

Jesus Teaches About the Vine and the Branches

John 15:1-17

Earlier Jesus had given an invitation to come to him and to believe in him. Now, Jesus is speaking to those who have already come to Him, and so his charge is that they remain in him. Our own “life” is now to be seen as an intimate union with Jesus.

Read John 15:1-17

v.2 – What happens to those branches that “do” bear fruit? Describe this process in horticultural terms? How does this process translate to the Christian life? Look up: Hebrews 12:11, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

v.4 – What is the responsibility of the believer? What is the condition that makes fruit-bearing possible?

v.5 – As branches from a vine, the believer’s very life is dependent on this union. What is this “fruit”?
Look up: Galatians 5:22-23

v.6 - Since this fruit manifests itself from the vine (Jesus), and under the care of proper pruning (God the Father), it is impossible to be truly united with God and not display His characteristic love. Look up: Hebrews 6:7-8

v.8 –Who is glorified in this behavior? What does this show, and by whom is it witnessed? (John 13:35)

v.9 – What is the measure of Jesus’ love for us?

v.11 – Notice who the beneficiary is of a life lived with such an attitude.

v.12-13 - Jesus says we are to love one another just as He has loved us. He immediately defines this love in terms of laying down of our own life/self-interests for our friends.

It might be thought that laying down one's life for one's enemies is a greater love. Jesus does have such love for His enemies but the focus in this passage is on His friends: the disciples, and fellow believers. Jesus says in verse 14 that His friends are those who obey Him.

v.15 – Here the disciples echo the relationship God had with Abraham and Moses. Abraham was called God's friend (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8), and God did not keep secret from him His plan for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:17). Moses also was God's friend, for "*the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend*" (Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10). Such intimacy with God is now achievable by all who come to Christ Jesus.

v.16 – Jesus made the first choice – to love and ultimately go to a cross for us. We make the next choice – to accept or reject His love. The fruit that lasts is the love that flows from, and bears witness to life in union with God. This love has come into the world in Jesus and now is to remain in the world in the community of His disciples. This awesome love displayed within the church will bear witness to Jesus before the world (17:21, 23), which will enable some to find eternal life and will also reveal the judgment of those who reject Him.

v.17 - This final reference to love for one another ties together this passage and provides a deep contrast to what immediately follows: Jesus' description of the world's hatred of the disciples. Jesus has been speaking of the incredible blessings of knowing and loving God in a community of love. However, the church is not to be an isolated club, but a garden spreading its branches throughout a hostile world.