

This morning I am so privileged to open the word of God with you all again. Before we open the Bible, let's pray together. The title of the sermon for today is "**Abundant Living: Go and Be Fruitful.**" Let's open our Bibles together. This morning we are going to look at the book of John chapter 15, verse 16. Let's read together on Powerpoint! "**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit-fruit that will last-and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.**"

Introduction: Brothers and sisters, I would like to tell you about an unforgettable event in my life. In 2015 on my graduation day, I received a best character award cup and gift from the Principal of Carey Baptist College. Actually I felt I was not a very good student, at least not any more (!), but I received the best character award which was based on my character, not my academic performance. At that time, I was so happy and felt so excited and so proud of myself. I couldn't express how happy I was. All of my friends and my family were really encouraged by my efforts in getting an award. Now I realise, that award was not through my own ability to get it. Actually, it was a gift from God, just by God's grace, not my work. Obviously, I was chosen by God for his glory. Is there a time in your life when you were chosen for something special? Maybe you were chosen for a team, or a scholarship, or you won a prize. Maybe it was getting Permanent Residency in NZ. Brother and sisters, did you know that you have also been chosen by God. God has chosen you to live an abundant life!

So, what does this whole Verse 16 of John chapter 15 mean for us today? This verse can mean a lot to us.... It answers these questions:

- **How have we been chosen?**
- **How do we go?**
- **How do we bear fruit?**

1. The first thing you might ask is how have we been chosen?

We can look back in the Old Testament to learn about the '**Chosen.**' God chose Abraham and Moses to become his friends or his family or his people. He also chose the people of Israel to become his people. So they were God's chosen people. Also, there were many other untold

names as well. Similarly, in the New Testament, Jesus chose twelve disciples to become his friends or his family or his people.

Jesus said here “**I chose you.**” Jesus chose the disciples as his friends or followers. So, that was not their choice or their decision. It was Jesus making the choice. Because Jesus was the Son of God and he had a divine authority to choose people to become the people of God. Therefore, the disciples were chosen by Jesus for his friends or his family or his community.

One of the very interesting things that Jesus has done is Jesus chose different kinds of people to become his disciples including fishermen, rich and poor, sinners, and tax collectors etc. Some of them were not considered proper Jews, because they lived amongst gentiles. Some of them were very sinners like a prostitute or like a leper. He did not choose just the perfect ones; he chose different kinds of people who were willing to accept Him as the Saviour Lord. However, today in the world, people are choosing the smartest one and the brightest one. We usually choose the best of the best! No one chooses the worst things or the bad things.

Do any of you watch American Idol or the X-Factor? People choose the best one or perfect one to go ahead, and only the best one can receive the prize or award. But our God is different, because he chooses us not for our good or our best. Not like American Idol or X-Factor. We don't have to do a competition and be selected the best or be the perfect one. God first loved us and chose us, Jesus died for us, and the Holy Spirit spoke to us. These all are just a gift from God, just God's present. So, we can receive the grace of God, the reward is not just for present, but for everlasting life. Even more, we can become his closest friend or his family or his people. For no other way or for no other reason, we can become Christians. God loves us, he chose us; so we could become a Christian. **John 3:16 says that “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** Even though we know nothing, he loves us so much, therefore he chooses us.

2. The second thing you might ask is how do we go?

Jesus said here “**I appointed you so that you might go.**” Brothers and sisters, how do you feel when someone chooses you to go somewhere you haven't been before? Or when

someone chooses you to do something you haven't done before? You don't know anything about where to go or what to do? What do you think brothers and sisters? For me I think it might be very surprising or it might be very disappointing or very exciting.....Here! Jesus used the phrase “**appointed you**” that refers to being ‘set apart’ for a particular ministry. Jesus set up a particular task for his disciples and he gave them the authority to preach the word of God. Another important word that Jesus means here is “**Go**”? The disciples were chosen and then ‘sent.’ They were going in the authority of God, not by themselves. They had been commissioned by Jesus.

