

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 15

We are continuing our verse by verse study through the Gospel of John

And we find ourselves in the portion of John's gospel where he focuses on the Upperroom discourse – where Jesus pours into His disciples, hours before He was to be arrested and nailed to the cross.

Now, one of the things that I told you guys last week is that in chapters 15-17, they are pretty deep.

Because everything that Jesus has taught them in the Upper Room

About loving Him and walking in obedience to Him – Jesus is going to demonstrate that in His own relationship with God the Father.

So we are going to be looking at some pretty heavy stuff

In fact, if you have a bible in your lap that has red lettering – you will notice that all of ch 15 is in red – meaning that these are all His words.

So, in our text this morning, Jesus is going to use the perfect illustration to teach His disciples and us on the essential relationship between God the Father and Himself and the essential relationship between Jesus and His disciples (including us).

Let's pray...

I'm going to go ahead and read our text –

We are actually doing three verses today – very deep verses.

[Jhn 15:1-3 NKJV] 1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Now, before we look at Jesus' illustration of the vine and the branches—let's set the scene.

Remember, we have to keep everything in context,

The evening began in John 13 in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem where Jesus and the twelve Apostles/disciples observed the Passover together.

During the meal Judas Iscariot left to carry out his betrayal of Jesus.

After Judas left the room Jesus instituted communion and then began to give His disciples one final teaching before His crucifixion to comfort and prepare them for what was coming the next day.

At the end of the chapter 14,

Jesus said to the eleven remaining disciples—"Arise, let us go from here" (verse 31).

Where were they going to go?

Garden of Gethsemane – the place where Judas was going to betray Jesus

On the way to the garden, they had to go through the streets of Jerusalem and pass through the Eastern Gate –

This gate leads to the Mt of Olives and ultimately the Garden of Gethsemane – which is located on that mount.

There is a full moon in the sky

And as they are passing vineyards and olive trees – Jesus makes the announcement –

“I am the true vine

I am – this is the 7th “I am” statement that Jesus makes in John’s gospel.

And as I mentioned the previous six times - Whenever Jesus made an “I am” statement in which He claimed attributes of deity; He was identifying Himself as God.

So Jesus uses the illustration of a vine to teach His disciples (and us) about what does it mean to have a relationship with God.

A connection with God.

And Jesus chooses the vine for two reasons –

1. Physical

2. Spiritual

The physical reason – the grape vine was something they were very familiar with – in fact, it was moments earlier when they partook of communion (wine) –

However, the spiritual reason is the important one here.

You see, in the Old Testament, guess who is referred to as God's vineyard?

The nation of Israel –

So the disciples – being good Jews – they would have known exactly what Jesus meant.

So when they would hear Jesus speak of the vine, they would connect it with the reality of God viewing Israel as His vine.

[Isa 5:7 NKJV] 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry [for help].

[Jer 2:21 NKJV] 21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?

[Psa 80:8 NKJV] 8 You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it.

And there are others –

Israel as His vine

God put Israel on the earth, to bear much fruit.

To bring forth Messiah, the Savior of the World

To spread the gospel to both the Jew and the Gentile

God's desire was that the gentile nations would look at the tribes of Israel and see God's grace and mercy upon them.

They were to be connected to God and ruled by God

And the result would be fruit

But unfortunately, as we study the history – as we did when we looked at 2 Kings – we find out that they were fruitless.

They became idolaters and turned their backs on God

So here, Jesus tells His disciples – I am the true vine

I had you make a note of the word true – because the meaning behind the Greek word is “real or authentic.”

In contrast to the nation of Israel – that was fruitless, rebellious and empty, Jesus says,

“I am the true vine”

“I am the real vine, the One to trust in”

The Jews for the most part were putting their trust in their heritage, they were putting their trust in their religious system – that is why there was no fruit.

Jesus is saying -

Your relationship must be through Me because I am the true vine

Coming to Calvary Santa Cruz every Sunday isn't going to get you to heaven

Being nice to people isn't going to get you to heaven

Being related to the pastor isn't going to get you to heaven

The only thing that is going to get you to heaven is to trust in the true vine

To trust in the true, authentic, real person of Jesus Christ who came to live for us and die for us.

