

Abiding in the Vine (John 15:1-11)

I. Christ is the Vine that Sustains (1-2)

A. Jesus is the true Vine (1)

1. In the Old Testament, the vine became a symbol for national Israel - (Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15; 19:10; Hos. 10:1) – the vine even appears on Israel’s coins during the intertestamental period.
2. Jesus claims to be the true vine – the fulfillment of what Israel was supposed to be
 - a. The Father is the gardener (vinedresser) – The Father tends to the branches (us) as they are connected to the vine (Jesus)
 - b. The branch cannot survive separated from the vine

B. The Branch’s Purpose is to Bear Fruit (2)

1. Fruitless Branches are Removed

- a. The reason the branch exists is to bear fruit
- b. The branch is not there for decoration or shade – the only reason to grow a vine is to produce the fruit of it
- c. This doesn’t mean believers can lose their salvation. The branches that are fruitless are not receiving nutrients from the vine
- d. Those who are not abiding in Christ, though they may look like they are part of the vine, are cut off and thrown into the fire

2. Fruitful Branches are Pruned (cleaned)

- a. The vinedresser trims clean the fruitful branches
- b. The vinedresser does this so that the branch may produce more fruit – left to itself the branches of a grape vine will sprawl and grow but produce a small amount of fruit.
- c. Pruning the unproductive parts ensures that much fruit will grow from the branches
- d. God disciplines his children and guides them to ensure fruit production
- e. The word translated “purgeth” or “prunes” literally means to “trim clean”

II. Abiding in Christ (3-11)

A. Abiding in Christ is Necessary to Bear Fruit (3-5)

1. Disciples are clean by Christ’s Word (3)

- a. The word “clean” here is from the same root as the word translated “purgeth” in the previous verse. God prunes (purgeth) those who bear fruit – now you are pruned by the word which I have spoken to you
- b. God uses his word for correction, instruction, and reproof so that his children will be increasingly fruitful

2. Disciples cannot bear fruit without Abiding in Christ (4)
 - a. Disciples cannot bear fruit unto God in their own strength
 - b. Man has no power to please God outside of Christ
 - c. Jesus supplies the fruit – believers cannot grow as a Christian or will converts to Christ unless they are abiding in Christ
 - d. The branch can't do anything unless it is connected to the vine.
 3. Disciples Abiding in Christ will always bear fruit (5)
 - a. Disciples that do abide in Christ will always produce fruit
 - b. Abiding in Christ is all that is necessary and it is always effective.
 - c. Jesus says if you abide in me you will produce fruit
 - d. Jesus also says that outside of him you can do nothing.
- B. Abiding in Christ is Necessary to Live (6)
1. Those who do not abide are cast off
 - a. The person separated from Christ is no branch of the vine – he is simply unwanted foliage
 - b. That branch that is withering is cut off and thrown into the fire.
 2. Those who do not abide are useless
 - a. A believer not bearing fruit for the kingdom is useless to the kingdom work
 - b. This doesn't mean you have to go start a church or become a missionary – but the fruit of growing in the Christian life will always be present in those who are resting in Christ's power
 3. Those who do not abide are burned
- C. Abiding in Christ Glorifies the Father (7-8)
1. Disciples Abiding in Christ have Access to His Authority (7)
 - a. Being “in Christ” gives us Christ's righteousness before the Father
 - b. Being “in Christ” gives us the right to access the throne of grace boldly with our supplications
 - c. Notice that it says “if my words abide in you” – Jesus is not giving us a license to force God to give us riches and fame. He is not giving us the key to all our selfish desires
 - d. He is giving us all authority and power to ask that which is according to His will and word which will bring glory to the Father
 2. Bearing Fruit glorifies the Father and Proves Discipleship (8)
 - a. The fruit we bear glorifies God because it is he who is producing the fruit in us

- b. The fruit could be Christian works, it could be converts, and it could be simply growing in the fruits of the spirit
- c. God produces this fruit in all those who are connected to Jesus the vine
- d. NOTE: the evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ is the fruit that is produced in his life. This is Christ's work in him. "So shall you be my disciples"

D. Abiding in Christ's Love Brings Joy (9-11)

- 1. Following Christ's Commands is Abiding in His love (9-10)
 - a. Disciples must continue in Jesus' love just as Jesus has continued in the Father's love
 - b. Continuing in His love means living to keep his commandments – the one who says he loves Jesus and does not live after his commands is deceiving himself.
- 2. Abiding in Christ's Love Produces the fruit of joy (11)
 - a. Bearing fruit for Christ imparts Christ's joy in us
 - b. What pleases Him (bearing fruit) pleases us
 - c. The true Christian can only have the fullness of joy when they are united with Christ and producing fruit for the kingdom
 - d. So many people can't find their joy anymore because they have separated themselves from the source

III. The Fruit of Love (12-17)

A. Jesus' Friends Obey Him in Love (12-14)

- 1. Jesus gives his disciples the command to love one another (12)
- 2. Jesus tells us the kind of love they are to have (13)
 - a. There is no greater love than a sacrificial one
 - b. Love lays down its life for his friends
- 3. Jesus claims the disciples as friends if they obey his commands (13)
 - a. Jesus will show them this love
 - b. Jesus will lay down his life for them
 - c. They are to lay down their lives in service to one another

B. Jesus' Friends Are Instructed in His Will (15)

- 1. Jesus disciples are not just his servants
- 2. Jesus disciples are his friends for he has given them the Father's words

C. Jesus' Friends are Chosen to Bear Fruit (16-17)

- 1. Jesus chose his followers they did not choose him
 - a. He reached down and changed their hearts
 - b. They did not pull themselves up by their bootstraps
- 2. Jesus chose them to bear fruit
 - a. Bearing fruit is their purpose
 - b. Bearing fruit is our purpose on this earth

- c. When we are not bearing fruit for God in our lives we are living a purposeless existence.
- 3. Jesus explains the fruit they will produce (17)
 - a. He once again give them this all important commandment
 - b. They are to love one another.