

The Gospel of John Pt. 23

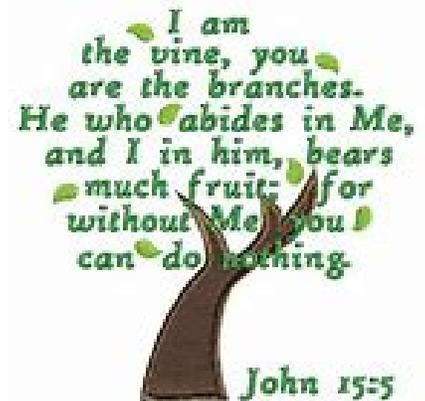
John 15:1-17

Big Idea

Jesus is the source for life for every believer. Our strength, vitality, and health come from our abiding relationship with Him.

Exposition – John 15:1-17

As Jesus and His disciples move from the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives, they pass near a vineyard. In typical Jesus fashion, He uses the opportunity to teach a vital truth about the vital connection Christians have with Him (vertical) and other believers (horizontal).



1. The Vine and Branches (V1-6)

- A. (V1-2) – Jesus gives the last of the seven “I Am” statements that are recorded in the Book of John. The Vine and Branches metaphor has four players, Jesus (The Vine), The Father (The Vinedresser), branches that do not bear much fruit (those that participated in religious activities, but were never born again), and finally, branches that bear much fruit (genuinely believers who are being sanctified)
 - 1. Observe that there are three verbs: bearing fruit; taking away; and pruning. The Father, as the Vinedresser, cultivates the vineyard. Whereas the believer is responsible for bearing fruit.
 - 2. The unproductive branches are taken away and burned. Clearly, they are removed for the purposes of allowing the productive branches to produce more and for judgment. See 15:6; Matt 7:16; Eph 2:10. Also, see the following on transformation: John 8:31-32; Matt 13:18-23; Heb 3:14-19; 1 Jn 2:19; 2 Jn 9)
- B. (V4-6) – *abide* – to stay or remain. It is important to understand this point – abiding or remaining is a characteristic of those who have truly received the regeneration that only Jesus offers, however, abiding is not a merit that gains us salvation. We abide because we are regenerated, rather than abiding so that we might be regenerated. This is made more clear when John says, *“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”* (1 John 2:19)

2. The Blessings of Abiding (V7-11)

- A. (V7) – Jesus makes a correlation between abiding and obeying. Although often overlooked or overcomplicated, obedience and remaining in the Christian life are necessary outcomes of each other. One necessitates the other.
- B. (V8) – Ultimately, God the Father is glorified by the abiding bond between the believer and the Christ that He sent to redeem man. This passage is loaded with logical processes. Here, it is presented as logic that by bearing much fruit we present evidence of being Jesus’ disciples.
- C. (V9) – Jesus moves from using a metaphor to using a simile. His love for us is AS the Father’s love for Him
- D. (V10) – The flow of V7 is reversed here. Obedience makes abiding possible, previously abiding made obedience possible.
- E. (V11) – With another simile Jesus proposes that joy flows from obedience. Interestingly, we often relate obedience to drudgery, but Jesus says the opposite. His yoke is easy and His burden is light... (Matthew 11:30)

3. Relationships with Other Disciples (V12-17)

- A. In this passage Jesus presents a number of characteristics of His disciples: Love (V12), sacrifice (V13), obedience (V14), friendship (V15).

- B.** Again, this passage is loaded with metaphor and simile.
- C.** Just as Abraham was a “friend of God” (2 Chr. 20:7), here believers are friends of Jesus if we obey Him. This is a paradigm shift for us, that our relationship with Jesus take on new dimensions when our relationship is one of abiding and obedience. It is most accurately characterized by friendship rather than servanthood. And, as His friends, He gives us access to the mysteries of His Kingdom.
- D.** (V16) – Jesus moves from the relational to the theological. He emphasizes the sovereign work of the Godhead in calling and commissioning of believers. This gives practical insight to the fact that His disciples have no room to become arrogant about their position with relationship to Jesus – He chose.
 - 1.** MacArthur notes that previously Jesus tells that He has given believers access to incredible spiritual access. Equipped with these tools, believers have all they need to bear much fruit.
 - 2.** “whatever you ask in My name He may give to you” – this is not a carte blanche offer to hedonism or prosperity. There is a sub-surface condition – “our requests of the Father must be offered in the name of Jesus, and therefore they must be consistent with Jesus’ character and wisdom.
- E.** (V17) – Jesus has given firm speech to the idea of obedience and living in accord with His design, but He goes a step further here. Love of other disciples is a command. See 1 John 4:11-12, 20-21 for more on this command and its expectation.