

JOHN 15

THE TRUE VINE & THE GARDENER

In John 15, Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine to instruct His disciples that they must remain in Him if they are to bear fruit. If not, they would be like a branch that withers, and is then burned. Jesus also reminds them that the world hated Him, and they shouldn't expect anything less. Their ministry won't be easy, but Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to help them. -JT

1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2** He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. **3** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **4** Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **7** If you

remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** 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. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. **19** If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. **20** Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’[b] If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. **21** They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know

the one who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. **24** If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. **25** But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’[c]

26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. **27** And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

a. John 15:2 The Greek for he prunes also means he cleans.

b. John 15:20 John 13:16

c. John 15:25 Psalms 35:19; 69:4

Study Notes BlueLetterBible.org Commentary

I am the true vine: This was a familiar symbol. God repeatedly used a vine as a symbol of His people in the Hebrew Scriptures (one example is Psalm 80:8-9). Yet it was often used in a negative sense (as in Isaiah 5:1-2, 7 and Jeremiah 2:21). Just in the previous week Jesus publicly taught about Israel being like a vineyard in the Parable of the Vineyard (Matthew 21:33-44).

Jesus spoke this to His disciples, probably as they stood in the upper room and prepared to leave. He used the picture of the vine because there were grapevines everywhere in ancient Israel. Also, there was a large golden vine set as a prominent decoration on the front of the temple communicating the idea that Israel was God’s vine. As well, “The vine was a recognized symbol also of the Messiah.” (Dods)

The New Covenant participant has relationship with both the **Father** and the Son; with both the **vine** itself and the **vinedresser**.

Every branch that bears fruit He prunes: This word for **prunes** is the same word translated cleanse in other places. The same word could apply to either “pruning” or “cleansing” in ancient Greek. The vinedresser cleans up the fruit-bearing vine so it will bear more fruit.

Abide in Me, and I in You: Jesus emphasized a mutual relationship. It isn’t only that the disciple abides in the Master; the Master also abides in the disciple. Something of this close relationship is described in Song of Solomon 6:3: I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine. Jesus used this picture to assure His disciples of continued connection and relationship even though He was about to depart from them. Yet He spoke this in a way that also indicated an aspect of **choice** on their part. Abiding was something they must choose.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine: It is impossible for the branch to bear grapes if it isn’t connected to the vine. The disciple can’t do true good for God and His kingdom if they do not consciously connect with and abide in Jesus.

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full: When the disciple fails to abide in the love of Jesus and thereby fails to keep His commandments, that disciple will not experience the fullness of joy Jesus promised to those who do abide in His love and obedience.

“No one is more miserable than the Christian who for a time hedges in his obedience. He does not love sin enough to enjoy its pleasures, and does not love Christ enough to relish holiness. He perceives that his rebellion is iniquitous, but obedience seems distasteful. He does not feel at home any longer in the world, but his memory of his past associations and the tantalizing lyrics of his old music prevent him from singing with the saints. He is a man most to be pitied; and he cannot forever remain ambivalent.” (Carson)

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends: Jesus described the measure and quality of His love for them, to use as a pattern for the

“It is not without significance that the disciples are to be known by their **love**, the world by its **hatred**.”

- MORRIS

way they should love each other. His love is complete and of surpassing greatness, laying down its **life**.

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you: They were friends because they were obedient (though not perfectly so). Friendship with Jesus can’t be disconnected from obedience to His commands. “It must be active obedience, notice that. ‘Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.’ Some think it is quite sufficient if they avoid what he forbids. Abstinence from evil is a great part of righteousness, but it is not enough for friendship.” (Spurgeon)

If the world hates you: Jesus told the disciples that the world would often hate them. As wonderful as Jesus was and His message was, they should expect to be rejected when Jesus departed, just as much as they were often opposed while Jesus was with them. “It is not without significance that the disciples are to be known by their love, the world by its hatred.” (Morris)

When Jesus spoke to Saul of Tarsus on the Road to Damascus, He asked Saul: *Why do you persecute Me?* (Acts 9:4) “The Lord who was personally persecuted on earth continued to be persecuted, even in his exultation, in the person of his persecuted followers.” (Bruce)

When the Helper comes: Jesus previously spoke of the sending of the Helper (John 14:16, 14:26). The departing Jesus knew the disciples would need the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit to face the opposition the world would bring.

He will testify of Me: Jesus had told them that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would continue the teaching work of Jesus (John 14:26). Here He explained that the Helper would speak of and about Jesus. Everything the Holy Spirit does is consistent with the testimony of the nature of Jesus. His job is to tell us, and to show us, who Jesus is. If spiritual things happen that are not consistent with the nature of Jesus, it isn’t the Holy Spirit doing it. He is the One who will **testify of** Jesus in all that He does.

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JOHN 15

#47

I HAVE CHOSEN YOU OUT OF THE WORLD

THAT IS WHY THE WORLD HATES YOU

JOHN 15:19

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