

6/1/25

The Vine and The Branches
Jn. 15:1-8

Our Lord had told His disciples that He was returning to the Father, and their response has been one of fear and a bit anxious.

1. In chapter thirteen Jesus revealed their relation to Him after the example of a servants.
2. In chapter fourteen Jesus revealed their comforts in relation to His return for them.

Now in chapter fifteen Jesus reveals their relationship to Him to bear fruit while in this hateful world.

* In Chapter sixteen Jesus will reveal their relation to Him through the Holy Spirit in persecution!

We want to look at the discourse of Jesus regarding the vine and the branches in relationship to bear fruit, which is expounded in three movements. Jn. 15:1-8

- I. The proclamation regarding fruit. vs. 1-2
- II. The interpretation regarding fruit. vs. 3-5
- III. The application regarding fruit. vs. 6-8

I. The proclamation regarding fruit. vs. 1-2

A. The occasion of the discourse of fruit bearing.

1. The proclamation took place after the Passover Supper in the upper room when Jesus said, "Arise, let us go from here." Jn. 14:31d-e

2. The discourse and prayer of chapter fifteen to seventeen took place somewhere between the upper room and the Kidron Valley. Jn. 18:1
3. The occasion is believed by some to have been prompted as Jesus saw the golden vine that adorned the bronze gate built by Herod, as they travelled through the Temple that was open day and night during Passover and the Feast of Unleaven Bread and was decorated with bright lights, others believe it was the vines on the slopes of the Kidron as they travelled through Ophel to Gathsemene.
4. The proclamation of the Vine by some has been said to be a parable, but it is not, it is an allegory.
 - a. A parable is an extended metaphor with one central truth, not everything is given a meaning in a Parable, and a Parable does one of two things, it compares or contrast and it has a punch-line.
 - b. There are no Parables in the gospel of John, remember the word *illustration* in the discourse of the Good Shepherd is not the word parable "parabole" but "paroimia" which means wayside saying literally, an allegory. Jn. 10:6
 - c. The word appears 5 times in the New Testament, 4 in John translated figurative language, figure of speech and proverb. Jn. 10:6; 16:25 (2x's), 29; 2Pet. 2:22

- d. The discourse of the True Vine is an allegory, like the Good Shepherd.
- d. An allegory is a prolonged metaphor or type with greater details than a parable as figurative language, as the two covenants of the law and grace by Paul, using the two sons of Abraham, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, Hagar and Sarah for the children of bondage and freedom. Gal. 4:21-31

* Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan is an allegory.

B. The source of fruit bearing. vs. 1

1. Jesus declared, "I am the true vine".

- a. The word true "alethinos" truthful, ideal, Genuine, opposed to the false or degenerate, literally the true vine.

- 1) He is said to be true light. Jn. 1:9
- 2) He is the true bread. Jn. 6:32
- 3) He is the true God. 1Thess. 1:9
- 4) He is holy and true. Rev. 3:7

- b. The vineyard was a symbol for Israel.

- 1) God did all He could have done, but Israel brought forth wild grapes. Is. 5:1-7
- 2) God called her a degenerated vine. Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Hos. 10:1
- 3) God was entreated to restore the vine of Israel He had planted. Ps. 80:8-19

* The olive and fig tree is symbolic of Israel also in Scripture. Joel 1:7, 12; Matt. 21:18; 24:32; Rom. 11:16-18

- c. The Lord Jesus expressed this also in the Parable of the wicked vinedressers, who were the Jews that would kill Jesus. Matt. 21:33

- 1) God sent servants, the prophets, to receive fruit and they beat them.
- 2) Last He sent His Son, they killed Him.

2. Jesus declared, "and My Father is the vinedresser." vs. 1b

- a. The word vinedresser "georgos" means a husbandman, the tiller of the soil, or a farmer to insure good fruit on the vine.

- 1) The word is used throughout the gospels sixteen times, once in John.
- 2) The last two in Timothy and James. 2Tim. 2:6; Ja. 5:7

- b. The work is joint venture of the Father and the Son.

