

The True Vine, Vinedresser, and His Branches

John 15

Outline

- 1-11 | Jesus - the True Vine, Father - the Vinedresser, and Disciples - the Branches
- 12-17 | Disciples are to love one another
- 18-25 | Disciples and the World
- 26-27 | The Spirit's Testimony from the Father about Jesus

Reflections

In this chapter, Jesus continues His Last Supper discourse giving His final instructions to His disciples before His arrest, trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection. In particular, Jesus gives His new commandment repeatedly, Love One Another. He introduced this in chapter 13 and then reemphasizes it in this chapter.

John 13:34-35 NASB "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:12 NASB "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

John 15:17 NASB "This I command you, that you love one another.

This falls in line with His teaching with regard to the two great commandments

1. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

The first section of the chapter deals with bearing fruit and abiding in Christ. Jesus warns that if a disciple does bear fruit, the Father, the vinedresser, will prune the branches so that it can bear more fruit and if it doesn't bear fruit, it will be cutoff and thrown into the fire. Jesus then talks about what it means to abide in Him—keeping His commandments. Additionally, God is glorified by our bearing much fruit and proving to be Jesus disciples.

So what does it mean to bear fruit, let alone, much fruit? The Believer's Bible Commentary offers these insights.

The branch that bears fruit is the Christian who is growing more like the Lord Jesus. Even such vines need to be pruned or cleansed. Just as a real vine must be cleaned from insects, mildew, and fungus, so a Christian must be cleansed from worldly things that cling to him. ... **The branch can only bear fruit as it abides in the vine.** The only way believers can bear the fruit of a Christ-like character is by living in touch with Christ moment by moment.

The cleansing process is facilitated by taking in the words of Christ and letting them "clean" the person from the inside out. Just as I wrote in the previous devotional for II Timothy 3, God's Word is good for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness. By devouring God's word on a regular basis we are able to nourish the soul and it thereby changes us from the inside out and making it possible to bear fruit in the world.

What kind of fruit should the Christian bear? The simplest answer can be found in Paul's letter to the Galatians. He makes a contrast of what is not fruit and what is fruit.

Galatians 5:19-25 NASB Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger,

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disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Peter offers a similar list in his second letter.

2 Peter 1:5-9 NASB Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

My word for you today is clear away the things that are hindering your growth and the growth of others around you and bear fruit by abiding in Christ, taking in His Word, keeping His commandments to love God and love others.

Lord God, our Vinedresser, I pray that You always find us fruitful and that we will understand Your pruning process and that we will produce much fruit in our lives and in the lives of others to Your Glory. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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