior and Lord, but in thinking of Him as someone that they literally followed and walked with, Jesus is saying in terms they could grasp that He was sending them another Rabbi to lead them.

14. And everything this new Rabbi would say are things that Jesus would say. Same source of truth.

15. So when Jesus tells them to bear fruit by abiding in Him, but He's leaving them and will send the Holy Spirit, we can link that to Paul's teaching (inspired by the Holy Spirit) especially in Galatians 5 in verses 16-25.

1. We Need to Make the Connection

A. We tend to think – Obey > Bear Fruit > Become more like Jesus

B. When really it's – Only in Abiding > Will we bear fruit > That results in obeying.

- a. The key is abiding or drawing near to Jesus. Don't make your journey about obedience that doesn't find its source in drawing near to Jesus.
- b. When we talk about abiding or drawing near to Christ, we are not talking about being saved.
- c. There is that reality of being "in Christ" and His Spirit abiding in us when we trust Him for salvation.
- d. But here, we're talking about the ongoing life-giving relationship that is the source of our joyful fruit bearing, and obedience to Him.
- e. Only when we keep abiding in Him or drawing near to Him are we able to walk in the Spirit – being directed and empowered by Him.
- f. It's the fruit of the Spirit, not our fruit. The "works" of the flesh are listed above that.
- g. Living on mission and growing deep in biblical community are not possible if we are not abiding in Christ.
- h. We can come up with what we think is sufficient obedience and accomplish it on our own. But when pressed, when in conflict, when in trials, will the fruit of the Spirit be visible?
- i. I don't get credit for being a good husband just by doing good husbandly things, if my heart is far from loving my wife.
- j. I'm going to pay the bills, do the yardwork, and a couple of others things, but not spend time investing in our relationship, and giving her the best of me.
- k. I don't grow into a better husband by just doing a few nice things for her.
- l. I grow into a better husband by cherishing her, spending time with her, growing in love with her, and then responses that look much like the fruit of the Spirit are seen more often and doing nice things for her far beyond a bare minimum list come more easily and joyfully.

- m. Too often we see it that God saved us by grace and now we obey Him in our power as best we can, even if its void of pleasure and joy because its guilt-motivated or begrudging.
- n. Obedience to your list of rules cannot change your heart, but abiding, or drawing near, to Christ will.

2. To Abide or Draw Near to Christ

- A. **There are no shortcuts**
- B. **We need Biblical rhythms in our schedule** – rest, unplug, say “no”, sabbath
- C. **We need Spiritual disciplines of the faith** – study Scripture, pray, fast, serve, solitude, silence, giving
- D. **We have re-started our small groups** with a focus of teaching the most important and essential beliefs and then teaching and modeling the most important disciplines you need to grow in Jesus.

Closing

1. Are you a Christ-follower?
 - a. Do you spend time with Jesus regularly?
 - b. Are there spiritual disciplines that you practice consistently?
2. Are you bearing fruit of the Spirit? They're not optional according to Jesus
3. Is your obedience to Christ joyful and life-giving?
4. Will you get honest about what is keeping you from drawing near to Christ?

Let's pray and then you stand and sing and reflect on what God has said to you.