

“Who is Jesus?”: The Vine
John 15:1-11

Introduction:

- After His comforting work in the upper room, they move on, BUT they don't move on from His teaching. Christ continues.
- Where this teaching occurs geographically is uncertain.
- We have to approach this passage with expectancy, simplicity and caution. The attempt will be to be overly rigid in interpreting the metaphor or over-extending the metaphor. DON'T MISS THE POINT!
- THE MAIN POINT of this image is that the disciple is completely and utterly dependent on Christ and must persevere to the end.
- In a sense, verses 9-16 act as a commentary on verses 1-8. I'll be out of town next week, Stephen Martin, our college pastor will be preaching. In that way, then, Stephen and I will be presenting essentially 2 parts of a single message as he'll deal with verses 12-17 next week. I'm going to give you the core message related to abiding in the vine. Stephen will be giving you the further expression of that abiding by speaking to the intimate love that is between Christ and His disciples (including those of us who are followers of Christ today)
- Begin with **verse 11...to verse 5.**
- The audience is the 11 disciples (soon to be apostles). Given the context of chps.13 & 14, this does not appear to be as much about salvation as bearing fruit as a follower of Christ (Pink).
- To understand this, we must understand the most used words: Vine and Abide.

The Vine (v.1)

- A) The Source: The Vine
- a. Agrarian society
 - b. In Context
 - i. Psalm 80:7-8,14-17
 - ii. **Isa. 5:7**, “7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but

behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!”

- iii. Herod's Temple
- iv. Last “I Am” statement given

B) The Vinedresser: The Farmer / Gardner

- a. Ruler / Owner of all
- b. Lots of possible implications
- c. Keep it simple
 - i. Owner of the sheep
 - ii. Owner of the field
 - iii. Cultivator of the harvest
 - 1. **Matthew 9:38**, “*therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*”
 - 2. **1 Cor. 3:6-7**, “*6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.*”

The Branches (vv.2-11)

A) The Branches (v.2a)

B) Unfruitful Branches removed (v.2b)

- a. 2 Probable Interpretations
 - i. Professing believers proven to be unbelievers
 - ii. Believers who become ineffective and are removed
 - iii. BOTH would fit within the MAIN POINT
- b. **John 2:23-25**, “*23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*”
- c. **John 10:27-30**, “*27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.*”

- i. A Lesson in hermeneutics
- ii. What do we know that is clear?
- iii. What is the greater point?
- d. Christ doesn't need to see the fruit to know truth
- e. Sober examination from professors in Christ
- f. Gal. 6:6-10
- g. **2 Peter 1:8**, *"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

C) Fruitful Branches pruned (**v.2c-5**)

- a. Not justification, sanctification
- b. Cleansed (catharsis)
 - i. Flow from vine to branch is unhindered (i.e. heart-cath)
 - ii. Through the Word of Christ
- c. Dependence (remembering who you are and who you are not – the gospel)
 - i. If you bear fruit, it is Christ in you
 - ii. This is why it would be so vile to take the credit for yourself
 - iii. The main point of this metaphor is that the true branches are completely dependent upon Christ – for His glory (v.5)
 - iv. **2 Peter 1:9**, *"For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins."*

D) Perseverance and Preservation of Branches (**vv.6-8**)

- a. Spoken to those "in" Him
- b. What does it mean to be "thrown away"?
 - i. Losing salvation
 - ii. That these are branch "posers"
 - iii. The works of the believers (**Rev.2-3**)
- c. Abiding is a decision and so is "not" abiding
- d. Persevering is dependent on the Word of God
 - i. Prayer according to the will of God
 - ii. **2 Peter 1:10**, "Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall."
 - iii. **Psalms 37:4**, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

E) Purpose of the Branches (**vv.8-11**)

- a. Glorify God
- b. By Bearing Fruit – proof
 - i. An Act of Love – Putting the perfect love of the Son with the Father on display
 - ii. An Act of Obedience – Make your choice
 - iii. John 14:15,21
- c. For Lasting Joy

Conclusion

A) **Are you bearing fruit? Abide.**

B) **Abiding**

- a. Daily interaction
- b. Ongoing fellowship
- c. In the Word
- d. In Prayer
- e. In Love
- f. In Joy

C) **Time of Prayer** (v.7)

- a. John 14:12-14,26
- b. God, cleanse us that we would abide in you increasingly.
- c. God, graft more branches into yourself this day.
- d. For Joy in Him