

The Parables of Jesus

The Parable of the Vine and Branches

The new birth is not the end, but rather the beginning of a new life in Christ, which involves *abiding in Jesus and Him in us.*

- As we abide in Christ, we will have His presence and power
- We will be fruit producers and be true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John's gospel, Chapter 15:1-7 we find the Parable of the Vine and Branches.

We will discover that this parable is about the demand that our discipleship to Jesus imposes upon us and the conditions that make it effective.

What is easier to say, "I'm a Christian" or "I'm a disciple?"

- It doesn't take much to say that I'm a Christian, but there is more involved when you tell someone you are a follower of Jesus and a disciple.

The truth is, what makes you a Christian is whether you are willing to abide in Jesus and His love.

The Components of this Parable

1. Jesus is the True Vine – Jesus is the source of life for his followers, who are called branches.
 - Jesus is the Vine and God is the Gardener, who carefully plants and cares for the branches with one purpose – that they may bear fruit.

John 15:1-2 - The True Vine - 15 "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.

Jesus' description of Himself as the true vine or 'genuine', vine implies that Israel had been an imperfect foreshadowing of what God had called Israel to be, **but what Israel had never become.**

In the O.T., grapes symbolize Israel's fruitfulness in doing God's work on the earth.

With Jesus, therefore a new Israel emerges, **the members which draw spiritual substance from Him alone.**

When Jesus spoke of the Vine, **the people of Israel understood the concept of the nation of Israel being referred to as the vine**; so here **we find Jesus challenging their old concepts** once again.

Jeremiah 2:21-22 - 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? 22 For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, Yet your iniquity is marked before Me,” says the Lord God.

The prophet, Jeremiah describes Israel here as **a vine that had been brought out of Egypt by God and planted by Him in a godly land**, which had **failed to yield fruit** to the owner He had a right to expect.

- The stain of sin is more than skin-deep.
- Israel had stains **that could not be washed out** even by the strongest cleaners.
- Spiritual cleansing **must reach deep into the heart** –
- And this is a job that **God alone** can do.
- **We cannot ignore** the effects of sin and **hope that they will go away**.
- Your sin has caused deep stain that **only God can remove** **IF you are willing to let him cleanse you...**

They had allowed **the philosophies of the world** to be molded into their way of life, which **we are warned against as well**.

Colossians 2:8 - Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Paul warns against **any philosophy of life that is based only on human ideas and experiences**.

Paul himself was **a gifted philosopher**, so he **doesn't condemn** education or philosophy.

- But **he does condemn** teaching that credits human wisdom, **NOT Christ, with being the answer to life's problems**.

- ***That approach becomes a false religion...***
- Don't let anyone **fool you** by using **senseless** arguments.
- **These arguments may sound wise, but they are only human teachings.**
- They come from **the powers of this world** and **not** from Christ.
- **To resist them, you MUST keep your eyes on Christ and study Gods Word!**

Isaiah describes **the same condition that Jeremiah** describe with Israel as the vine.

Isaiah 5:1-2 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. ² He dug it up and cleared out its stones and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; So, He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.

In this parable, Jesus is saying that He is the True Vine.

In other words, He is saying, **“If you want anything to do with the Vinedresser, who is the Father, you must come through Me.”**

- **God’s chosen nation was to bear good fruit – to carry out his work.**
- **The people did bear fruit – but the fruit was bad....**

Jesus said, **“By their fruit you will recognize them.”** Matthew 7:20.

- **Examine your own “fruit” by looking at how you treat others, both in your words and actions.**
- **Is your fruit good or bad, sweet or bitter???**

We should ask ourselves the question,

- **“Is Christianity today a true representation of what God expects it to be?”**
- **“Are we abiding in the True vine or have we adopted the philosophies of the world?”**

1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Whoever believes in God’s Son has eternal life – In Him we have ALL we need!

2. The Father is the Vinedresser or Caretaker with a Concern for Spiritual Growth.

John 15: 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 a distinction between **two kinds of pruning**:
- **Cutting off** branches and **cutting back** branches.
- **Fruitful branches** are **cut back** to promote growth. In other words –
- **God must sometimes discipline his people to strengthen our character and faith.**
- **Branches that don't bear fruit** are **cut off the trunk** – **Not only because they are worthless** – But also because **they can infect the rest of the plant.**

Jesus said, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He (**the Father**) takes away and even those branches that bear fruit He prunes for the purposes of bearing more fruit.”

