

Jesus is the True Vine

John 15:1-17

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Introduction:

1. The context of the words spoken by Jesus on this occasion come immediately after he and the eleven apostles rise from the table (John 14:31). Judas was no longer with them since he had already departed in order to carry out his betrayal (John 13:30).
2. The mood was not one of celebration but rather that of sorrow and perhaps even confusion on the part of the apostles in view of the Lord's impending death and departure. Jesus is obviously concerned and uses this occasion to console and encourage the sorrowing disciples.
3. At the beginning of our text Jesus used yet another allegory to not only present the truth about who he is, but also to confirm his right given by God the Father to both command and expect compliance to those commands. He has earned it (Heb. 5:8-9).
 - a. Jesus proclaimed, "I am the true vine." Literally, Jesus is the real and genuine vine, pure and uncorrupted, perfect in fruit-bearing.
 - b. The fact that Jesus is the **true** vine implies that there are false ones. Notice the similarities in Matthew 7:15-20.
 - c. With equal importance Jesus says, "my Father is the husbandman." He is not a mere laborer hired to dress the vineyard, but rather he is the owner – one whose interest in his possession would clearly indicate a much greater concern.

Discussion:

I. We must bear fruit (John 15:2-8)

- A. What is the fruit we must bear and what fruit are we bearing?
 1. 2 Peter 1:5-8
 2. James 3:17-18
 3. Galatians 5:22-23
- B. We must be "in Christ" in order to bear fruit (v. 4-7).
 1. Just as the life of the branch is completely dependent on its connection with the vine, so are our spiritual lives wholly dependent on our continued connection with him who is the source of all life.
 2. No matter how much opposition from the world there remains only one way into Christ. (Gal. 3:27; I Cor. 12:13) – baptism!
 3. The branches are individual Christians – not different churches or denominations!
- C. God expects us to bear **much** fruit (v. 2, 5, 8)
 1. No such thing as a mediocre Christian. God rewards those who diligently seek him (I-Heb. 11:6). The blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt 5:6).
 2. In life we have terms such as liberal, moderate and conservative to effectively communicate to each other where a person stands on the continuum of political discussion. We employ similar language concerning the spiritual realm. With God, according to the figure of speech Jesus used here in John 15 with reference to his disciples, you are either a fruit bearing branch or you will be cut off and destroyed.
- D. Consequences for not bearing fruit (v. 2, 6)
 1. 2 Thes. 1:7-9
 2. Romans 2:6-9

3. Rev. 14:10

II. Blessings and responsibilities (John 15:9-11)

- A. Jesus qualifies his love for the disciples with the greatest method of measure possible – the Father’s love for the Son (Matt. 17:5).
- B. Frequently overlooked here is the command to “continue ye in my love: (v.9).
 - 1. Some mistakenly apply this to the love Jesus has for us.
 - 2. The command is that we must continue to love him, because love is the condition of abiding in him as a “branch.”
 - 3. If we cease to love him we cease to abide in him and thus cease to bear fruit.
- C. How do we abide in his love? By keeping his commandments (v.10).
 - 1. Through the ages men have debated over what our responsibilities are to God.
 - 2. Jesus forever settles that once again by giving us the measuring device by which we must gauge the height, depth, length and breadth of our obedience – **Himself** (Psalm 40:7-8; Phil. 2:5-8).
 - 3. To abide in his love we must not cease our pursuit of spiritual perfection.
- D. By continuing in Christ’s love and keeping his commandments we not only abide in his love but we receive the magnificent blessing of joy reserved only for those in Christ (v. 11).
 - 1. Unfortunately, some are under the impression that Christianity requires of its members that their disposition be sad and gloomy and their lives devoid of pleasure.
 - 2. This, of course, is a very false concept (Psalm 19:8; I Peter 1:8; I Thes. 5:16; Luke 10:20).

III. The example, blessing, and command of love (John 15:12-17)

- A. Once again Jesus is set forth as the supreme example of how we should understand and practice love (v. 12-13).
 - 1. If the greatest expression of love is to lay down ones life for his friends, what does that say for the love Christ has for us since he gave his life for us while we were his enemy (Rom. 5:6-8)?
 - 2. Compare I Cor. 13:6 and Matt. 23:13-33.
- B. The blessing of friendship (v. 14).
 - 1. Notice that this friendship is conditional, “if ye do the things which I command you.”
 - 2. It is vain to profess to love Jesus or to be his friend while refusing to do what he has said (Luke 6:46).
 - 3. Friendship with God puts one in pretty good company (James 2:23).
 - 4. Since our service to Christ is motivated by genuine love we are not called servants. Instead, we are called friends who have knowledge of their master’s interests and mission.
- C. Finally, loving one another, with Jesus providing the model by which we measure our love, is commanded (v. 12,17).
 - 1. Love for one another is the badge of discipleship (John 13:34-35).
 - 2. When the Lord was asked, “which is the great commandment in the law?” notice his response in Matt. 22:37-40.

Conclusion:

- 1. If we are to love one another as God commands we need to understand what love is (I Cor. 13:1-7).