

Apart from Me You Can Do Nothing

Healthy Soul, Pt. 1
John 15:1-5

Allan McCullough
Grace Hill Church
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I. VIDEO

II. INTRODUCTION

a. When I was five years old, my family moved to Herndon, VA.

- i. I have been in Northern Virginia for the vast majority of my life.
- ii. And one thing is true about the culture of Northern Virginia and that it is FAST PACED.
 - And I love it!
- iii. We are always busy here in Northern Virginia.
 - We work jobs that require long commutes, long hours, and important work.
 - Our weekends are busy. Our evenings are busy. Our churches are busy. Our schools are busy. Our kids are busy.
 - In Northern Virginia, if you want to hang out with some friends, it's going to require a marathon text chain, with your calendar out, searching for the day that the planets align and you both have a free night where you can schedule a time to hang out next month, right?
- iv. And let me be honest, I love this about Northern Virginia.
 - I like being busy.
 - I like having things to do.
 - I get uncomfortable with silence, stillness, having nothing to produce, nothing to accomplish, nothing to distract my soul.



b. And I don't know about you but ever since everything got shut down, no matter how hard I try to stay busy, life is just not as busy.

- i. Sure, I'm still working full-time hours...
- But having all my meetings on Zoom means less commute.
 - All my evening plans are canceled.
 - All my weekend plans are canceled.
 - Many of the things we were working on at the church have been put on hold while we navigate our current circumstances.
 - And as much as I want to fight it and even though my soul still feels busy...the truth is, I'm not as busy...
- ii. **And my guess is that is true for most of you as well...**
- You no longer have a commute...
 - Your evening plans have been scratched...
 - No travel...
 - No weekend plans...
 - Even if you're working from home, there is only so much you can do remotely...
 - Some of you have lost your job or been furloughed and your time has really been freed up.
 - Now, others of you might be a lot busier because you work in an industry that is essential for these circumstances...or because your kids are now no longer in school and you're trying to figure out how to be a homeschool parent...



- iii. **But regardless how this pandemic is affecting you, we are all experiencing a major disruption in our lives.**
- We are all having to face a different kind of pace of life here in Northern Virginia.
 - And I think this disruption that 100% of people are experiencing and 100% of our church is experiencing right now presents an opportunity that we need to leverage.
- iv. **We have an opportunity right now to hit pause on the busyness of our lives, hit pause on all our plans, hit pause on all the expectations that our culture puts on us...**
- And evaluate if our souls are really healthy?
 - To truly be honest about if we have a healthy relationship with Jesus.
 - And to ask the question: Is the normal way of life that we're all used to...is that what we want to go back to?
 - Do we want to go back to crazy busyness that numbs our soul or do we want to experience what it's like to have a healthy soul?
- v. **Because if I can speak with some boldness...as much as I love the crazy busy Northern Virginia culture...and much as I am a child of it...and as much as I contribute to it...**
- It's not healthy. It's not what God wants for us.
 - And there is a better way to live that brings greater honor to our God and joy to our souls.



c. And so, we are launching into a new sermon series called “Healthy Soul” for the month of May and we are calling all of you to take part in the Healthy Soul Challenge throughout the month of May.

- i. And here is our simple goal for the Healthy Soul Challenge...
- Is that we would all learn to slow down and abide in Jesus.
 1. That’s it!
 2. That’s the goal.
 - That we would learn to slow down, give our souls some breathing room, to not numb and distract them with busyness, and to build a true friendship with Jesus.
- ii. **And family, let me be honest with you as your pastor.**
- I am not leading us into this sermon series and this challenge from a place of strength...I am actually leading you into this from a place of weakness.
 - As I mentioned earlier, I am a product of Northern Virginia culture.
 - I love busyness and hate stillness as much as the next person.
 - And I have just a hard of a time slowing down and sitting in the presence of Jesus, resting in Jesus, and letting my soul find it’s worth and value in Jesus and not my busyness and my production.
 - And that really is the heart of the matter.
 1. We are wired into believing that our worth and value is found in the things that we do and accomplish.



2. And, therefore, our souls are never at rest.
 3. They're always pestering us to do more...to produce more...we're too lazy...look at how much those people are doing...
 4. And we're restless.
- And so, over this next month I am going to be teaching you things and leading you into things that I myself and my soul need to be taught and led into as well.
- iii. And this morning, as a way of introduction, I want all of us to look at a passage of Scripture that puts all of this in very simple terms for us.
- John 15:1-5

III. JOHN 15:1-5

a. Let's first start by just talking about v.1-2.

