

Fruit that Remains

By Ken Birks, Pastor, Teacher, Author

There are moments in Scripture that feel like the ground beneath us shifts—moments when Jesus’ words do not just inform us but awaken something deep within. John 15:16 is one of those moments. It carries a sense of divine anticipation, as though the courts of heaven draw close and speak softly, “Pay attention—this is who you are, and



this is what I am calling you into.” Before we ever imagined bearing fruit, Jesus had already chosen us, appointed us, and envisioned a life overflowing with lasting, eternal impact. These words invite us into a journey—one filled with promise, responsibility, and the unmistakable heartbeat of God drawing us closer to Himself.

John 15:16 *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and **that your fruit should remain**, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

There is something deeply humbling—and profoundly anchoring—about these words of Jesus. Before we ever reached for Him, He reached for us. Before we ever bore fruit, He appointed us for it. And not just any fruit—but fruit that remains. This is the heart of the Father toward His disciples.

Just a few verses earlier, Jesus lifts the relationship even higher: “*No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends.*” This is not distant obedience; this is intimate partnership. The Father’s desire is not merely that we do things for Him, but that we walk closely with Him—so closely that His life flows through us in a way that produces lasting, enduring fruit. But if we are honest, we know this does not happen automatically.

In my backyard, I have an apricot tree that tells a story every year. Each spring, it bursts into life with beautiful blossoms—full of promise, full of potential. It looks like a great harvest is inevitable. But then reality sets in. Heavy rains come, keeping the bees from pollinating. Stormy winds blow, stripping blossoms from the

branches. What looked so promising begins to thin out. Then, just when small green fruit begins to form, another threat appears—birds and squirrels, eager to take what is not theirs. Add more wind, and even the developing fruit falls prematurely to the ground. By the time summer arrives, there is little fruit that remains.

I cannot help but see the parallel. Jesus calls us trees of righteousness, yet like that apricot tree, we face real forces that work against the fruit God desires to produce in our lives. Some are external—pressures, disappointments, spiritual opposition. Others are internal—weariness, distraction, discouragement, or even subtle compromises. All of it works together to do one thing: diminish what God is trying to grow in us to produce fruit that remains.

Jesus addressed this directly in the Parable of the Sower. In fact, He made it clear that understanding this parable is essential—like a key that unlocks all the others. If we miss this, we risk misunderstanding how the Kingdom actually works within us. Everything in the Parable of the Sower hinges on one thing: the condition of the soil. The seed is good. The sower is faithful. But the outcome depends on the heart that receives it.

In this parable, Jesus begins by describing the seed sown by the wayside as hardened ground—soil so compacted that the seed cannot penetrate. It remains exposed, vulnerable, and quickly stolen.

Matthew 13:19 *When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart this is he who receive seed by the wayside.*

This should cause us to pause. Because hardened hearts do not happen overnight. They form over time—through disappointment, unmet expectations, repeated struggles, or even familiarity with truth that we stop truly receiving. Life has a way of pressing down on the soul until what was once soft becomes resistant.

When the heart grows hard, even good seed cannot take root. This is why Jesus pointed to childlike hearts as the key to receiving truth. Not childish—but teachable. Open. Uncluttered by pride, preconceived ideas, or rigid expectations.

The first part in understanding the meaning of this parable and other parables Jesus used to introduce kingdom truths is having a teachable spirit with our eyes and ears open to kingdom truths. We must come to Him as little children whose hearts are

wide open rather than tainted by worldly philosophies and pre-conceived ideas even as we continue to mature in Him.

The Scribes and Pharisees could not understand what Jesus was teaching because they were trying to filter everything, He was saying through their distorted religious beliefs and pre-conceived ideas of who the coming Messiah would be.

Jesus then quotes from the prophet Isaiah, *"Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will not perceive" for the hearts of this people have grown dull.*

The thing to keep in mind is that we are in continuous battle as we move through various stages of our walk with God. We face many situations, disappointments and failures that tend to harden our hearts to the point, new seeds of revelation and understanding have difficulty penetrating our hearts. The revelation of God and His word is progressive and needs soft and playable hearts for new seeds of understanding to penetrate.