Again, Jesus is trying to get His disciples to think in terms of the eternal –

He knows what their hearts are troubled, He knows that things are only going to get worse for them as they see Him arrested, beaten and crucified

That is why He promised them at the beginning of ch 14 -

[Jhn 14:2-4 NKJV] 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I

am, [there] you may be also. 4 "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Jesus wants His disciples to not put their trust in their heritage or their religion.

He wants them to stay connected to Him / the True Vine.

It is from Him where they will draw strength

It is from Him where they will find hope.

He alone is the source of life, nourishment, fruitfulness and fulfilment.

Let's look at the second part of verse 1 –

and My Father is the vinedresser

If you have a NLT – the word is translated “gardener”

So Jesus is saying that He is the true vine and that God the Father is the Gardener –

Jesus is saying that God the Father is the One that takes care of Him

He is the one that tends the vine and cultivates the vineyard

In next week's study, we are going to see Jesus give the command, “Abide in Me”

So what Jesus is telling His disciples and us is – You abide in Me and the Father takes care of us.

You abide in Me and because you are connected to Me, the Father takes care of us.

For some of us.....these are encouraging words

But for many in the world today – these are very difficult words.

Why? Because we live in a society that says, “I can take care of anything on my own”

We live in a self-sufficient society

How many times have you heard someone say,

I don't need church

I don't need God

I don't need you

These are very hard words –

God is telling us, we need to be taken care of

He is telling us that our relationship will flourish as we abide in the vine, Jesus Christ, and the Father takes care of us.

This doctrine of abiding is even hard for some in the church

Why?

Many people tend to live out their relationship with God by simply following a list of rules and regulations and not abiding to the vine, Jesus Christ.

As parents, one of the things that we do with our children is to teach them to be self sufficient.

We do this from a very young age -

A perfect example – we teach them to tie their own shoes.

And some of used the bunny ear method to teach them and some of used songs to teach them.

And I am pretty sure there were times when you wanted to tie their shoes because you were in a hurry – and your child would want to do it on their own – even if it took 30 minutes/shoe

“Let me help you son, let me help you daughter we’re going to be late for church – no dad, I want to do it”

But eventually they learned how to tie their own shoes.

They become more and more independent and they learned to rely less and less on their parents.

However, it is not so with our Heavenly Father

We will always need Him in our lives

Again, the place of great fruit in our lives is abiding in the vine and the Father taking care of us.

That little boy, that little girl struggling to tie their own shoes – that is the life of the believer.

Our difficulties, our worry, our anxiety – our heavenly Father comes to us – son/daughter, let Me tie your shoes

And how do we respond – I got this

son/daughter, let Me tie your shoes

I got this -

Until we come to the point of surrender and say, OK God, You got this.

[Jhn 15:2 NKJV] 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every [branch] that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Jesus makes the point that there are two types of branches in His illustration

He is the vine – God the Father is the vinedresser – and who do you think is the branches?

We are

There are two types of branches - the branches that produce fruit and there are the branches that do not produce fruit.

Now, unfortunately – there are many people that take this verse out of context and will use it as an argument about whether or not a believer can lose their salvation – **this is not what Jesus is talking about here.**

When Jesus said they bear no fruit –

He used a verb tense which means the consistent pattern of their lives is fruitlessness.

They never have beared fruit,

don't bear fruit now,

and they never will bear fruit

Jesus is dealing with the issue of those who are fakers from the start.

They make an appearance as believers, but they have never been born again

Remember, God knows their nature –

He knows they never will bear fruit – that's why He removes them / He cuts them off and carries them away

Why does He cut them off - so the branches that truly abide in Him can produce more fruit.

When we moved to our Sahaurita house – one of the first trees that I planted in the backyard was a peach tree

And I noticed that there were years were it produced much fruit

However, there were years that I began to see these sucker branches that would come out of the base of the tree – and it often appeared that they came out of nowhere – they grew fast

and one of the things that these sucker branches would do was suck the nutrients and water that was supposed to go to fruit bearing branches – so if I didn't cut them off - no peaches.

Unfortunately – I am not a good vinedresser as the tree eventually died.

However, Jesus is promising to us that our vinedresser will take good care of those of us that are abiding in Him.