- i. Jesus is using the illustration of a vine and branches to describe the relationship between God the Father, Jesus the Son, and us as followers of Jesus.
 - And Jesus actually makes a very biblically rich statement here in v.1 when he says: I AM THE TRUE VINE.
 1. We could do a whole sermon on the significance of those five words from Jesus.
 - But in Psalm 80, the nation of Israel is described as a *vine* that God brought out of Egypt when he rescued them from slavery in Exodus and planted in the promised land.



1. Psalm 80:8-9 - *"You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹ You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land."*
- But, the Old Testament also says that Israel, as this vine, turned away from God.
 1. Jeremiah 2:21 (NLT) - *"But I was the one who planted you, choosing a vine of the purest stock—the very best. How did you grow into this corrupt wild vine?"*
- And so, when Jesus makes the claim that he is the true vine, what he is saying is that he represents God's righteous people.
 1. And whoever believes upon Christ and puts their trust in Christ will become a branch that is connected into the true vine.
 2. And this would have been a controversial statement to the Jews who believed simply their heritage and their observation of the law were what connected them into the vine of God's people.
 3. But Jesus is saying that He is the true vine and those who trust in Him are the branches connected to that vine.
 4. The true people of God is not a nation. It is the church, those who are connected to the true vine.
- Get it? So, when Jesus says I AM THE TRUE VINE, that's what he is saying.



- ii. So, what we learn in verse 2 of our passage this morning is that the branches that are connected to this vine will bear fruit.
- They will live their lives in such a way that there is visible evidence of its connection to the true vine.
 1. Yesterday, my wife spent time trimming this massive hydrangea tree that we have in our backyard.
 2. She was cutting off the branches that were not growing leaves and leaving the branches that were growing leaves.
 3. Because the branches without leaves were dead and the branches with leaves were obviously alive and connected into the resources of the tree.
 - And God the Father is the vinedresser of this true vine that is Jesus.
 1. Those who trust in Jesus and are connected into Him are going to produce a certain kind of fruit. Just like the leaves on our hydrangea tree, our lives will provide evidence that we're connected to the vine.
 2. And God the Father will continue to prune us so that we can continue to grow and bear more fruit.
 3. And if we bear no fruit at all, God the Father will cut us out all together and take us away.
- iii. But, in v.3...
- Jesus makes it known that his message, right here, is not as much a warning to the dead branches that are going to get taken away, his message is to the branches that are connected to him...



b. Read v.3.

- i. Jesus makes it clear that those whom he is talking to right now have already been connected to the true vine...
 - And they are not connected to the true vine by anything they have done, they are connected to the true vine through the Gospel of Jesus!
 1. The verse says that you are already clean because of the WORD that I have spoken to you.
 2. Jesus is referring to the Gospel message that he has been declaring to his disciples.
 - Remember, what does the vine represent?
 1. The righteous people who belong to God.
 2. The people who will experience eternal life.
 - And we don't become a part of the vine, these people, by any works of our own, we become a part of this people through the WORD that Jesus has spoken,,,through the Gospel.
 1. We become a part of the vine when we trust in the life of Jesus...believing that He lived a life without sin.
 2. We become a part of the vine when we trust in the death of Jesus...believing that when He went to the cross, He paid for all of our sins and gave us his righteousness.
 3. We become a part of the vine when we trust in the resurrection of Jesus...believing that His new life is our new life and that He has defeated death and secured us for eternity.



- And THEN our lives will begin to produce fruit that serve as evidence of our connection with Jesus.
- ii. **And so, before we move on in our passage, I need to stop and ask the question:**
 - Are you someone who has trusted in the Gospel?
 1. Are you connected to the vine?
 - Because the way to be connected with Jesus is not by HOW you live your life.
 1. Going to church.
 2. Being nice.
 3. Giving money away.
 - You can't produce fruit BEFORE your connected to the vine.
 1. You have to surrender to Jesus, confess your sin, and trust the Gospel to be connected to the vine and then God will begin to use you to produce fruit.

c. And that leads us to what Jesus has to say to all of us this morning in v.4-5.

- Remember, Jesus is speaking to those whom are already clean and a part of the true vine because they have believed upon the Gospel.
- i. **Read v.4-5.** Think about this with me...think about the cause/effect relationship that Jesus is very simply saying...



- You become a branch on the true vine, Jesus, through the Gospel.
 1. He cleanses you of your sin and brings you in.
 2. You abide in Jesus, are connected into the nutrients He provides, and then you produce fruit.
- It's not...
 1. You, as this branch all on your own produce fruit and prove your worthiness to be a branch attached to Jesus.
 2. No, Jesus just refuted that in v.3.
 3. You become a part of the true vine through the Gospel.
 4. And then you begin to produce fruit...
- It's also not...
 1. You become connected to the true vine because you have believed on the Gospel.
 2. And then you produce fruit somehow on your own apart from Jesus.
 3. Almost like you find the ability to produce fruit without Jesus being a part of that process.
- No! You produce fruit by abiding in Jesus.
 1. And it is this second organically inconsistent way of living our lives that we need to be challenged with today as followers of Jesus.
- Because I believe that many of us have settled into our Christian lives by believing that the Gospel has connected us to Jesus and given us eternal life...but we seek to live our lives and to produce fruit apart from Jesus and not through abiding in Jesus.



d. Notice in our passage this morning that there is a category of Christian here who is a branch on the vine, they have been cleansed through the Gospel, but they are not actively abiding in Jesus.

- i. And just because you believe the Gospel in your mind it doesn't mean that your soul is daily abiding in Jesus.
 - And Jesus is saying very clearly here...apart from me, you can do nothing.
 - You cannot produce the kind of fruit that I desire for you without abiding in me.
- ii. And so, this morning, the two questions I want to answer are:
 - What does it mean to abide in Jesus?
 - And what kind of fruit will that produce?
- iii. Because I wonder if we were to all to evaluate our lives, look at the pace of life that we live, look at how we spend our days and our hours...
 - Would we conclude that we believe that apart from abiding in Jesus, we can do nothing?
 - Or would we conclude that all of the fruit that we set out to produce, we seek to do it all on our own?

IV. ABIDE

a. What does it mean to abide in Jesus?

- i. Well, to abide means to remain somewhere. To stay. To linger.
 - Let's not overcomplicate this.



ii. **To abide in Jesus means to be fully present with Jesus in our whole being.**

- Our soul is engaged. Our minds are engaged. Our bodies are present. Abiding in Jesus.
 1. Spending time with Jesus.
- This is not just a mental assent.
 1. Where we mentally believe the Gospel and therefore, we are now abiding in Jesus in some intellectual way.
 2. That's part of it, not all of it.
- This isn't just some physical thing where we go to all the church activities and read our Bibles consistently.
 1. That's part of it, not all of it.
- Think of a branch connected to a vine.
 1. It is always connected.
 2. It's always receiving the resources it needs from the vine.
 3. And it is able to produce fruit because it is connected into the vine.
- So, abiding in Jesus, means a daily reliance upon receiving the necessary resources and strength needed to live in the way that Jesus has called us to.

b. And here is what I think we need to be challenged with this morning.

- i. I believe there are many of us who believe the Gospel...
 - We are a branch on that vine...
- ii. But we don't daily abide with Jesus, relying on him to give us what we need to produce fruit, we try and do it on our own...
 - And our souls are unhealthy and discontent because of it.



- iii. A newborn child has the identity of being a child of a particular mother.
 - And that child relies upon milk from its mother for strength and to be healthy.
 - But if that child were to refuse its mother's milk...
 - Would it change its identity? Of course not. You can't change that child's identity.
 - But would that child suffer, be malnourished, be uncomfortable and discontent because its body is hungry?
- iv. Oh, this is how we live the Christian life mostly in our wealthy American culture...
 - It's not a matter identity and if we believe the Gospel or not...
 - But so many of us refuse to abide in Jesus for strength...and we wonder why our souls are discontent and malnourished.
 - We wonder why our souls are hungry and we are looking to so many other things to fill it.

c. Abiding with Jesus means spending time with Jesus...

