

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN SESSION 17

Review: Last week we went through chapter 14 which records Jesus comforting His disciples before His death, assuring them that He is going to prepare a place for them in the Father's house and that He is the way, the truth, and the life. He teaches that knowing Him means knowing the Father, promises that those who love Him will keep His commandments, and assures them that the Holy Spirit—the Advocate—will come to teach, guide, and remind them of His words. Jesus also gives His followers peace that is different from the world's peace, encouraging them not to be troubled or afraid as He prepares them for His departure.

Every word of chapter 15 is spoken by Jesus. They have left the upper room, and they are walking through the city to the garden of Gethsemane.

John 15:1-3 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

- **Christ is the true vine** – meaning he is the root, the life source. It's a metaphor emphasizing a vital spiritual connection.
- **The Father is the husbandman** – meaning he is the farmer. It describes someone who cultivates crops, cares for vineyards, and manages agricultural land.
- **Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away** – God removes spiritually unfruitful branches (those connected to Jesus outwardly but bearing no fruit). This verse refers to false professors. Just like a vineyard, there can be dead branches that appear to be connected to the main body but are not. A husbandman will remove those branches because they will never produce fruit, giving room and resources to living branches that will.
- **Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit** – After a season of fruit bearing, in the off season, the husbandman goes through the vineyard and prunes (cuts off) excess foliage, tendrils, and “suckers”. If left unchecked, these drain the vine's energy and cause poor-quality fruit. The husbandman cuts these away so the plant directs all its energy into high-quality fruit production.
- **The pruning process** – is not meant as a punishment for the believer. Instead, it's preparation for greater effectiveness. It's a sign that the husbandman sees potential in the branch and is preparing it for an abundant harvest. Because pruning literally

means cutting off a living part of the branch, it can be painful, challenging or a confusing experience in person's life. This might manifest as the shifting of relationships, the closing of doors, or seasons of trial. However, the husbandman is never closer to the branch than during this time.

- **Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you** – this means that through his teachings and truth, they were already spiritually purified and set apart by God, making them spiritually ready to bear fruit because of their faith.

John 15:4-7 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

- **Abide in me, and I in you** – the word “abide” means to dwell in or to stay continuously. It signifies maintaining an intimate, unbroken fellowship rather than having a temporary or superficial connection.
- **The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine** – A branch bears fruit because of its connection. Sever the connection and it is impossible to bear fruit. The fruit of the Spirit recorded in Galatians 5:22-23 is produced by the Spirit in the life of the believer through their abiding in Christ. A saved person that doesn't abide in Christ won't have the fruit of the Spirit produced in them.
- **The cast forth branch** – A saved person that doesn't abide in Christ will dry up spiritually. When a branch is cast forth it dies instantly and dries up eventually. This is referring to FUNCTIONAL DEATH not loss of salvation. **Romans 8:6-7** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. *Not everyone that is saved is spiritually minded, they are functionally dead (bear no fruit)*
- **Cast into the fire and burned** – this teaches that there is judgment for believers who never become fruitful. A saved person's life can go into destruction or even physical death because of their refusal to repent and grow. **Hebrews 10:30-31** For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. **Hebrews 12:29** For our God is a consuming fire.
- **The promise of abiding** – ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. When believers maintain a close, continuous relationship with Christ and let his

teachings shape their thinking, their desires will align with God's will. Consequently, God will grant the requests they bring to Him.

John 15:8-11 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

- **The Father glorified through bearing fruit** – A believer's spiritual growth manifested through loving character, good works, and obedience brings honor to God and provides visible evidence that they are true believers.
- **Continue in Christ's love** – He loves us the same way that the Father loves him. Remaining in this love means actively resting in that unconditional acceptance and aligning your life with his teachings through obedience.
- **He is where the joy is** – lasting joy doesn't come from favorable life circumstances or material possessions, but from an active loving relationship with him. Obedience is not a joyless chore, but a loving response that unlocks his joy. The word "full" means to be complete or overflowing.

John 15:12-17 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

- **His commandment** – That we love one another as he has loved us. This means unconditionally and sacrificially.
- **Greatest love lays down life for friends** – It means putting the needs of others before your own.
- **The transition in relationships** – From this point going forward, you are now my friends and no longer just servants because you know the Father's plans. In the ancient world, a master did not explain the reasons behind his actions to his servants.
- **Friendship with Christ is conditional** – Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you. Friendship and love are not synonymous. The love of Christ is

unconditional, but a friendship requires obedience. True friendship requires mutual loyalty.

- **Purpose and calling come directly from God** – In the ancient world, disciples typically sought out or chose their own rabbis. Jesus flipped this dynamic. He reminds his followers that their salvation, calling, and purpose are entirely a result of divine grace, rather than human effort.
- **Fruit that remains** – The promise of fruit that remains signifies that the spiritual impact of a life connected with Christ will have eternal, lasting value rather than temporary worldly success.

John 15:18-21 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

- **Why the world hates Christ and his followers** – the “world” is the satanic system on the earth that wants God left out. This world is under the influence of the kingdom of darkness and Christ came to reestablish the kingdom of God on earth. So, if you are saved and submit to the kingdom of God, the world hates you because of its little “g” god.
- **The servant is not greater than his lord** – How others have treated Christ will be how they treat his followers. If they persecuted him, they will you. If they kept his sayings, they will keep yours.

John 15:22-25 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

- **No cloak for their sin** – Jesus clarifies that if he had not come to teach and perform unprecedented miracles, the people might have an excuse to claim ignorance for their sin. However, because they clearly witnessed his works and heard his words, their rejection of him exposes that their unbelief and rebellion against God.
- **If you hate the Son, you hate the Father** – The Father and Son are so unified that it is impossible to love one and despise the other. The Jews repeatedly claimed God for their Father but vehemently hated the Son. Jesus told them that this was proof positive that they did not know his Father.

- **Hated without a cause** – This is a quote from the 69th Psalm and shows that Christ was hated despite his perfect life and works of love.

John 15:26-27 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. *Again the conversation turns to the coming Comforter (Holy Spirit) which shall testify of Christ meaning that he will reveal the truths of Christ's identity and work directly to the hearts of people. The Holy Spirit relates what Christ says directly to us. To "bear witness" means provide evidence or serve as proof that something is true. Witnessing means seeing an event, bearing witness means actively demonstrating that truth.*

Tonight's application: Abiding in Christ to bear fruit. To abide in Christ means maintaining a continuous, vital connection with Jesus. Just as a branch draws life from a vine, it is the daily practice of trusting, resting, and obeying. It shifts your focus from striving to do good, to simply remaining in his love.

- **Immersing yourself in scripture** – regularly reading, meditating and memorizing scripture so that the Bible shapes your daily thoughts and actions
- **Communing through prayer** – leaning on Jesus as a constant companion throughout your day, pouring out your struggles, and listening to his guidance
- **Obeying his commands** – choosing to act out of love for him whether it is stepping away from habitual sin or actively showing kindness and grace to others
- **Relying on his grace** – Acknowledging that apart from him, you can do nothing of eternal value, and asking for his strength into your daily work and relationships
- **Activity and intimacy aren't the same things** – Martha was cooking a meal for Jesus and was near him, but Mary sat down at his feet with her full attention turned to his face and heard his words. Jesus said that she chose the good part that would never be taken away from her. It's good for us to look over our spiritual lives and judge whether we have intimacy with Christ or just activity.