

John Chapter 15

Through this extended metaphor of the vine and branches, Jesus has set forth the basis of Christian living.

Jesus used the imagery of agricultural life at the time, i.e., vines and vine crops.

In the Old Testament, the vine is used commonly as a symbol for Israel.

He specifically identified Himself as the “true vine” and the Father as the “vinedresser” or caretaker of the vine.

The vine has two types of branches:

1. Branches that bear fruit (verses 2, 8) and
2. Branches that do not (verses 2, 6).

The branches that bear fruit are genuine believers.

Though in immediate context the focus is upon the 11 faithful disciples, the imagery also encompasses all believers down through the ages.

The branches that do not bear fruit are those who profess to believe, but their lack of fruit indicates genuine salvation has never taken place and they have no life from the vine.

Especially in the immediate context, Judas was in view, but the imagery extends from him to all those who make a profession of faith in Christ but do not actually possess salvation.

The image of non-fruit bearing branches being burned pictures eschatological judgment and eternal rejection.

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

This is the last of the 7 claims to deity in the form of “I am” statements by Jesus that is in the gospel of John.

The vine throughout the Word of God is associated with God's people.

The followers of God are spoken of as God's vineyard (in Isaiah).

Isaiah 5:1 "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:"

We see here, that God the Father is spoken of as the true husbandman.

Just as Jesus is the tree of life; He also is the true vine.

The branches get their strength from the vine, not the other way around.

A branch which is broken off from the vine will die.

Those, who do not receive Jesus, are also headed for an eternal death and the lake of fire.

John 15:2 “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

The picture is of the vinedresser (i.e. the Father), getting rid of dead wood so that the living, fruit bearing branches may be sharply distinguished.

This is a picture of apostate Christians who never genuinely believed and will be taken away in judgment; the transforming life of Christ has never pulsated within them.

God removes all things in the believer's life that would hinder fruit bearing.

I.e. He chastises to cut away sin and hindrances that would drain spiritual life just as the farmer removes anything on the branches that keep them from bearing maximum fruit.

Just as a peach tree which bears no fruit is cut down and burned, that is what is done with branches on this vine that do not produce at all.

Just as a peach tree must be pruned to put out beautiful fruit, these branches here are pruned to make them grow better and stronger.

The best fruit comes from the new growth after the pruning.

You see, God cuts away the dead part of the branch, so that the new growth will produce even more fruit.

We workers for Jesus must not get self-satisfied and stagnant.

We must be growing all the time in the Lord to be productive.

Remember the best results are from new growth.

You will never stand still with God.

You will either be going forward or backward.

We are not dealing here with the loss of salvation, but with the bearing of fruit of true believers.

John 15:3 “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

We can read a little more about this in Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:26-27 "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Jesus is the Word.

The Word is what keeps us straightened out in our thinking.

When we feed upon the Word of God, we become powerful men and women of God.

Jesus speaks of the Word as being like a two edged sword, it is powerful.

The word "abide" means to remain or stay around.

The "remaining" is evidence that salvation has already taken place (see 1 John 2:19), and not vice versa.

The fruit or evidence of salvation is continuance in service to Him and in His teaching (8:31; Col. 1:23; 1 John 2:24).

The abiding believer is the only legitimate believer.

Abiding and believing actually are addressing the same issue of genuine salvation (Heb. 3:6-19).

John 15:4 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

Just as the strength of this branch comes from the vine, so does the strength of the Christians come from Jesus Christ.

We cannot grow, unless we stay with Jesus.

The sad thing in many Christians today is they do not stay in Jesus (the Word of God).

Most expect God to be there when there is a need in their life, but they do not feed upon the Word of God.

The nourishment comes from the branch.

Without that daily feeding upon the Word, the branch will die.

To do God's will, we must know God's will.

God's will in your life is found in His Word.

Daily Bible reading and study gives Christians good solid growth and makes us a strong branch.

John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

This is Jesus speaking here.

He is elaborating on the fact that He and His true followers are one.

He is showing the need of His followers to be continually in Him.

Abide means to dwell continually.

Jesus reminds us in this verse above, that the power to be fruit-bearers only exists as we draw our strength from Him.

To be broken away from the body of the vine (Jesus), we would be but a broken dead branch.

The power to be what God would have us to be lies within our relationship to Jesus Christ (who is the vine).

These disciples Jesus is speaking to, as well as we disciples of today, need to stay in contact with our source of existence and power (Jesus Christ).

John 15:6 "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

The imagery here is one of destruction.

It pictures the judgment awaiting all those who were never saved.

We see here people who are supposed to be Christians, and are in fact hypocrites.

