

Our Purpose And Privilege

John 15:1-12, 17

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The longing for purpose is innate in all humans. The world view of purpose - that it is up to us - is deceptive. In John 15, the disciples were desperately in need of purpose. Jesus responds to them - not just as 11 confused disciples - but as the 11 future pillars of the Church.

What is the Church for?

1. The Purpose

vv. 1-2 - Jesus assures His disciples that He is the true Vine that will never fail and whose purposes would be fulfilled. He paints a scenario of 3 things with specific roles: Jesus as the true Vine whose role is to pulsate with life and fill the branches with it; God the Father as the Vinedresser whose role is to care for the Vine and see to its maximum fruition; Jesus' 11 disciples are the branches whose role is to bear fruit (v. 5). To Jesus, fruitfulness is serious business (vv. 2, 6). Fruitfulness was the disciple's purpose then, and it remains our purpose now. Fruitfulness is a must! Our purpose is to make disciples, lead people to faith, and abound with the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Fruitfulness for Agape Baptist Church is to be the catalyst in the city for the gospel to awaken and enliven believers and seekers. As God's children, we need to go beyond the thinking and feelings of sufficiency, fulfillments, and achievements to evaluate the fruitfulness of our lives. Instill habits and routines to evaluate the fruitfulness of your life. Fruitfulness is the purpose of our lives!

2. The Process

vv. 4-5 - Jesus gives an illustration of the branch that cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine. We can only bear fruit if we abide in Jesus, the true Vine. The process of fruition is abiding in Jesus and not just associating with Him. Abiding is an active belonging. Don't "associate", abide! Actively belong and be abundantly fruitful. Abiding means to choose to actively belong day after day, week after week. It is a daily decision to

spend quality time in God's word (v. 7). It is a weekly decision to honour the Lord's Day, setting aside Sundays primarily for worshipping God and fellowshiping with His people. Honour the Lord's day by prioritising the on-site services for you and your family - and let any other activities be secondary. Obey Christ's commands and abide in His love (v. 9). Choose not to merely associate with Jesus; abide in Him! He is the Vine and we are the branches. Only by abiding in Him will we bear much fruit.

3. The Privilege

Fruitfulness is not just the church's purpose, but also her privilege. It is only with Jesus that we can be fruitful and accomplish things that are truly, eternally, and wholly good (v. 5b). While nothing that our sinful hearts propose to do would be impossible (Gen. 11:6b), they are like the vain building of the tower of Babel. While mankind continued to build towers to reach into heaven, Jesus was given as a seed from heaven to fall to the ground, be killed, and buried. This dead seed became a God-nurtured vine that spread all over the earth, toppling man-made towers. Jesus is that seed. He is the true Vine that endured and prospered through history. Agape Baptist Church is part of this vine. As sinners who only know how to build towers in vain and be fruitless, Jesus made a way for us to abide in Him and so fulfill our purpose and be fruitful. Such is our privilege! We have been cleansed by Jesus, pruned, and ready to bear fruit (v. 3). Arise not as a man-made tower into heavens, but as a God-nurtured vine across the earth. Abide and experience more of His love and joy (vv. 10-11). Abide and truly love one another (vv. 12, 17). Abide and glorify God (v. 8)!

Commit to abiding and bearing much fruit.