

## REMAIN IN ME

John 15:1-17

Key Verse: 5

### 1. Read verses 1-3. Who is the vine?

According to Verse 1, Jesus is the true Vine. He used this metaphor as he passed through a vineyard on the way to the Mount of Olives. He is the source of all life and the source of focus in our lives.

#### What is the relationship between the vine and its branches? (Jn 1:3)

John 1:3

“<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

The branch is nothing without the vine. The same thing when we remain in Jesus we can live. The vine is the source for the branch. Jesus is the source for our life and it is imperative to believe in him. It is important to know the where our life comes from.

#### Who is the gardener and what does he do to make the vine more fruitful?

Verse 2, “<sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> so that it will be even more fruitful.” The gardener cuts off unhealthy branches so that good branches can grow more. He also prunes dead branches so new ones can grow. The gardener maintains the tree so that it can produce fruit not just to survive. God does this because he is carrying out his will for us to produce good fruit.

#### What does it mean to cut and prune?

In the context of gardening, to cut and prune means to reduce and cut back dead branches and extra unproductive or underproducing branches. They are cut off to allow good branches bearing fruit to flourish. Sometimes you cut off a branch or trim them back so that they may grow more fruit and to increase the yield of a fruit tree. It means to care for the tree as well. Concern over it. For our lives as believers sometimes God prunes some non-essential things so that we may bear fruit.

#### What should be our attitude toward this?

Ultimately cutting the branches and pruning is a good thing because it produces fruit, which is the ultimate goal. Sometimes pruning seems painful or unnecessary, but the gardener is doing this in our life so that we may produce fruit. We should accept God's pruning as God's sovereignty and accept it.

### **What does verse 3 mean?**

Verse 3 is an extension to John 13, "Wash one another's feet." Jesus says to his disciples that they are clean because of the words he has spoken. Meaning that by accepting Jesus' words the disciples had their sins forgiven. It is also a promise to the disciples that they will never be cut off from Jesus because they have accepted Jesus' words.

### **2. Read verses 4-5. What does this teach about the relationship between Jesus and his disciples (us)?**

We must remain in Jesus. Without Jesus we are nothing. When we remain in him we can be more than ok, we can produce good fruit. Apart from him we can do nothing. Our relationship is vital. Jesus uses the phrase, "Remain in me," four times.

### **What is the gardener's purpose in caring for the vine?**

To produce fruit, to produce glory for God.

### **What is Jesus' command and promise?**

If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

### **Why is fruit-bearing so important? (8, Ge 1:28; Mt 7:16; Jn 15:16)**

John 14:8

<sup>8</sup>This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

The Father's purpose for our lives.

Genesis 1:28

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

This was the purpose we were designed for from the beginning. Not the same for animals - this helps us find meaning in our existence.

Matthew 7:16

<sup>16</sup>By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

Our nature is to receive God's grace and then share it with others so that we can be recognized as Christians by what we do. Jesus will see fruit and see it through us.

John 15:16

<sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit— fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

God called us to this, we did not decide this method. God's purpose is that he chose us to bear fruit.

### **What is the fruit God wants?**

Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

To have an inner life change effected by the Spirit. To obey Jesus and love one another.

### **3. Read verses 6-8. Why is it essential that the branches remain in the vine?**

Otherwise they are picked up and thrown into the fire. There is no where apart from Jesus. Either in him or dead.

### **What happens to branches that become disconnected from the vine?**

They can do nothing apart from the vine. Those branches are then gathered up and thrown into the fire. A life separated from God.

### **How can we remain in Jesus the vine? (7; Col 2:6,7, Phil 3:10-11)**

Pray to Jesus and ask Jesus for his will to be done in our life. Then we can remain in Jesus because we know his will and that we talk to him and we listen to him. If his words remain in our hearts then we can remain in Jesus.

Col 2:6-7

<sup>6</sup>So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Being thankful to God for what he has done is a good way to remain in him. Jesus' words must take seep root in our hearts.

Phil 3:10-11

<sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

To share in his sufferings we can follow him and then remain in him if we suffer for him, like he suffered for us.

### **How can we glorify God?**

To show ourselves to be Jesus' disciples. Disciples obey Jesus' commands and love each other and they remain in Jesus. Remaining means allowing Jesus' commands to take root in your heart and change your inner heart.

#### **4. Read verses 9-11. How does Jesus reflect the Father's love?**

As the Father has loved his Son completely and without abandon, Jesus has loved us with the same abandon.

### **How can we remain in Jesus' love? (9,10,17)**

To obey Jesus' commands to love one another. In this case love is obedience.

### **What is Jesus' example?**

Just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

### **What does Jesus say about joy?**

Jesus tells us this so that his joy, which is knowing the love of the Father, may be in us and reassure us. When we obey Jesus we have complete joy in our life. Usually obedience implies weakness, especially here in America, but in Jesus, obedience brings joy.

### **How can we be full of joy?**

When we obey and the presence of Jesus is in us. When we sacrifice and the Spirit comes into us. Then we are full of joy knowing that we are carrying out our designed purpose.

#### **5. Read verses 12-15. What is Jesus' repeated command?**

Love each other as I have loved you. Here then we see a church that does not love one another and fellow believers is kind of a strange church.

### **How has he shown his love to us?**

<sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. The ultimate sacrifice is to lay down your life.

Jesus gave his life in our places, there is no greater love.

### **How can sinners be Jesus' friends?**

<sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command. If sinners repent and do what Jesus' commands then they can be his friend.

### **What does it mean to be Jesus' friend?**

<sup>15</sup>I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. We are more than just servants and slaves blindly following, but we are friends of Jesus who know his business.

### **What can we learn from Jesus who made friends with all kinds of sinners?**

We must learn Jesus' sacrificial spirit and how through this sacrificial spirit he could relate to all sinners.

### **How can we imitate him?**

We must learn from him. We must take the Bible and Jesus' teachings into our practical life and they should not be separated. In this context also being friend of Jesus is a great privilege.

### **Read verses 16-17. What does it mean to you and me that God chose us rather than our choosing him?**

It shows his sovereignty. It shows that God is in control not fickle man kind to make a decision. We should not be self-righteous, not proud, we also cannot "unpick" God.

### **Why does God choose people?**

Because the people he chose were appointed to bear much fruit (16) and give glory to God.

### **Why should this one-sided grace of God not make anyone proud? (See 2 Sa 7:18,19)**

No one earned it. It all came by the grace of God.

<sup>18</sup> Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:

"Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? <sup>19</sup> And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD ?