

*Sermon: Connected*  
*Text: John 15:1-8*  
*Date: May 10, 2009 AM*  
*Place: Jesup First UMC*

All mama wanted for Christmas was a vacuum cleaner. So the entire family got together and bought one of those Rainbow Vacuums. You know the one with all those attachments? And boy, was mama happy. It arrived a few days before Christmas while she was trying to get the house ready for the family to arrive. So mama decided that she would use her new vacuum cleaner. So she plugged it up and turned it on and off she went. But something was terribly wrong. This brand new vacuum cleaner kept turning off and on, off and on every few seconds.

There had to be a short somewhere. So, she ran out to the garage and got her husband. She said: "Come and see; something's wrong with the vacuum." Well, he went inside sure enough, the vacuum cleaner kept turning on and off, on and off. So, he shook the cord, and he turned the vacuum cleaner upside down, and flipped the switch a few times, but nothing worked. It still kept turning off and on, off and on. So, he said: "Honey, I'm sorry; I think we'll have to send it back." And he went over to unplug it and that's when he discovered the problem. Mama had plugged the vacuum cleaner into the box that makes the lights blink on and off.

Sometimes I think we Christians are plugged into that box too! You see, it seems we're always blinking off and on, off and on. We're faithful for a while and then, we drop off the face of the earth. We keep out quiet time for a while and then, we forget how to read

the bible and pray. We get involved in a ministry for a while, and then we just want to sit on the pew for a while and do nothing. Off and on; Off and on.

Well, in our text this morning, Jesus is teaching His disciples in what we call “The Upper Room Discourse.” He said: *I am the vine; my Father is the gardener ...and you are the branches ... abide in me and you will bear fruit ... abide in me and you can do great things ... abide in me and you will see your greatest prayers answered.* In these verses, Jesus tells us the three results of being plugged in.

***First, if you’re plugged in to Jesus, you’ll bear fruit!*** Now, when the Bible talks about fruit, it’s talking about the godly characteristics produced in your life by the presence of the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is one of the measuring rods of a person’s salvation. Paul told the churches of Galatia: **“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”** Now, we treat these things as something we do rather than something the Holy Spirit does in us and through us. But John MacArthur said it best: *“Fruit-bearing is not a matter of being strong or weak, good or bad, brave or cowardly, cleaver or foolish, experienced or inexperienced ... Fruit is borne not by trying, but by abiding.”*

So, you see, when you are connected, when you’re plugged in to Jesus, your life produces fruit.

***Second, if you’re plugged in to Jesus, you’ll do great things for God.*** In verse 5, Jesus said: **“Apart from me, you can do nothing.”** This is another

kind of fruit the Bible talks about. You see, one of the results of abiding in Christ is good works. In fact, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believed that the only true measurement of Christian piety and maturity was good works. He believed that if the Holy Spirit was working in your life, then your life would produce fruit. You'd be more than a pew sitter; you'd be actively engaged in some form of meaningful ministry: feeding the poor, clothing the naked, giving a cup of water to the thirsty, and visiting the sick and imprisoned. After all, Jesus said: "*When you've done it to the least of these, you've done it unto me.*"

But we don't do these things on our own strength. We do good works in the power of the Holy Spirit. The angel said: "*With God, nothing will be impossible.*" Paul told the church at Philippi: "*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.*"

So, you see, when you are connected, when you're plugged in to Jesus, your life produces good works.

***Third, if you're plugged in to Jesus, your prayers are effectual.*** In verse 7 says: "*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you.*" Now, I'm not preaching a name-it, claim-it gospel this morning. I'm not saying, nor was Jesus saying, that all your prayers will be answered. If I'm up here praying for rain and you're out there praying for a clear sunny day, at least one of us isn't going to get what we ask for. But you know, prayer isn't really about getting things anyway. Prayer is about building a relationship

with God. It's about knowing the heart and mind of God so that my thoughts, words, and actions – yes, and even my prayers – are conformed to His likeness.

Proverbs 15:29 says: *“The Lord is far from the wicked but He hears the prayers of the righteous.”*

James 5:16 says: *“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”*

So, you see, when you are connected, when you're plugged in to Jesus, your prayers are effective.

Now, you may have heard about the man who was in a hurry to get to work one morning. Well, he came up to a stop light and there was a lady in the car in front of him who was going through some papers on the front seat instead of looking at the light. So, when the light turned green, she didn't move. Now, at first, the man was patient, but that didn't last long, especially when the light turned red again. All of a sudden, he went crazy; he started beating on the steering wheel, and honking the horn, and screaming four-letter words out the window.

And just about that time, a police car came up behind him and hit the lights and siren. The policeman came up and pulled the man out of the car and put him in the back of the patrol car. And all the while the man was screaming, *“You can't arrest me for yelling in my own car.”* Well, about 15 minutes went by and the policeman took the man out of the car and apologized for the misunderstanding. The man said: *“I knew you couldn't arrest me for yelling in my own car.”*

And the policeman said: *“Son, when I came up behind you and saw you screaming and beating your steering wheel, I thought, well that guys having a bad day. But then, I saw the cross hanging from your mirror and the fish symbol on the back of your car and I said, ‘Hey, this car must be stolen because a Christian wouldn’t act like that.’”*

You know what the problem is? It’s not that we’re non-Christians. I would hope and pray that every person here this morning has come to a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We’re Christians ... but somehow we’re unplugged. You know what I mean?

Sometimes the busyness of our lives and misplaced priorities get our lives so out of whack. And we’re like that vacuum cleaner that’s plugged in to the blinker box – off and on, and off and on. But Jesus calls to us this morning; He speaks to us through His word saying, “Abide in me ... make your home in me.” If you’ll plug into me, your life will produce an abundance of fruit. If you’ll plug into me, your life will produce good works. If you’ll plug into me, your prayer life will be different than ever before.

And that’s what worship is all about, you know? As you and I come into the presence of God, as we give ourselves to God in worship, we receive anew His grace; we plug in to the greatest source of power in the world ... the very power and presence of God.

Let us pray ...