

sermon study guide

Sermon Summary (see next page for discussion questions)

Fruitful: More Like Jesus - Faithfulness

October 23/24, 2021

Pastor Ashwin Ramani

The flavors of the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5: 22-23 are not natural virtues that we can produce on our own but they signify the supernatural work of the Spirit. The fruit is a visible byproduct of abiding in Christ. As we take the time to abide by engaging in spiritual disciplines, God does His part by changing us from the inside out.

Abiding requires us to not only be people of faith but to be faithful in all areas of our life. Faithfulness is about being reliable and trustworthy. It means staying the course.

Maintaining focus, without giving in to distractions, is the key to faithfulness. Jesus modelled this throughout His earthly ministry by surrendering to the will and agenda of His Father. This meant that He would not worry about breaking cultural taboos but reach out to those who were marginalized and overlooked in society. Jesus' life was focused on completing the task that the Father had for him (John 4:34; 6:38). His mission included bearing God's wrath and enduring the agony of death on the cross. Jesus fulfilled God's perfect plan of redemption for our sin and our salvation. Jesus modelled faithfulness by glorifying God in completing the work He was called to. We too can glorify God by being faithful to the unique tasks that He has called us to.

In 2 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul highlights the critical role of the faithful for the message of the gospel to advance. Although it can be tempting to focus on creative ideas, strategies, talents and human abilities, it is faithful people that allow the gospel to be passed to the next generation.

A faithful person is **like a soldier** (vv 3-4). Soldiers declare their unequivocal commitment and have undivided loyalty. They obey orders and sacrifice their personal interests, even if it means hardship and danger. Nothing gets in the way of fulfilling the task. In the same way God wants us to stay focused and not compromise our commitment and loyalty to Jesus by allowing everyday life to blur and distract from our mission.

A faithful person is also **like an athlete** (v 5). In order to win the crown, an athlete has to be disciplined in every way, knowing and staying focused on the goal. They must play by the rules of the game. They willingly take the time to diligently adhere to a rigorous regime of practices. In the same way faithfulness demands such devotion. It is not a casual approach but an intentional one. But the athlete does all this for a perishable crown, something that will fade away and be forgotten. The faithful in Christ do it for eternity.

Lastly, a faithful person is **like a farmer** (v 6). The farmer is familiar with all of the stages of work necessary for the reaping of a harvest. It is an act of faith for the farmer to not yet see the harvest but to stay focused and continue laboring. In the same way, faithfulness is about working hard and staying in it for the long haul even when we don't see immediate results.

The fact that we are beneficiaries of the faithful who have gone before us, proves that God blesses the faithfulness of His followers and multiplies their efforts. Our faith goals, which are accomplished only by trusting in God's strength and power, are the link for the gospel to be passed on. These goals, similar to the fruit of the Spirit, are not attained by natural human ability.

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Discussion Questions

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IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Share about a long-term goal you had, or currently have. What helps to keep you focused on accomplishing that goal?
2. What powerful example of faithfulness from literature, a movie or someone in your own life has stuck with you?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read 2 Tim 2:1-7

3. Pastor Ashwin said fruit is produced in our lives not by our own efforts, but through the Spirit's work and yet we are not passive in the process. How do we see this balance at work in the metaphors of soldier, athlete, and farmer?

Read John 4:34-35

4. What was the work the Father willed for Jesus to finish? Give 2 to 3 examples where Jesus demonstrates his faithfulness to His Father. How can these serve as a model to help us complete the work that He prepared for us?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. What is one 'faith goal' for you to pursue in this coming season? It could be related to Pursuing God, Pursuing Relationships, Pursuing Mission, Pursuing Generosity, Pursuing Simplicity (for a reminder review the message from October 16th/17th). What do you need in order to stay faithful to reach this goal?
6. There are many different opportunities to serve at CSC. Visit <https://www.cschurch.ca/volunteer/>. What mission of CSC is needing your partnership?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

If you haven't already, take some time to prayerfully visit [cschurch.ca/faith](https://www.cschurch.ca/faith). Share with someone in your life these goals and how you hope to faithfully attain them.

THE WORD (NIV)

2 Tim 2:1-7

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. 5 Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

John 4:34-35

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

