

Text: John 15:1-8

Theme: Attachment Has Its Benefits

April 29, 2018

How many of you have ever bought a garden tool that came with attachments or a mixer that had multiple attachments? Now, how many of you have successfully used the attachment without connecting to the main unit? Have any of you made homemade bread using only the beaters or cultivated your garden by dragging the cultivator attachment through the soil? Today's text remind us of something we already know, but don't always apply to our relationship with our God - Attachment does have its benefits.

I. Our God has assured us that being attached to the Vine has its benefits. A. Even so, we often attempt to live unattached. 1. We attempt to live unattached because we don't want God telling us what to do. When you were a teenager, how many of you liked to have your parents telling you what you could or couldn't do? As teenagers, we knew it all and our parents knew nothing. We didn't want or need them telling us what to do. Too often, we act like teenagers even though the teenage years passed us by 20, 40, even fifty years ago. Although our Father actually knows best, we still have our moments when we don't want Him telling us what to do.

2. We attempt to live unattached because we think we have a better plan. If I recall correctly, it's Ford that has a better idea. Whether that's true or not, we find ourselves in situations where we think we have a better idea. When we offer our best and it doesn't make any difference, we have a better plan for next time. When life doesn't unfold as we intended, we know better than God. But when we get done, we find out that we didn't know what we thought we knew. In a world where we have the entire internet at our fingertips 24/7, we're convinced that there's a better way than God's way. The unfortunate part is that we are extremely slow learners.

3. We attempt to live unattached because we think God is depriving us. Jesus says, "I am the Vine and you are the branches," and we say, "No, no. You have it all wrong. We are the vine and we create our own branches." Because we think God is holding out on us, we declare our freedom. "God is not going to deprive me! I'm going to go my own way and do my own thing and life will be great!" Then, like the prodigal son, when we finally come to our senses, we find ourselves wallowing in the pig pen wondering how we got there. When we believe God is holding out on us, that we will show Him, the pig pen is where we will always end up sooner or later.

B. Although we foolishly attempt to live unattached, what are the benefits of attachment? 1. By attachment, we have the guarantee that God loves us. In our Epistle, John writes, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." Who did the loving? Who failed to do the loving? Rather clear, isn't it? Let's take the thought one step further. Suppose God hated you. Where would you find comfort? Where would you turn when life pulls the rug out from under your feet? By attachment, we obtain a guarantee that's better than any money back guarantee you can find because it's God's guarantee that He loves you no matter what.

2. By attachment, God abides in us. Abiding - what image does that word create? Here today, gone tomorrow? Maybe He will show up when I need Him, but maybe not? Abiding isn't a casual relationship. It's God moving in permanently and making Himself at home in our hearts. Notice the words in our text, "Apart from Me, you can do nothing." What's the flip side of that statement? You can do

some things occasionally? You might be able to do something? The more accurate statement is, "Because God abides in me and I abide in Him, I am unstoppable. I can do anything He wants me to do!" Attachment - it's a great thing.

3. By attachment, we are capable of bearing fruit. Why is that of any importance to us? Because that's why you are here, that's your purpose for existence. When we bear fruit, we give evidence that we are attached and when we are attached, everything the Vine has to offer becomes ours. How many of you plant an apple tree expecting it to never produce an apple? If a fruit tree never bears any fruit, why bother? As we bear fruit, as we obtain that capability from the Vine, our loving God looks down on us and smiles with delight as He says to Himself, "This, this is the most magnificent part of My creative work, people who respond by bearing fruit."

4. By attachment, we realize that pruning is a good thing. Did you catch that very important statement? "Every branch of Mine that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." How many trees have a perfect shape at sixty feet tall without pruning somewhere along the way? How many fruit trees produce to their optimum ability if they are never pruned? God prunes us to prepare us for our next task. Out of love, He's getting us ready for what He knows, but we don't know is coming down the road. When we realize the purpose of pruning, it becomes comforting. It reassures us in yet another manner that God loves us beyond our understanding.

5. By attachment, we respond by loving one another. As we realize what we gain by attachment, our natural response is to love as He loves us. Because He abides in us, we have the motivation and the power. Now, He waits for us to act, to respond, to do what our hearts nudge us to do. As we love others, we give evidence that He abides in us, that we abide in Him and with that evidence we tell the world that we are His disciples, disciples of the greatest Master ever, followers who choose to follow by duplicating His actions, by demonstrating love, by doing what Jesus would do if He were standing beside us. As branches attached to the Vine, we can do nothing less.

6. By attachment, we are invited to ask whatever we wish. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." Now, before we get any wild ideas, we need to understand the words before the "ask whatever you wish" part of that statement. When we abide in Him, when we have an intensely close relationship with Him, and when His Word abides in us, guides our lives, directs our words and actions, prompts us to do all that we do, when all of that is occurring, we are invited to ask and to expect it to occur because what we ask, when it's motivated by that preceding information, will be in agreement with His will. With the proper preface, God says to you right here, right now, ask whatever" and then comes the most glorious part, "it will be done for you." That's the benefit of attachment. Amen.