Remember what Isaiah said.

- He said the **Father expected the vineyard to bring forth good grapes,**
- But it brought forth **wild grapes.**
- The Father is concerned that **his new vineyard does not bring forth wild fruit**
- So, **he prunes it** and **cuts out what is not producing.**

Our Caretaker takes away that which may hinder real spiritual growth in our lives.

Proverbs 3:11-12 - 11 My son, **do not despise the Lord's discipline,** and do not resent his rebuke, 12 because **the Lord disciplines those he loves,** as a father the son he delights in.

Sometimes we can't know *when God has been disciplining us* until we look back on the situation later.

Remember God loves us, and He will show us what to do through our discipline.

3. We Are Clean Through the Word.

John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Jesus makes this powerful statement: “You are already clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you.”

Our cleaning process comes because of the blood He shed for us on the cross.

- We have now become totally righteous in Him.
- In one sense we are totally clean and justified because of His blood.
- In another sense we are still being sanctified and cleansed through the Word.

The first aspect of our cleansing process comes when the Word of God enters our hearts and we accept Jesus, the Word of Life into our lives.

The second part of this process continues as we apply His Word to our lives.

Moving from the theological to the practical – *Paul gives guidelines for living as a redeemed people in a fallen world.*

- We are to give ourselves to Christ as living sacrifices.
- Our personal responsibility – A Living Sacrifice!

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- Paul warned Christians about following the selfish and corrupt pattern of the fallen world.
- Only when the Holy Spirit renews, reeducates, and redirects our minds are we truly transformed.

4. As Branches of the Vine We Must Abide in the Vine to Produce Fruit.

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- Many people try to be good and honest.
- But Jesus says that to live a truly good life we must stay close to him.
- Like a branch attached to its vine!
- Fruit in this chapter – answered prayer, joy, and love are mentioned as fruit.

To abide in Christ is to have continuous fellowship and dependence upon Him.

Our ability to produce fruit in our lives stems from our fellowship and dependence upon walking with the Lord Jesus Christ in obedience.

2 Corinthians 3:4-5 - 4 We are sure about all this. Christ makes us sure in the very presence of God. 5 We don't have the right to claim that we have done anything on our own. **God gives us what it takes to do all we do.**

- Paul was not boasting; he was **giving God the credit** for all his accomplishments.
- No one can claim to be adequate **without God's help!**

2 Corinthians 9:8 - And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

- Christians who give back to God will lack nothing they really need.
- **God's favor, his grace** will be showered on those who give.
- They will have **everything they need** in every situation.
- **God has promised** to open up the flood gates of heaven and pour out a blessing.

The spiritual fruit that Jesus wants to produce in us is brought forth **by continually abiding in Him** and allowing Him to be our sufficiency.

1 John 2:6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Over the years, as a pastor, I have observed people who supposedly come into the kingdom, **who never seem to produce any kind of fruit whatsoever.**

The thing that I have observed is that they do not make any kind of a separation from the world and sin.

They chose not to abide in Christ by putting the old behind them and becoming new in Christ. As a result, the new remains un nourished, buried deep within them.

5. The Blessings of Abiding in Christ. The Father will be glorified.

John 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

When we bear "much fruit" like a fruitful branch, we glorify God.

6. We receive those things we ask for.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

1 John 3:22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

- **Ask in line with His will, NOT ours.**

7. The love of Jesus will remain in us - John 15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

8. Our joy remains full - John 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy may remain in you**, and that **your joy may be full**.

- **True Joy comes from a consistent relationship with Jesus!**

The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast.

9. We come into a deeper relationship and friendship with Jesus.

John 15:14-15 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Jesus has the right to call us servant, but he calls us friend – because we are his friend, we should love him and others the way he loves us.

CLOSE: Are you abiding in Christ?

- ***Do you walk and talk with Him daily?***
- ***Are you growing daily – producing fruit – and reaching out to the lost for Christ?***

If you don't grow, there's a possibility that you could fall by the wayside.

Allow Jesus to abide in you and remove those things from your life that keep you from being the best for Him...