- 1) The Father sent the Son.
- 2) The Son came to do the Father's work.

C. The care of the vine dresser is for fruit bearing. vs. 2

- 1. The care of the vine was not easy work and took a lot of time.

- a. The farmer would break up the fallow ground and remove all the stones in order to plant the vines.

- b. Then he would water it and tend to it constantly.
 - c. The first three years the vine was not allowed to fruit, but cut back each year in order for it to strengthen and develop it to produce good fruit.
* This was a familiar occupation of the day.
2. The first kind of branches mentined are those not bearing fruit, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away.” vs. 2a
- a. The branches are at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, “Every branch in Me”.
 - b. Do not miss what Jesus says, these branches are “in Me”, these are born again believers, to make them unbeliever or nominal Christians contradicting the words of Jesus!
 - c. These are not dead branches, but live branches attached to the Vine, “in Me” Jesus, but are fruitless.
 - d. The declaration of Jesus to His apostles is that every branch not bearing fruit “He takes away”.
1) The phrase takes away “airo”, depends on the context, it can mean either to lift up as the lame man took up his bed and walked. Jn. 5:8

- 2) The phrase can also mean in this context to take off or carry away from what it is attached to, it means to be removed from the Vine.
 - 3) The tense is the present active indicative, a timeless present.
 - 4) The fault is not of Jesus the vine true, but the branch “in Me”, like the Vine Israel. Is. 5
* These are the words of Jesus don’t explain them away or twist them!
3. The second kind of branches mentioned are those who do bear fruit, “and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit and much fruit.” vs. 2b-c
- a. These fruit bearing branches are pruned. vs. 2b
 - 1) The word pruned “katharos”, meaning to cleanse filth or impurities and used as a metaphor for cleansing from guilt of sin. Heb. 10:2
 - 2) The context implies a cleansing by cutting away useless shoots drawing away from the fruit bearing branches.
 - 3) The cutting back may seem drastic and even unwise, yet it will allow the vine to gain strength and produce a better quality and greater quantity of fruit.
* Cleansing us by the word of God. Jn. 15:3; Eph. 5:26-27; 1Jn. 1:9; 2:1

- b. The purpose of this pruning is that it “may bear more fruit”. vs. 2c
 - 1) This refers to every Christian virtue in the life of a believer, in thought, word, deed that we do in agape love depending on Jesus. vs. 2c
 - 2) The fruit is not limited to works or the salvation of sinners.
 - 2) Lenski the Greek Scholar says, “What this fruit in reality is, is plainly told in Scripture, “the fruit of the Spirit agape love. Gal. 5:22-23
 - 3)) Jesus gave them a new commandment, to love one another, by this all men would know they were His disciples. Jn. 13:34-35
 - 4)) Jesus will say, “abide in My love”, “these things I command you, that you love one another.” Jn. 15:9c, 17

This is the proclamation regarding fruit!

II. The interpretation regarding fruit. vs. 3-5

- A. The condition of the disciples for fruit bearing. vs. 3
 - 1. The eleven had been born again, “You are already clean.” vs. 3a
 - a. The eleven apostles were already clean “katharos”, means to be purged, free

from sin or guilt, justified before God by repenting and being saved.

- 1) The word is a different form of the same word “prune” in verse two.
- 2) In verse 2 it is used as a verb, here as an adjective.
- b. Jesus used the word in the upper room as He was going to wash his feet. Jn. 13:10
 - * The believer has provisions for ongoing cleansing to abide in fellowship with Jesus. 1Jn. 1:9; 2:1
- 2. The eleven were saved and cleansed through the gospel, “because of the word which I have spoken to you.” vs. 3b
 - a. The gospel message that calls all sinners to repent from their sins to be forgiven of their sins through Jesus. Eph. 5:26-27
 - b. The gospel message that sanctifies the believer capable and enabled to bear fruit through Jesus, the true vine, through pruning and the work of the Holy Spirit. Ps. 119:9, 11, 67, 71
 - c. The Father Who is the vinedresser had already worked on their hearts through the vine, Jesus the source of the Father!
- B. The abiding of the branch is absolute for bearing fruit. vs. 4
 - 1. The absolute essential, “Abide in Me, and I in you.” vs. 4a-b

- a. The word abide “meno”, means to tarry, not to depart, to continue and remain.
 - 1) The word appears 7 times between verse 4-8 and 12 times between verses 4-16, it is a key word, like the “fruit”.
 - 2) The abiding speaks of dwelling and walking obeying the words of Jesus!
- b. The word is an aorist active imperative command, to be constant and ongoing, once and for all!
 - 1) If abiding takes place **automatically**, there would be no need for Jesus to command the eleven to **obey**!
 - 2) The command is not an option, but a requirement to bear fruit.
 - 3) The bearing of fruit is a partnership of Jesus being the source, the vine and the believer the branch to abide attached to the vine to bear fruit.
- 2. The obvious explanation is by way of a “simile”, “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine.” vs. 4c-d
 - a. The branches have no potential to bear fruit in and of themselves.
 - b. The branches have no potential apart from their abiding in the vine.
 - c. Abiding is not a work for salvation, it is obedience of salvation!
 - d. The Jews were an agrarian society and very familiar with the imagery!

- 3. The personal application is transferred to the eleven apostles, “neither can you, unless you abide in Me”, the true vine. vs. 4de-f
 - a. They had no potential to bear any fruit for God apart from the vine, Jesus.
 - b. The possibility of not abiding is stated by Jesus, “unless you abide in Me”, Jesus is speaking directly to the eleven apostles.
 - c. This is not hypothetical, do not explain away this absolute condition by the words of Jesus or spiritualize them.
 - d. If there is no possibility or potential of not abiding, why would Jesus indicate it so and state it clearly?
 - * Let me repeat, the word abide appears 7 times between verse 4-8 and 12 times between verses 4-16, it is a key word, like the “fruit”.
 - e. The eleven had to abide in the vine to bear fruit and so every believer!
- C. The abiding of the branches guarantees fruit bearing. vs. 5
 - 1. Jesus identified Himself again as the source of the fruit, “I am the vine”. vs. 5a
 - a. There is no other vine or source of fruit bearing for God. Jn. 15:1a
 - b. There is no other way to the Father apart from Jesus, Who can claim this. Jn. 14:6
 - c. There is no other name that the Father honors or mediator. Acts 4:12; 1Tim 2:5

2. Jesus identified the disciples and apostles, “you are the branches.” vs. 5b
 - a. The ones that had confessed Him as their Messiah and trusted Him as their Savior.
 - b. They are the ones who Jesus will use to manifest Himself to the world.
 - c. They are the ones who will manifest a Christ-like life on earth for all to see.
3. The consistent abiding union of a believer brings certain results, “He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. vs. 5c-e
 - a. The person who “abides in Me”, Christ, the tense is the present active, and “I in him”. vs. 5c-d
 - * We don’t have to worry about Jesus not abiding, it is us who are prone to wonder and stray away!
 - b. The person who “abides in Me”, “bears much fruit.” vs. 5e
 - * The word fruit appears 6 times between verses 2-8, note of the progressive stages, fruit, more fruit, much fruit.
 - b. The person who attempts to bear fruit without Christ can do nothing.

This is the interpretation regarding fruit!

III. The application regarding fruit. vs. 6-8

- A. The consequences of not abiding in Christ, the vine. vs. 6
 1. Jesus made the application of the allegory to all believers, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered.” vs. 6a-b
 - a. Jesus said if any person “in Me”, means one born again, if he does not abide they are cast out as a branch. vs. 6a-b
 - 1) The word abide is the present tense, continues to remain in Jesus.
 - 2) The reality of the warning is to any and all believers, not unbelievers, the warning is that not all will abide.
 - 3) The individual abiding is warned about the potential of not abiding, and as a branch is separated from the vine and removed, so will he or she.
 - 4) Jesus did not say if a branch does not bear fruit, but “does not abide in Me”, so much for all Prodigal son sermons of eternal security, the Prodigal was not born again when he left, he was born again in the pigpen.
 - 5) Jesus clearly indicates the possibility of some who are “in Him” might not “abide”, simple.
 - 6) The late Pastor Chuck Smith was not a Calvinist, nor did he agree with the teaching of Calvinism. Anyone who says he was, is lying, listen to his

- 2000 or 3000 through the Bible commentary or read his Distinctives of Calvary Chapel, he believe a believer can walk away, depart!
- b. Jesus said the result of being cast out is that the branch withered.
- 1) The word cast out “ballo” means to throw or let go of a thing.
 - 2) The word withered “xeraino”, means to dry up and have no life in itself.
 - a) The word is used for the seed that had no root and withered in the Parable of the Sower. Matt. 13:6
 - b) The word is use for the man with the withered hand, which Jesus healed. Mk. 3:3
 - 2) Take note the branch was not cast out because it was withered on the vine, Jesus said it became withered after He cast it out or away and detached from the vine, no longer being connected to the vine.
 - 3) The reference is certainly to Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus.
2. Jesus gave the eternal consequences for those who do not abide in Christ, “and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” vs. 6c-d
- a. The individuals as branches “them plural” cast out and then wither are dealt with by God, described in three ways.

- 1) The individuals cast or cut off as branches then withered, gathered, and thrown into the fire and burned.

* Lenski the Greek scholar says, “Here we find them (the two aorist tenses cast out and withered) combined with three **timeless present tenses**, all five expressing actions that invariably follow upon a supposed future case, a man’s failure to remain in Jesus.”
- 2) The first two words gather and throw, are in the present active indicative and the third word burned is a present passive indicative, all three are timeless presents. Lenski
 - a) The common knowledge and practice of the day of vineyards must be the plain sense of the meaning!

* Wesley use to say that the most obvious sense is usually the common sense and the best sense, and should be accepted lest it be made to say nonsense.
 - b) The fire in this context means God's judgment, separation from God.

* First the only thing branches of a vine are good for is to bear fruit, they cannot be used to build anything, second to burn, but are consumed quickly not having much substance!

- c) John the Baptist told the Pharisees if they did not bear any fruit worthy of repentance, it was a tree without good fruit and would be cut down and cast into the fire. Matt. 3:7-10
 - d) The constant warning of the New Testament is of be cast into Gehenna that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Rev. 21:8
- 3) Remember this is not a parable teaching one central truth, but an allegory and Jesus is giving meaning to all the details as absolute truth.
- a) Yes, the central message is to be fruitful in the Christian life.
 - b) But Jesus is also warning strongly His disciples about the potential of not abiding, otherwise the warning would be useless and false, having no possibility nor application!
 - c) The obvious observation is that those that are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned were attached to the vine, no unbeliever is “attached” nor “abiding” “in Me”, Christ. But dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. 2:1-2
 * Nothing is said that they only appeared to be attached!
 - d) We know that God is not the author of confusion, and that

Scripture interprets Scripture, the doctrine of predestination is scriptural as well as that of free will, yet they are irreconcilable in the mind of man, but not to God or the Scriptures. Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-5; 1Pet. 1-2

* The doctrine of Predestination of Calvinism or Reform theology makes God unjust, I reject it!

- e) The clear warning of continuing in the faith are too obvious to miss and should not be ignored. Acts 11:33; 14:22; Rom. 11:22-23; Col. 1:23; 1Tim 3:14; 4:1; Heb. 8:9; 2Pet. 2:20-21
- 4) Some will say, “You are teaching salvation by works, no, I am saved by grace through faith and that not of myself, it is a gift of God.” Eph. 2:8-9
- a) What I do in obedience is evidence of my salvation and love for Jesus through my commitment and faithfulness, as in a marriage relationship, my motive for my works will be judged at the Bema Seat of Christ. 1Cor. 3:11-15
 - b) We know some are never born again, but Jesus is addressing the believer. 2Tim. 3:5-7; 1Jn. 2:19

- c) The warning to not be deceived in the New Testament is to believers, not unbeliever, they are deceived already. Matt. 24:4; 1Cor. 6:9; 15:13; Gal. 6:7; Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:4; 2Thess. 2:3
- d) What do you do with the entire book of Hebrews that has the strongest warnings about departing from the living God. Heb. 3:12; 10:26-31
- e. Peter says, “For if, after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” 2Pet. 2:20-22

- B. The consequences of abiding in Christ, the vine, has the benefit of prayer. vs. 7
 - 1. The meaning of abiding in Christ is two fold. vs. 7a-b
 - a. First, the personal relationship of the 11 disciples, “If you abide in Me”. vs 7a
 - 1) The word abide stated twice is the aorist active, to remain permanently.
 - 2) The phrase speaks of dependency for life and trust for everything, a daily walk with Him.
 - * Paul tells us in Ephesians that the phrase “in Christ” is the key to the believer’s position and intimate relationship for God to work in him and through him.
 - b. Second, the personal study and obey His word by the 11 disciples, “and My words abide in you.” vs 7b
 - 1) The words of Jesus are at home with the person and not something strange or uncommon.
 - 2) The words of Jesus are transforming the person from day to day.
 - 3) The words of Jesus are instructing a person to do the will of God, not their own.
 - * “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.” Jn. 8:31

2. The person will be able to ask and receive from God, “you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” vs. 7c-d
 - a. The promise must be seen in it’s context.
 - 1) The one who is abiding in Jesus, the vine, a disciple of Jesus, but is addressed to the eleven disciples.
 - 2) The one who is denying himself.
 - 3) The one who is picking up their cross and following Jesus.
 - 4) The one who is doing this will, will be asking in the name of Jesus accord with the will of God, not their own selfish desires. Jn. 14:14; 1Jn. 5:14-15
 - b. The promise is that it will be done for him or her.
 - 1) God cannot lie.
 - 2) God uses prayer to align us with His will; it is not to get our own will done or our own desires.
 - 3) God always answers prayer because prayer is initiated by God that we may lift it to Him, in order that He answer, like Moses when he interceded for Israel. Ex. 32:32

C. The consequences of abiding and bearing much fruit through prayer. vs. 8

1. The proclamation, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.” vs. 8a-b

- a. The Father’s glorified was the will of Jesus constantly. vs. 8a
 - 1) He is the vinedresser working hand in hand with the vine to cultivate and care for the fruit harvest.
 - 2) He is the one who Jesus came to glorify, not Himself. Jn. 17:4
- b. The particular, that you bear much fruit.
 - 1) The present tense is durative, keep on bearing fruit, a timeless present as in verse 6.
 - 2) He is glorified in fruit in the believer’s life.
 - 3) The fruit is not only soul winning.
 - 4) The fruit is not only works.
 - 5) The fruit is not only giving of money.
 - 6) The fruit is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, growing, developing and maturing spiritually. Gal. 5:22; 2Pet. 1:5-11
2. The confirmation, “so you will be My disciples.” vs. 8c
 - a. The evidence of disciples is a present continuous agape love relation, “so you will be My disciples”. vs. 8c
 - b. Agape love is the same as the Father for the Son and the Son for us and us for each other. Jn. 15:9-10
 - c. Agape love is the distinguishing mark of the believer. Jn. 13:34-35

This is the application regarding fruit!

Illustration

“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of the sinners, Nor sits in the sear of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law, he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither, And whatever he does shall prosper.” Ps. 1:1-3

Conclusion

These are the three movements in the discourse of Jesus regarding the true vine the branches.

- I. The proclamation regarding fruit were the words of Jesus!
- II. The interpretation regarding fruit were the words of Jesus!
- III. The application regarding fruit were the words of Jesus!

Abide in Christ