

**What Jesus Promises When We Stay Close to Him**  
**Peace, Joy, and Lives that Count**  
**John 15:1-8, 16; 14:25-31; 15:11; 16:20-24**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** We need hope to work hard at anything, including spiritual growth. Hope drops off when life is difficult, as it was about to be for Jesus' disciples when he addressed them in John 13-16 just before his death. Jesus gives them (and us) hope by (1) promising three things and (2) giving them (and us) something to do.

**I) Three promises**

**A) Peace**

*John 14:27: Peace I leave with you...Not as the world gives do I give it to you*

- What sort of peace
- Meaning for us

**B) Lives that count**

*John 15:16: ...that you should go and bear fruit and your fruit should abide*

- Jesus' plan
- Meaning for us

**C) Lasting joy**

*John 15:11; ...that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full*

- Jesus means to make better people of us, but the way to get there is very different from the way most people think

**II) Jesus give us something to do**

**A) Stay close to him**

*John 15:4: Abide in me and I in you...*

**B) How?**

FWPSM

### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Rate your level of enthusiastic engagement with your Christian faith—on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being deeply engaged and 1 being comatose. Why the rating?
- 2) Read John 14:27. How is the peace Jesus gives different from the peace that the world gives? Bear in mind that Jesus ties his promise of peace into his “going to the Father” through the cross and what follows. Note in your answer what Paul writes in Romans 5:1, 8:1, and 8:39.
- 3) Read John 15:5 and 15:16. What does Jesus promise to those who abide in him? What does he mean by “much fruit” and “fruit that will last”? In your answer consider what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:58 and 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.
- 4) Look at John 15:11. There Jesus promises things about his joy and about our joy. How are they different? How are they related?
- 5) Reflect on the following: “Jesus does make better people of us. But the way he gets us there is different from the way that we tend to think of. He comes alongside us and says, ‘Look, I know what’s wrong with you—I know is better than you do. So I have come alongside you, as your substitute, to live the life that you should but don’t, and then to die the death you deserve in your place. And then I come inside you by my Spirit, changing you from the inside out, planting my life and joy inside you so that, in due time, you will have the joy of becoming genuinely good, noble, and loving.’”
- 6) Jesus tells us in John 15:1-8 that the only way to grow spiritually is by “abiding in him.” We do this by staying close to him through the gifts of intentional fellowship, prayer, study of the Word of God, the sacraments, and a missional life (FWPSM in the parlance of EPC). These five graces are like the necessary ingredients in a well balanced diet. If we neglect any of them we become spiritually unhealthy. Why do we need them all in order to grow fully into Christlikeness? What happens, for example, if we pray but never study the Bible? Think of other the effects of neglecting any of the others.
- 7) How balanced is your FWPSM diet? What will you do about your answer?