

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of July 19

Introduction

On the eve of Jesus' suffering, he spent time with his disciples whom he loved deeply, and charged them to remain in his love. Imagine as Jesus looks into the eyes of each disciple and says: "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more" (John 15:1-2), the racing thoughts in their minds. These men had already experienced a 'pruning' as they had left behind houses, businesses, family, lines of work they had previously known, *and* fellow followers, as some of their own had left.

Background

Though the disciples could not see what was ahead – Jesus betrayed and arrested, his death, his body sealed in a tomb, the third day being raised, seeing him, hearing him, eating with him, being present at his ascension – their minds would be open once they experienced the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. On this eve, as Jesus said *remain in me* their obedience was essential. As you read carefully John, chapter fifteen, ask the Holy Spirit to help you hear Jesus' words. This passage is full of imagery. Hear the intimate yet urgent tone in the Lord's voice. Ask the Lord to help you understand what *remaining in the vine* means in context of this setting with the disciples, and also for you.

Read John 15:1-8

Jesus is the true vine. Yet notice Jesus said: "My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more" (Jn 15:1-2). God (the gardener) is the One who prunes.

- How is it with your soul? Are you a healthy branch? Are you producing fruit? Perhaps there are areas in your life that need pruning? Every day we choose: will I align with the things of this world, or will I submit to the Father and ask him to keep me 'grafted' into his Son, the true vine?
- What is God's cleansing agent, according to v3?
- Overtime, aligning with this sinful world may result in diseased fruit or the inability to bear fruit at all. Certainly, a useless branch is detrimental to the overall health of the grapevine. What does diseased fruit look like? What results from diseased fruit?

No one cares more for the overall fruitfulness of the vineyard than the Father, the gardener. And the Father loved the world so much, he sent a true vine so we don't have to perish but may remain connected to his great love and care. The gardener is patient, desiring each branch to be fruitful. Hear his words through the prophet Isaiah—

"In that day, sing about the fruitful vineyard. I, the LORD, will watch over it, watering it carefully. Day and night I will watch so no one can harm it. My anger will be gone. If I find briars and thorns growing, I will attack them; I will burn them up—unless they turn to me for help. Let them make peace with me; yes, let them make peace with me" (Isaiah 27:2-5).

Notice the benefits of turning to the Lord in the passage above from Isaiah! Name the benefits aloud. The prophet says: "The time is coming when Jacob's descendants will take root. Israel will bud and blossom and fill the whole earth with fruit!" (Isaiah 27:6).

- God wants all to be at peace with him. Knowing his Son Jesus, the true vine, is the way to have peace with God, for Jesus completes all that the Father, the gardener, began. Throughout the Gospel of John, we've heard Jesus say *I will fulfill all that the Father requires of me; I have come to do his will; I've come to finish the work of the One who sent me*; in other words, I have been sent to save you and I will see this thing through. Trust me! What brings the Father great joy, according to Jn 15:8?
- If Christ perfectly fulfills all that the Father requires, then does it not make sense to trust him and remain in him? What results from being grafted into the vine (the source of life) and remaining in the vine?

Jesus tells us in John 4:36 "The harvesters are paid good wages, and the **fruit** they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!

Read John 15:9-17

Jesus says if we don't remain in him, we will be thrown away like a useless branch (v6). There may be times we may treat one other as though some of us are useless. This is not our place to decide. Remember, the gardener is the One who prunes.

From these verses (Jn 15:9-17), jot down at least five imperatives in the space below.

When we trust in Jesus and remain in his love, he removes the disease of sin from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). We are no longer his enemies, but his friends. No longer orphans, but beloved children, as though

our names are written on a giant family tree in a cherished family Bible. We must humbly remember, our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life not because we deserve it, but *only* because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, selflessly giving up his life on our behalf, in obedience to his Father.

Read John 15:18-27

In these verses Jesus tells his disciples they will face persecution. As a Christ-follower, you may experience some people turning away from you or scorning you for your faith. When the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, began to teach and preach more fervently upon his conversion experience, he was scorned. The university where he had been a fellow forbade him from speaking. Clergy in the upper ranks of the established Church of England prohibited him from preaching in many of the parishes. John Wesley, who saw the world as his parish, began to preach in the open air. Thousands of persons who had never heard the Gospel wept as Brother Wesley told them God loved them. Men, women, young people, children – individuals who were unwelcome in the more affluent churches, accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, asked him into their hearts and professed faith in Christ. Thus, the Wesley Societies were formed to connect the many people coming to faith in Christ with other brothers and sisters in the faith.

In time, a committed society member had the idea of dividing the growing societies into small groups of twelve people, unfolded into what would become the "Class Meeting." The Wesley Class Meetings became the pillars of early Methodism, as the goal of keeping every person connected, loved, and accountable worked! Men and women – regardless of gender, status or wealth – were strengthened (like branches on a grapevine!) to carry out their part in the fiery movement that promised to spread across England and the New World. The goal? ... to help people *remain* in Jesus, the true vine.

Close in a Time of Prayer

Pray for Life Groups to grow and multiply at Christ Church, as one of our goals for Vision 2:28 is 100 Life Groups by 2028.

One Year Bible Reading

July 19: 1 Chronicles 28:1-29:30, Romans 5:6-21, Psalm 15:1-5, Proverbs 19:18-19

July 20: 2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17, Romans 6:1-23, Psalm 16:1-11, Proverbs 19:20-21

July 21: 2 Chronicles 4:1-6:11, Romans 7:1-13, Psalm 17:1-15, Proverbs 19:22-23

July 22: 2 Chronicles 6:12-8:10, Romans 7:14-8:8, Psalm 18:1-15, Prov. 19:24-25

July 23: 2 Chronicles 8:11-10:19, Romans 8:9-25, Psalm 18:16-36, Proverbs 19:26

July 24: 2 Chronicles 11:1-13:22, Romans 8:26-39, Psalm 18:37-50, Prov. 19:27-29

July 25: 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14, Romans 9:1-24, Psalm 19:1-14, Proverbs 20:1



Text: John 15

PLAIN TRUTH:

I choose to reject _____
Christianity in _____ for
_____ in Christ daily filling me with
_____ and _____.

1. Jesus is the true _____.
2. Jesus removes our _____ spirit and by
_____, has _____ us into the
_____.
3. Those who _____ in Christ are rooted in
_____ and bear _____.

July 19, 2026