He is removing those sucker branches from our lives – little by little so that we may bear more fruit.

It is a process – it takes time

And as we abide in the vine and we allow the vinedresser to cultivate us – we will bear fruit.

Church -

The bible says that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith

Paul reminds us

[Phi 1:6 NKJV] 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete [it] until the day of Jesus Christ;

That is the promise we have some God

Now, look at what Jesus says happens to the branches that do produce fruit.

They are pruned

Why are they pruned? So they can bear more fruit.

Now, for the believer, this pruning comes in many different ways

It could come through discipline, it could come through training

Much in the same way that we prune our kids through discipline and training.

It is important to understand that pruning is not punishment

So if we currently find ourselves under the pruning shears of God – we need to understand that He is doing it so that we may bear more fruit and not less.

God is doing a work in the life of the believer – nothing is wasted by God

He uses the pruning to train us and chasten us – He is not mad at us, He is not punishing us, He has not left us, He has not forsaken us

But He is also not wasting anything so that we may be pruned back.

Growing up, we lived in a house that had dozens of rose bushes – and I remember that my dad used to prune them all after Christmas

Was he mad at them? No – He was pruning them so the following year, they will produce more roses.

That is the promise that Jesus is making to His disciples and to us.

[Jhn 15:3 NKJV] 3 "You are **already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**

Verse three is connected to verse two.

Jesus is speaking directly to His disciples

And notice that He says, "You are already clean"

I had you make a note "already clean"

And the reason is that the Greek word that Jesus uses here and the Greek word that Jesus used for prunes in verse two – both of the words are derived from the same Greek root.

In fact, the word for prunes can also be translated as "cleanse"

How does Jesus cleanse us, how does He encourage us, how does He prune us – He uses His Word.

Don't forget you the context again –

The disciples here are a mess

They are full of anxiety and worry

They are full of uncertainty and concern

They are worried about the future

They are still a little confused about what Jesus is saying to them

However, one of the concerns that the eleven remaining disciples had – Jesus addresses here –

He is telling them -

I am giving you my word – I've entrusted my word to you – “you are already to clean”

Now – turn to the left a few pages back to ch 13

We are going back a few hours in time

Jesus was in the process of washing the disciples' stinky dirty feet and Peter says – no way am I letting You wash my feet.

And Jesus responds - “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

And Peter then says “Give me a bath then”

But look at what Jesus said

[Jhn 13:10 NKJV] 10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash [his] feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

There is our initial cleansing – our salvation – when we are washed by His blood

But then there is a continual cleansing that takes place

And for the believer – that happens through His Word.

It condemns sin; it inspires holiness; it promotes growth.

As Jesus applied the words God gave him to the lives of the disciples, they underwent a pruning process that removed evil from them and conditioned them for further service.

Jot this verse down – it is our memory verse

[Eph 5:25-26 NKJV] 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

Apostle Paul, he commands us as husbands to wash our wives with the water of the word.

It is a command

And so much pain and difficulty in marriages exist today because husbands have failed to follow this instruction.

We have all been guilty of not washing our wives with the water of the world.

That includes being the spiritual leader in the house, that includes making sure that we are in fellowship with one another, that includes answering their questions and sharing and encouraging our wives with the Word.

Jesus gave us the example to follow – as He washes the church with the water of His word, therefore, we must follow what He did with our wives.

For those that are single – this doesn't relieve you and me from washing ourselves with the water of the world.

We need to have our minds washed regularly – there is a lot of filth out there in the world.

Not just sinful things – because those are easy to spot.

There is a filth that defiles us – so we need cleansing

There is filth out there that distracts us from the work that we have been called to do

A filth that causes us to forget that we are called to abide in Him, that we are called to be fruitful

So we need to be washed by the water of His word – this will result in more fruit.

Turn with me to Psalm 119

[Psa 119:9-16 NKJV] 9 BETH. How can a young man (old woman,man) cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. 10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. 12 Blessed [are] You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. 13 With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth. 14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As [much as] in all riches. 15 I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. 16 I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

We have His promise church

He has given us His Word –

Let's cleanse ourselves with it.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

My Father takes care of Me, and when we abide in Him, the Father is taking care of me too.

CALVARY
Santa Cruz

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