Similarly, today brothers and sisters you and I are chosen by God. We are not just going. We are going in the authority of God. And so we don't have to be afraid and worry. Because Jesus has appointed us an ambassador, therefore, we are an ambassador of Christ. The Bible tells us **Jesus is the Son of God (John 5:25-27)**. He has divine power or authority to do everything. Jesus is more powerful than a Superman. He chooses us to go somewhere, we don't need to be afraid and scared; we just need to have faith in Him alone. And to follow his way of doing things: listen to his voices, follow his instruction and do whatever he says, that's all we need to do. He will protect us and bless us wherever we go or whatever we do. Check this video out – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRcNLlIbjU>

Let's me tell you my experience, when I first came to New Zealand, I did not know where I would go and what to do. I knew nothing about NZ before I came. In fact I had to depend on the people who were looking after me. I needed to follow their instruction and to listen to what they were saying. Otherwise I might not be here today and also I couldn't study theology when I really wanted to. However, I did listen to what they were saying and I was following their guidance, so today I have a happy life in New Zealand and I am now able study theology here in New Zealand. That is an example of following the people who give us a permission to go somewhere. Similarly, we know that we are chosen by God to live in this country. God sent us here for his glory. If we are not depending on Him, we will be lost in our own ways. **John 15:1-2 also says that Jesus is the true vine and his Father is the gardener.** We are his branches, so if we are in Him or with Him, we don't have to worry or afraid because Jesus is appointed us as an ambassador. So, wherever we go we just need to submit everything to Him even in difficult situations...He will protect us and guide us!

3. The third thing you might ask is how do we bear fruit?

We are the chosen of God, so we need to become a fruitful tree. We need to go everywhere, and to tell everyone the good news of Christ, even though we might face a difficult situation. For example, Mother Teresa is one the most well-known Christian leaders in the Christian history. She was a Roman Catholic sister and born in Albania on 27 August 1910. She went to India, worked for the Missionaries of Charity, and managed this organization with a full-time staff of 4,000 employees, in over 100 countries, as well as over one million volunteer team members. That was one the most successful mission brands in the world. She sacrificed herself for her whole life for the poor people to introduce them to the word of God. That's why today, there are many charities in the world. Many orphans and poor people have received God's grace, the blessings of God through Mother Teresa's work as I said before. Mother Teresa brought good fruit to these poor people. Today, brothers and sisters we can see Mother Teresa's fruit everywhere in the world. Mother Tresa loved them; she sacrificed for them, and brought good news to them. Today, if we are grateful for this work, we need to do the same thing as she did. We need to share our blessings with the other people around us. We need to bear fruit to the people who haven't met Jesus.

If we are not bearing fruit, we can become a barren tree. Here is one example of a barren tree. **Matthew 21:18-19 shows that "Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered."** Brothers and sisters, you and I are like this barren tree? Or Like a fruitless tree? We all know that Jesus doesn't want his followers to be like a barren tree with no fruit. Actually, he wants us to be a fruitful tree. Jesus himself is the true vine and we are the branches of Him, so if we are remaining in him, he will help us to become a good tree with fruitfulness.

If we are a fruitful tree, when someone is hungry or in need or needs help, they can come and eat our fruit, so they can enjoy it and can be satisfied. Today, we all are to live in this beautiful country. We all know we were chosen by God to come together to worship in this church. Some people have come to this church for 25 years, some are 10 years, some are 2 years, a few have just come here for a month. A few of us have come to this church for 1 time.

People who have come here for a long time.....have you ever helped people who have just come? Who are in need or have difficulties? If you have not, or if you have just enough to feed yourself that is not a fruitful tree's character. You might be like a barren tree. So brothers and sisters we should ask questions of ourselves; Am I a fruitful tree or a barren tree? I am sure we would find out who we are. Therefore, we need to remain in Christ then we can produce good fruit. Also, wherever we go or whatever we do, we do not have to worry, if we are in Christ, the Holy Spirit will protect us and bless us. This is also one other thing. The final part of this verse comes with a promise and a blessing. Jesus promises us **“whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.”** Isn't this great? When we pray, we need to ask in his name; and then we will receive whatever we ask.

Conclusion: Through this Scripture of John 15:16 –

Firstly, we understand that we are the chosen people of God (God's chosen people) and so we understand God's love and God's grace.

Secondly, we know that wherever we go, whatever we do, we need to keep near and remain in Christ alone even in difficult situations. If we listen to his voice and follow his instructions, he will protect us and guide us through the Holy Spirit to the end of our life. Christ has given us hope that is for everlasting life.

Finally, if we are not in Christ, we can't bear fruit and we will be like a barren tree. But if we are with Christ, or in Christ, or through his name, we all become like a fruitful tree and we can live in abundant life with God forever and ever...Amen.

Let's me conclude with reading this Scripture! **“That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither- whatever he does prospers” (Psalm 1:3, NIV).** May God Bless You all!

