Sermon: **Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you** (John 15.4)

Who likes a bargain? TEXT.

Sounds like a bargain being struck – if you stick with me, then I will in return stick with you.

But humans are not very good at keeping their side of such bargains – Israel continually failed, we are all selfish at times, and want to be independent.

NB there is no ‘if’ at the beginning of the text. It is best seen as a mutual indwelling.

So how do you remain united to Christ?

For a carrot you plant a seed, water it, leave it, and growth occurs, all happening naturally.

A branch does not choose to stop being united, it is cut off by another agency. God is the other agency.

Why would God want to (or need to) cut someone off? For when we are sinful, or disbelieving?

v4 (**you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me**) So what matters is being fruitful – what does that mean?

Some plants are all leaves and no fruit.

Is it about doing lots of good things? Danger is that all is done in our own strength and/or choosing.

For a plant to be fruitful is principally about allowing the sap to flow – ie the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is a conscious decision, and that is the part we play, our choice.

Fruit is also about the kind of person we are, not just what we do. It is not about being perfect – humans cannot be so, despite any spirituality courses or psychotherapy. (That is why we need pruning).   
v8 (**my Father’s glory is shown by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples**)

Bearing fruit leads to God’s glory, and us becoming disciples. That truly is a bargain!