

**Text:** John 15:1-16

**Ser#** 3546

**Title:** "Fruit that Remains"

**Date:** October 28, 2007

**Group:** <NONE>

**Sermon Type:** Textual Sermon

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**Fallen Condition Focus:**

**Propositional Statement:** God calls his people to produce fruit that remains through dependence on Christ and his word.

**Introduction:**

1. Hanna's Ministry DVD presentation
2. Proverbs 25:25: We have good news!
3. You must understand the context of our good news (as seen in the presentation)
  - a. Taiwan has traditionally been an unresponsive field
  - b. ❶ an advanced economy & high standard of living
  - c. ❷ a developing democracy: freedom of speech and religion
  - d. ❸ spiritual darkness: syncretism and false religion
  - e. = materialism, apathy, and secularism
4. Before you write off Taiwan, hold the mirror up to America: We see the same situation and results.
5. But, *where Biblical ministry takes place, genuine and lasting fruit is the result.*
6. We are seeking fruit that remains in Taiwan. But our first two terms we returned frustrated and discouraged. ❶ National churches planted by the previous generation of fundamental missionaries were turning away from the biblical pattern and doctrine. ❷ Missionaries were leaving because of discouragement and retirement and not being replaced.
7. This caused us to start a spiritual quest. We became convinced of the truth seen in this passage: *God calls his people to produce fruit that remains through dependence on Christ and his word.*
8. TRANSITION: We must answer three fundamental questions about this passage.

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- I. What is fruit?
    1. Vv. 1-8 presents the metaphor of the vine and the branches. The purpose of the passage is seen fruit bearing ("fruit," v. 2; "more fruit," v. 2; "much fruit," vv. 5, 8).
    2. People have approached this passage asking the wrong question: "*What does it mean to abide in the vine, to abide in Christ?*" A whole theology has arisen called the "deeper life movement" which emphasizes the believers mystic union with Christ by an act of faith through which he may enter into a new level of spiritual experience and fruitfulness. **This is the wrong question.** To begin to understand the significance of this passage to ministry we must begin with a different, more basic question: "*What is fruit?*"
    3. V.16 "chosen ... and ordained"
      - a. In the context (chap. 12-17) Christ is speaking particularly to

his chosen apostles. This choice and ordination was their ordination to the apostolic office, function, and ministry. *The fruit was the building of the church* on the apostolic foundation: “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;” (**Eph. 2:20**).

- b. Although **the Great Commission was initiated by the apostles, it did not end with them!** (**2Tim. 2:2**) God continues to choose and ordain men in every age for whom his purpose is the same: to produce fruit that remains. *That fruit is still the building of the church in the present age!*
4. The day came in my own experience when I realized that my understanding of my job description changed dramatically. I am a *church planter*. But I cannot build the church, only Christ can build His church (**Matt. 16:18**).

## II. What conditions are necessary in order to produce fruit?

1. V. 4 “abide in me” means to “continue [same word] in my love” (v. 9) and “ye shall abide in my love” (v. 10). This parable has two halves (1-8 & 9-16) in the second half Christ drops the metaphor and speaks plainly. The second half of the parable defines what it means to abide in Christ.
2. This “love” in which we are to abide is ❶ the love of Christ for us revealed on Calvary which results in ❷ our love for God and Christ, ❸ love for one another as believers, and ❹ love for the lost in this world.
3. V. 14 Love for Christ takes the word of Christ seriously— it means obedience! (Cp. V. 12 “commandment).
4. This is the only genuine motivation for missions or for service for Christ in building his church.

## III. How do we ensure that we produce fruit that will remain?

1. In a sense we have already answered that question: ❶ proper motivation; ❷ obedience to the plan and pattern of Christ; ❸ transmitting the gospel to the next spiritual generation of Christians— training faithful men.
2. In our attempts to produce fruit that will remain we have
  - a. Planted Cornerstone Baptist Church
  - b. Goals for furlough: recruitment— building a team ministry
  - c. Theological training of national leaders
  - d. Taiwan a launching pad for the gospel into Mainland China
3. We have some specific goals for our furlough
  - a. Report to our supporting churches
  - b. Recruit new missionaries, build a team for ministry
  - c. Raise new support (we are currently at 80% of need)

Conclusion: