

Parting Words
The Green Thumb of Jesus
John 15.1-17
Small Group Discussion

Intro Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- How do you feel about gardening? Multiple choice:
 - A) It is my passion and I am successful at it. If so, what are you looking forward to growing this year?
 - B) I dabble in it but I have a great deal to learn. If so, what is your greatest gardening challenge?
 - C) I like to eat things that come from gardens, and that's the extent of my knowledge. What fresh produce do you enjoy most?
- In today's passage, Jesus works with a gardening metaphor.

Pray: Invite the Holy Spirit to be present and to guide your study and discussion of God's word.

Read John 15:1-17, then discuss the following.

- What major themes do you see in this passage? You may want to make a list! Take some time with this part of the discussion.
 - Methodically look at each theme in the passage. What does Jesus say about each one?
 - How does each theme relate to the others?
 - Do you think that there is one theme that holds all the others together? Why or why not?
 - Leaders, I (Pastor Josh) see the following four themes: bearing fruit, remaining in Jesus, keeping his commands, and loving one another as he has loved us. As I explained on Sunday, I believe that they are all connected in that Jesus says in v. 11, this is how we will experience his joy: *Love as he has loved you. That's the practical way you remain in him, such that you are able to bear fruit, and have great joy.* That being said, I'd like for your groups to wrestle through these themes and try to see the connections for themselves.
- What are some ways that you have experienced God pruning you? What fruit has it borne?
 - Are you in the midst of any pruning presently? How can we support you?
- What are some examples of fruit that Jesus has produced in your life, or in someone else's life through you? How has this experience brought you joy?
- Do you envision Jesus as the epitome of joy? Why or why not?
- How does the practice of loving one another enable us to remain in Jesus?
 - To what degree is our small group enabling you to do this? How could it improve?

- Twice in this passage (v. 7 and v. 16), Jesus says that we may ask whatever we wish, in his name, and he will do it. What do you think he means? How is this statement related to the concepts of remaining in him and bearing fruit?
- Why does Jesus claim, in v. 1, to be the “True Vine?” What is the significance of this claim?
 - How does this claim take on more meaning in light of what Jesus says in v. 13?
- How do you sense Jesus speaking to you most through this passage and discussion? Do you receive any encouragement? Any correction? Inspiration? Other?
 - How can we help one another to follow up on how this passage is speaking to us?

PRAYER:

- If you haven’t already shared about other particular needs in your life, be sure to do that, and pray for one another.
- Pray in response to what God has revealed to you in this discussion of his word.