

Speaking to the soul



Obedience

**[Jesus said,]“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.”
Matthew 12:35**

Jesus' teaching couldn't be clearer. Our words and actions flow from what's going on in our hearts. That means we all need to focus our attention on our hearts to ensure that there is a constant supply of goodness to feed through into

our everyday lives. Jesus' teaching to his disciples about the vine and the branches in John 15 makes clear how this happens. It all relies on a continual relationship of abiding in him.

Jesus said: "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Dipping into Christian faith from time to time is not what is in view here. Merely attending Christian worship services and meetings occasionally won't give us what we need. To receive the life of Christ we need to be fully part of the vine, opening our daily lives to the Holy Spirit. As we do so, the life of Christ naturally flows through into our words and actions, enabling us to be fully the people that we were created to be.

I am conscious that this will sound, to some people, like a straitjacket. Handing over your life to Christ and obeying him might sound restrictive and even stifling. How will your own personality and individuality find expression if you are only ever doing what Christ wants you to? The answer lies in his perfect knowledge of you and me, and his absolute love for us. When we are fully united to Christ's will we are then able to be everything that we were created to be. He will lead us to be more liberated and fulfilled than in any life we could ever find for ourselves.

QUESTION

How does obedience to Christ enable us to be fully alive?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for your challenging words.
Help me to ensure that my life is open to the wind of your
Spirit throughout today. Amen