

## The 2023 PEACE ON EARTH Series

*“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. He removes any of my branches that don’t produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit.”*

John 15:1–2 (CEB)

### Peace on Earth **Bearing Fruit**

What is the fruit John speaks of in Chapter 15? Think about this brief question and relate your answer to the other thoughts from this series. I have personally wrestled with this part of Jesus' discernment for some time. Many people suggest that fruit-bearing means leading other people to Jesus Christ. It is the Billy Graham approach to meeting in large arenas and churches, preaching with great enthusiasm, and finally inviting the people to come forward to receive Jesus into their heart. Perhaps that is a worthy application, but, for me, it is hard to find or follow in John's text.

Finding meaning for the words had been complicated until I turned my thoughts to Paul's listing of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 which reads, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this."

If we look at the context, we might receive a better clue. Verse 12 says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you." The whole paragraph that follows our text for today is about abiding in love, the kind of love that Jesus showed to us.

It seems that Jesus is saying once again that we should emulate His character and especially his love. A branch should have the same DNA as the trunk. If God is love, then we should as God loves.

May I suggest that we leave this Talk together knowing that the DNA of God is deeply woven throughout your and my hearts, souls, minds, bodies, and spirits. Doing so, we will depart with a clearly defined comprehension of what it means to be "fruit bearing" people of God. In this role, we will achieve much toward uniting people around the city into our spiritual community.

That's it, I'm keeping this Talk short. Before I go, I want all of you to know how much I appreciate your prayers calls, cards, and well wishes. You are all quite special to me.

*Peace Always,*

*Ted*