Our scripture will come from John 15, verse 8 and then verses 26 & 27. While you’re finding that, A jet was flying through a severe thunderstorm. As the passengers were being bounced around, a young woman turned to a pastor sitting next to her and asked, “Reverend, can't you do something about this storm?” The pastor smiled and said, “Sorry ma'am, I'm more on the sales side. I’m not in management.” As followers of Jesus, we’re not in management and never will be. We’re more in the testimonial department.

**John 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:26-27 26“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.**

As disciples of Jesus our focus is to be as much like the Master as possible. We’re not called to accept Jesus and then go wait in the closet somewhere until the day He returns. We’re called to bear fruit… but not just a little fruit, but much fruit. What kind of fruit? Well, an apple tree gives apples, a tomato plant gives tomatoes, and a grape vine bears grapes. Since we are grafted into a vine that is Christ, our fruit should be a fruit worthy of the vine we’re grafted into. Our fruit must be unmistakably Christ with all of His characteristics. His characteristics were love, forgiveness, humility, and mercy. Our fruit must be likewise - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, as Galatians 5:22 reminds us.

Last week, we talked about abiding in Jesus through prayer and fellowship. These are the inward facing master keys to relationship with Jesus Christ. These bind us to Him and our brothers and sisters. These strengthen us and fill us so that we can concentrate on pouring ourselves out in service and witness. When we’re filled with Faith in the Holy Spirit, it can’t help but pour out. When no works or witness arise from Faith, James 2:17 suggests the Faith is dead.

In verse 8, Jesus says - By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. We bear fruit in many ways, but the one that speaks – no shouts – to a lost and hurting world is acts of service. As we seek to be like our Savior, remember Matthew 20:28 says just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Mark 9:35 says And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” When we love someone enough to serve them, even when they don’t look like us, they don’t believe like us, they don’t sound like us… we are being like our Lord. He washed Judas feet, even as Judas planned to betray Him. When those outside the church see our love demonstrated, it provides a witness where our words will certainly fail. In 1 Corinthians 9:19 Paul says For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more. We can’t say we love God and then watch our neighbor suffer. It’s inconsistent with the disciple we are striving to be.

Service becomes the opportunity to witness for Christ. Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. If I witness from a place of shouting, when I witness from a place of condemnation, when I witness from a place of judgement, I stand little chance of being heard. When I witness from a place of service, I’m almost always heard.

But we must be bold with our witness. Isaiah 40:8 exhorts us to get up on high mountains and fearlessly lift our voices loud and strong. John 15:27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. It’s strange to me that people will witness to others about something that saw at Chick Filet, they’ll bear witness to something that saw on Facebook, they’ll bear witness readily to who has the best ice cream in town, but, ask them to bear witness to the way Jesus has changed them, and they’re suddenly bashful and silent. We are to bear witness because we have met the Master… He saved us. We have filled up on prayer and fellowship and we are pouring ourselves out in service and witness. The witness you give may turn someone’s life completely around and alter their very eternity.

Over in Acts 4, we find the story of Peter and John, having been arrested and threatened for speaking the name of Jesus. In verses 19-20, we read, But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Oh that we might have that boldness in Christ – when we are threatened, when we are told to be silent, when our service is rejected and we are despised for the Lord – may we respond with boldness – we cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard. May our prayers and fellowship prepare us to be poured out in service to our Lord in these dark and dreadful times the world now faces.

Today, if you do not know the Lord or you want to be Baptized in the presence of this church – come while we sing. Start your witness by stepping out in Faith today.