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There are three words in Mark 4 that forever changed my attitude about what I am here on earth to do. I knew that I was saved and called by God for a purpose; and I knew it had something to do with fruit bearing. But it wasn't until I asked the Lord to show me in His Word -- what He wanted from us as believers, that the words on the page began to jump at me. Look again at Mark 4.8 and let the words God chose, rise with a freshness and newness in your mind.

*Mark 4:8 But other seed fell on good ground (a believer's heart) and yielded a crop (that's fruit) that **sprang up, increased and produced**: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

Remember last week we learned that the theme of the first 20 verses of Mark 4 is -- that God expects one thing from those who accept His Word and are born again -- they "yield a crop" or we can call it -- fruitfulness. So we saw --

Fruitfulness Expected: Mark 4:1-20

Now look more closely at the three words God chose to describe the crop that we are to yield if we are His.

- **"...yielded a crop that -- sprang up"**: anabaino (Strong's-305 used 87 x N.T.) Whenever Jesus said this word it was for when He went up or "ascended" to Heaven. So it speaks of something rising in a special and visible, and intentional way.
- **"...(yielded a crop that) -- increased"**: auxano (Strong's-837 used 22 x N.T.) is a very descriptive word. It described how the early church grew (Acts 6.7) from 12 to 3,000 on the day of Pentecost and beyond. It also describes the multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt (Acts 7.17) from 70 to three million. Both are truly showing something that "increased" in a dramatic way.
- **"...(yielded a crop that) -- produced"**: phero (Strong's-5342 used 64 x N.T.) This descriptive word is used for dragging in the full net of fish (John 21.10); of being bound and carried (John 21.18); of the paralyzed man carried by four (Mark 2.3); and of the wind driving the boat of Paul in the sailing to Rome (Acts 27.15, 17). All of these speak of strength and direction and accomplishment.

Here's the message: God wants His workings in our lives to SPRING UP, to INCREASE, and to PRODUCE. How? That's point two.

Now turn over to our second passage – John 15, and the second truth we are going to learn – fruitfulness explained.

Before I read these precious verses again with you, may I remind you of the incredible challenge each of us have. According to what Jesus said in the verses before us, all that will last of your and my life on Earth will be the fruit that you and I produce while we are alive on this planet. Everything else of ours -- will either burn, rust, or rot. Have you paused lately and looked around all that fills up each of our lives?

Everything we ever have will turn to rust and ashes except for what was transformed by our ABIDING in Christ into Eternal Fruit. Christ's rewards to us are based on what was GOOD or fruitful, all else attached to our lives Jesus Christ has promised He will burn away at the BEMA SEAT JUDGMENT.

*John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit **He lifts up**; and every branch that bears fruit **He prunes**, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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.*

"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. 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. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Fruitfulness Explained in John 15:1-8

The God of Heaven says I am in the business of producing crops. When my Word gets into your life something is going to happen. When you allow me full access – amazing results will come. That leads us to ask a series of questions about fruitfulness. If God is explaining fruitfulness to us what exactly does that mean.

Question Number One: Does God Know How to Raise Crops?

Before we look at the meaning of spiritual fruitfulness in John 15, look around you in this world that God made. Ask yourself – does God have any experience in fruit bearing? When He is in charge what type of results are there?

The conclusion is immediate -- God really knows how to raise a crop. He has demonstrated an unbelievable ability to cause life here on this planet to multiply and flourish beyond what is even possible for us to comprehend. Here are just a few examples from nature around us.

- One yard pest, the dandelion is a great example. That cheery bright yellow blooming dandelion plant that pops up in your yard during April and May has the capacity to yield over 5,000 airborne seeds. Those seeds are launched each time that yellow blooms turn into those beautiful white little puff balls. If each seed were to make it into the ground and grow to maturity – one plant could at the end of its first year have planted 5,000 children. In year two those 5,000 plants produced would also go to seed and produce 25 million (5,000 x 5,000) seeds. By year three those 25 million seeds become 125 BILLION seeds. And so on – **if there was perfect replanting year five would produce 10 dandelions for every square foot of the surface of this planet!**
- Sweet corn is the same. If healthy and planted well each kernel can produce a stalk that can have up to six ears each with 700 to 900 kernels or one corn seed can make up to 5,000 seeds in one season. Replanted that one kernel of corn would cover this planet with 10 stalks of corn per square foot by the 5th year.
- But to see the explosive power of life that God has built into this world look in any standing water or pond. *“Water is preeminently the seat of life. There is not a bay or creek, not a shelf or a sound on the face of the earth that does not teem with life. Even a drop of ditch water can hold 500 million microscopic creatures so small that a teaspoonful of water would be to them what the Atlantic is to us. Those half a billion infusoria can live comfortably in a single drop. They appear in a thousand species, some are herbivorous, some carnivorous, some have shells, and some have none. They possess mouths, teeth, muscles, nerves, and glands. Some species have between one to two hundred sacks or stomachs, connected by an intestinal canal. The thickness of the membranes that line those stomachs have been estimated to be one fifty-millionth part of an inch! Only a God who is infinite could have worked on such a majestic scale as we see in the skies and on such a microscopic scale as we see in the seas. There is no such thing as bigness or smallness to a God who is infinite.”***[1][1]**

Question Number Two: What Crop Does God Want to Produce in Our Lives?

Now God has outlined for us in His Word the four areas He watches, remembers and will someday test for fruitfulness. Do you know them? Are you cultivating these four areas each

day for His Glory? What does God call time, possessions, attitudes, and actions in our lives that are harnessed and used and deposited before Him in Heaven? FRUIT.

Fruit Consists of inviting Jesus into each area of my life and letting Him take it over. When Jesus is invited into each area what happens? My time becomes where He “abides” (John 15); my attitude becomes His personality (Galatians 5); my body is not mine any more and I present it to Him (Romans 12); my possessions are all evaluated by how to make God “rich” and not me (Luke 12).

Christ Wants to Abide in My Time:

Remember the river of our life flowing by at 60 minutes an hour? This is all about how we use, how we prioritize, and how we spend our moments.

Has God said anything about that time? Yes –Seek Me FIRST (Matthew 6.33). Jesus wants to be welcomed into all of my time. That is what abide means, He wants to “stay” with you – get up each morning and eat with you, go out to the car and ride with you, sit at your desk while you work, go to lunch, ride home and spend the evening with you. He wants you to notice Him, talk to Him, and let Him be a part of your life. What are the results of abiding in Christ? In these verses Jesus explains three: He gives us prayer that is effectual; fruit that is perpetual; and joy that is celestial.

- If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you [John 15:7]. That is prayer that gets God’s plans done, it is effectual.
- Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples [John 15:8]. This is fruit perpetual.
- These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full [John 15:11]. That is joy celestial.

Christ Wants to Abide in My Treasures:

This is what we do with our money. This is how we view our possessions.

Has God said anything about those treasures? Yes – Jesus actually said much about money, the summary would be in two passages -- (Matthew 6:19-21 lay not up) and Luke 12 be rich towards God!

- Matthew 6:19-21 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- Luke 12:13-21 Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” 14 But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” 15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of

covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."