- i. Consistent, daily, unrushed, meaningful time with Jesus...
 - Letting Him minister to our souls.
 - Receiving milk from him, strength from him.
 - Yet, so many of us refuse to budget time for that because it doesn't quite meet our cost/benefit analysis does it?



ii. **We are so busy, so rushed, our calendars are so full...**

- That to give Jesus one hour of uninterrupted, solitary time every single day is considered radical...or unrealistic...that's idealistic...that's legalism.
 1. It's not legalism. No one is talking about your identity. We're talking about your health.
- And we are so important, our jobs are so important, our family obligations are so big, all the activities that we are involved in are so necessary...that slowing down and letting our souls be with Jesus just isn't efficient enough...
 1. Jesus' way of fueling us and strengthening us just isn't efficient enough for our standards...
 2. And so, let's be honest, we don't have the patience to abide with Jesus.
 3. He's not fast enough for us.
- And unless he can fit Him into all of the things that we have prioritized over Him, abiding isn't practical is it?

iii. **And we've all been duped by our culture...**

- Into believe that apart from Jesus we can do more...
- And yet, we're irritable. We're tired. We're discontent. We're easily frustrated. Our marriages are suffering. Our kids are being disciplined into a life of busyness. And we dream of a different life...



V. APART FROM JESUS

a. And Jesus has been saying...

- i. Apart from me, your soul will not be healthy. It won't be content. You can do nothing...
 - And Jesus believed this.
 - If we look at the way He lived His life...and he had much more important work to do than any of us...He spent significant time abiding in the Father.
 1. So much so, it bothered his disciples and was at times considered to be selfish for Jesus to devote that much time to be with His Father.
 2. Because people needed Him.
 - And if Jesus needed to abide with the Father, than you do as well.
 1. Your soul is not exempt from it...
 2. Your personality doesn't predispose you to needing less time with Jesus...

b. Apart from Jesus, you can do nothing...

- i. Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, your marriage will not flourish to the places you dream it would go...
 - Where you truly are best friends, enjoy life together, laugh together, partner together, encourage each other, and strengthen each other when life is hard.
 - Without abiding in Jesus, you cannot experience that.



- ii. **Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be salt and light in your work place.**
 - If your soul doesn't receive what it needs from abiding in Jesus, it will look for it in the approval of our co-workers and the advancement of your career.
 - So, it will be too much of a risk to be an ambassador of Christ in the workplace.
- iii. **Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be able to deal with the anxiety and depression.**
 - Praise God we have some medical solutions to these mental illnesses.
 - But these are illnesses of the soul as well as the mind.
 - And if our soul is not healthy and finding strength and hope in Jesus, we will not be able to have healthy minds while our soul remains malnourished.
- iv. **Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be able to heal from the wounds of your past.**
- v. **Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be able to have the patience and the intentionality you need as a parent.**
- vi. **Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be able to embrace a life of singleness and experience the unique joy of a life wholly focused on what Christ has for you.**



- vii. Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be able navigate the suffering and the tragedy that this fallen world will bring us.
- viii. Apart from daily abiding in Jesus, you won't be a servant of others. Serving others instead of being served will wear you down...and you'll get bitter.
- ix. Friends, apart from Jesus, you can do nothing.

c. And here is the good news...because of the Gospel, Jesus abides in you.

- i. When you abide in Him, He is always right there abiding in you.
 - He will not leave you.
 - He's there.
 - He will not find other things more important.
 - He is not going to do to us what we do to Him.
- ii. But I believe that it is time to say enough is enough.
 - Because of the way we live in this culture...our souls are not healthy.
 - And we need to address it.

VI. HEALTHY SOUL CHALLENGE

- a. **And this is why we are doing the Healthy Soul Challenge through the month of May.**



- i. Because we want to leverage the disruption of this pandemic to address this issue and begin to learn to abide in Jesus again.
 - The whole point of this challenge is to help all of us slow down and spend more time with Jesus...abide in Jesus.
- ii. **So, tune in on Sundays.**
 - We are going to be preaching on this.
- iii. **Tune in on Mondays at noon.**
 - We're going to get practical.
- iv. **Register for the Healthy Soul Challenge!**
 - Daily Guided Meditations (starts tomorrow)
 - Weekly Reflections
 1. First one already went out so if you register today, we'll send it to you!
 2. Carving out your daily hour with Jesus.
 - Healthy Soul Team for encouragement and accountability.
 - Registers here:
 1. gracehillchurch.com/healthysoul

VII. CONCLUSION

- a. **Grace Hill, my prayer is that we would all taste what it is like to have a healthy, well-nourished soul.**
 - i. And that is available to us in Jesus.

VIII. PRAY