I have experienced, Christians at every stage of their walks with the Lord bomb out and not continue their journey. Therefore, as it says in the book of Hebrews, *"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away."*¹

Following the seed sown by the wayside, Jesus explains the seed sown on rocky soil. He says, *"but he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately received it with joy; yet he has no root in himself but endure only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."*

The seed on stony ground reveals the danger of shallow faith. This person hears the word and responds quickly, even joyfully. There is genuine enthusiasm, emotional excitement, and a sincere desire for change. On the surface, everything looks promising. But beneath, the roots never go deep. The problem is not with the seed—the word of God is living and powerful. The issue is the condition of the heart. Rocky soil has just enough depth for quick growth but underneath lies resistance. This can point to an unbroken will, hidden fears, unresolved wounds, pride, or a reluctance to fully surrender. The person welcomes the blessings but has not allowed God's word to penetrate the deeper places of the soul.

¹ Hebrews 2:1, 10:23

Following the seed sown on rocky soil, Jesus says, *“Now he who has received seed among the thorn is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”*

Jesus’ picture of seed among thorns is one of divided loyalty. The person hears the word and may even receive it with sincerity, but competing desires and anxieties slowly crowd out what God is trying to grow.

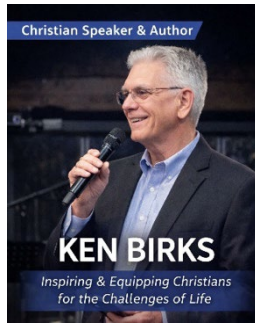
The “cares of this world” are the daily burdens that can consume our attention—finances, reputation, security, family pressures, future fears, and more. These things are not always sinful in themselves, but when they dominate the heart, they leave little room for trust, prayer, and obedience. Worry becomes a form of spiritual suffocation. Jesus also points to “the deceitfulness of riches.” Wealth promises what it cannot truly give: lasting peace, identity, control, or joy. Riches deceive because they create the illusion of independence from God.

Following the seed sown among thorns, Jesus says, *“But he will receive seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold. some sixty, some thirty.”*

Jesus’ description of the good soil shows what happens when the word is truly welcomed, understood, and embraced. It represents a heart that is open, humble, and responsive to God. This person does more than merely hear the word with the ears; they receive it into the depths of their life. This person is now able to produce Fruit that remains and is in position to receive whatever they ask from our Heavenly Father.

So now the question rests before us—not softly, but with holy weight: What kind of soil will we choose to be? Jesus has already chosen us, appointed us, and invited us into a life that bears fruit with eternal significance. But the condition of our hearts will determine the harvest. This is not a passive calling; it is a daily challenge. A challenge to guard the heart, to uproot the thorns, to break up the hardened places, to deepen our roots, and to welcome every seed God desires to plant. The invitation is glorious—but the responsibility is real. And the fruit God longs to produce in us is worth every battle, every surrender, and every step of obedience. The question is no longer whether He has chosen us. The question is whether we will cultivate the kind of heart that can carry His calling to completion.

About Ken Birks



Ken has walked with God through seasons of quiet wonder, deep refining, and unexpected grace — journeys that have shaped both his faith and voice. Ken Birks has walked with God through seasons of quiet wonder, deep refining, and unexpected grace — journeys that have shaped both his faith and voice. From early moments of sensing God’s nearness to years of learning to listen more closely, Ken has discovered that the Lord often speaks in whispers, rhythms, and poetic impressions.

Out of those sacred encounters came a desire to write — not to impress, but to invite. To invite others into the same stillness, the same clarity, the same holy encouragement that has carried them through life’s valleys and mountaintops. His devotional poetry and other writings flow from a heart that has wrestled, worshiped, and been transformed by God's presence.

For other Articles Like this, by Ken Birks
Click the Image Below