This message in the last few verses has been to those who claim to be Christians.

They are branches and Jesus is the vine.

We see here, if a person strays from the Word of God (vine), they dry up and die.

Any storm of false doctrine, or most any trial, can cut them off from Jesus.

Just as dead branches from a vine are gathered and burned, dead members of the church (those who have separated themselves from God), will go the way of the unconverted world (to hell).

These are those once enlightened who walked away from God.

Read the parable of the sower (in Matthew 13:1-23), to better understand about those who were enlightened and then walked away.

These are those who were never saved even though they were enlightened.

In verses 7-10:

True believers obey the Lord's commands, submitting to His Word (14:21-23).

Because of their commitment to God's Word, they are devoted to His will, thus their prayers are fruitful (14:13-14).

Which puts God's glory on display as He answers.

John 15:7 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

As the "agent" of Jesus, the promise of answered prayer is based on the disciple acting as the agent of Jesus' will (16:23-26).

It is also linked (in 14:13-14), especially in the accomplishment of the "greater works."

The promise is for unlimited resources to do the works of God.

Jesus is saying here that those, who abide (dwell continually), in Him and store the Word of God in themselves, are pleasing God.

These are Jesus' followers who have completely lined up their will with His will.

Their prayers will be in the will of God, because they are stayed upon His Word.

They are full of His will, as well as His Word.

Their wishes are answered positively, because they line up with the will of God "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

In (Psalms 37), we read more about this

Psalms 37:4-5 "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

When I see the "word" plus and "trust", I think of it as abiding in Him.

Trust goes farther than faith.

Trust to me, means we rest contentedly knowing all is well between us and God.

John 15:8 “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Those who are strengthened by their relationship with Jesus Christ should have no problem being fruit bearers for the kingdom.

Jesus is not only our source of strength, but our example as well.

We (if we are Christians), should be an extension of His work.

We are the working arm of our leader, Jesus Christ.

Jesus works through us to bring more into the kingdom.

The Father is pleased in us when we carry out the wishes of His Son.

The amount of fruit we bear depends entirely on our dependence on the vine for our strength.

A disciple is a disciplined one who follows his master.

If we discipline ourselves and then follow Him doing His will and not our own, then we shall be His disciples.

John 15:9 “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.”

This is not emotional or mystical, but defined in verse 10 as obedience.

Jesus set the model by His perfect obedience to the Father, which we are to use as the pattern for our obedience to Him.

No greater love could man have, than to lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus did that for us.

He died, that we might live.

More than once the Father said “This is my beloved Son”.

When we make it to heaven and stand before Jesus, He will say to the Father and the angels of heaven, these are my beloved.

What a wonderful thought, He will not be ashamed of us, but will claim us for His very own.

John 15:10 “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.”

We read that obedience is better than sacrifice.

Jesus was obedient unto the death of the cross.

Jesus fulfilled the law.

We must obey His law of love.

Love God first and with all that is within you, and love your neighbor as yourself.

1 Samuel 15:22 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams."

If we do these few things, Jesus will be with us all the way.

We can rest in His love with no fear of tomorrow.

Our tomorrow will be in Him.

John 15:11 “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

Just as Jesus maintained that His obedience to the Father was the basis of His joy, so also the believers who are obedient to His commandments will experience the same joy.

We Christians are not like the people of the world who have no hope of tomorrow.

Jesus spoke these things to His disciples, that their sorrow over His death might then be turned into joy.

There should be no fear of death for a Christian.

Our hope and trust lies in Jesus who rose from the grave.

We should have joy forevermore, knowing that because He arose, we shall also rise to have everlasting peace and joy.

John Chapter 15 Questions

1. Who is the true vine in verse 1?

2. Who is the husbandman?
3. What is the vine associated with throughout the Bible?
4. In Isaiah 5:1, who are the vineyard of God?
5. What happens to branches which produce no fruit?
6. Why are the branches purged?
7. If we are not growing in Jesus, what is happening?
8. Verse 3 says, we are clean through what?
9. In Ephesians 5:26, we read that He might sanctify it how?
10. The branch cannot bear fruit unless it abide in the _____.
11. Jesus said He was the vine, we are the _____.
12. Without Jesus, we can do _____.
13. What happens to withered branches?
14. What kind of prayer availeth much?
15. If we bear _____, we are His _____.
16. How does Jesus love us?
17. What is the greatest show of love?
18. Jesus said, if ye keep my _____, ye shall abide in my love.
19. What does Jesus wish for His disciples in verse 11?
20. What is different in a Christian and a person of the world?