

John 15, 16:1-4

- Pray
- Intro/Overview
 - Primarily not about salvation
 - Many want to use this to discuss losing salvation
 - V2 + V6 - Cut off branches, then gathered and thrown in the fire
 - Can discuss later
 - **MAIN THEME:** This is all about us **abiding** in Christ such that we can bear fruit even through the persecution of the world
 - How we do this? LOVE.
 - Four main themes/metaphors/word pictures from this chapter
 - **God the father is the gardener/vinedresser/husbandman**
 - It is God the father who addresses the vineyard
 - He cares for the vine and its branches and provides for them – this includes pruning ;)
 - **Jesus is the vine or “root stock”**
 - He provides the sustenance
 - He produces the fruit which the branches will bear (more in a minute)
 - **We are the branches**
 - As a branch, we can not live without the vine
 - In order to survive and bear fruit we must remain in the vine
 - If we do not bear fruit we are cut off from the vine
 - We are pruned by the vinedresser in order to bear more fruit
 - **The branches Bear fruit**
 - What is fruit?
 - Greek for Fruit is “karpos”
 - *the fruit of the trees, vines, of the fields*
 - *that which originates or comes from something, an effect, result*
 - *work, act, deed*
 - *praises, which are presented to God as a thank offering*
 - In the context of this chapter, I believe fruit to be:
 - Winning lost souls
 - Read Col 1:1-14
 - Love – Read Galatians 5:22
 - Although all of this verse pertains, I believe that it all centers on Love
 - Love is a main theme in this chapter
 - Won't go too deeply into others
 - Worship/Praise (based on above definition)

- He cares for the vineyard
 - Makes sure that the vine is producing the fruit for his upcoming harvest!
 - Story of the vinedresser washing the fruit
- **V2: He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.**
 - “cuts off” - Airo
 - to raise up, elevate, lift up; and to take upon one’s self and carry what has been raised up, to bear
 - John 11:41 Jesus lifted up his eyes
 - Luke 17 : people lifted up their voices
 - NOT take away but “lifted up”
 - “prunes” – Katharizo – root of Catharsis (cleansing process)
 - John 13 – Jesus cleansed the feet of his disciples
 - To me, a more clear picture or translation is that the vinedresser lifts up those branches which are not bearing fruit and then cleanses or prunes the branches which are bearing fruit in order for it to bear even more fruit.
 - We all have areas or things in our lives that are useless or empty, even things that we cling to that we THINK are for our own good. But, God knows what is best to produce fruit in us – he knows the things that are really just a distraction or that are not necessary and therefore he prunes this away and cleanses us in order to better shape us and grow us.
 - Pruning can be painful.
 - Hebrews 12.
 - If we are sons then we are disciplined
 - The purpose of this pruning and cleansing is of course to produce fruit. The fruit we are to bear has to do with our attitudes and actions towards others and towards God. The context of pruning and fruit bearing here is directly connected to love. Will expand more in a minute.
- **V3: You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.**
 - Flows well with alternate interpretation of prune
 - The words from the father (vinedresser) have come through Christ and cleansed his disciples already
 - Great picture again of us being the heavy branch in the mud and being cleansed by the vinedresser
- **V4: Remain in me, and I will 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.**
- **V5: I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.**
 - Greek for abide is meinate
 - a verb tense of the word meno that "presents an occurrence in summary, viewed as a whole from the outside, without regard for the internal make-up of the occurrence"

- The root verb means more than the English word “abide”.
 - The definition from a physical perspective gives the picture that from the outside, no one can tell the difference between the abider and the abidee
 - In regards to time the definition urges us to persevere and endure
 - *In short, the command to “abide” here makes no attempt to detail the action, or to give us some exact description of what the action looks like. It simply commands that we are to perpetually be kept connected to Jesus.*
 - Again Eph 2:8 – not by works but Grace so we can’t boast
 - It is not us that do any of it. We are just to abide in the Lord and he will produce the fruit in us.
- **V6: If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.**
 - The picture of a branch away from the vine is clear – we wither and die
 - When a dead stick (formerly a branch) is found it is picked up and thrown into the fire.
 - Kylan said once how God’s metaphors are so great...this one (vine/branches) takes the cake in my opinion
 - The metaphor is perfect. Apart from the vine, we are useless, we are like a dead stick. It not only can’t produce fruit but it can’t even survive on its own.
- **V7: If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.**
 - First of two references to this in Chapter 15.
 - Also referenced last week in Chapter 14
 - In relation to our prayers
 - Andrew Murray (*With Christ in the School of Prayer: Chapter 21*): “There is a terrible discrepancy between this promise and the experience of most believers. How many prayers bring no answer? The cause must be either that we do not fulfill the condition, or God does not fulfill the promise. Believers are not willing to admit either, and therefore have devised a way of escape from the dilemma. They put a qualifying clause into the promise that our Savior did not put there-if it be God's will. This maintains both God's integrity and their own. If they could only accept it and hold fast to it as it stands, trusting Christ to make it true! And if only they would confess their failure in fulfilling the condition as the one explanation for unanswered prayer. God's Spirit would then lead them to see how appropriate such a promise is to those who really believe that Christ means it. The Holy Spirit would then make our weakness in prayer a mighty motivation for us to discover the secret and obtain the blessing of fully abiding in Christ.”
 - WOW. Lets take just a moment to think about that one for a minute.
 - This is my prayer for myself. I must increase my faith, I must abide more in Christ.
- **V8: This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**
 - As we talked about previously, our bearing of fruit brings glory to God
 - This is TRUE fruit

- This shows us to be true disciples
- **V9: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.**
- **V10: If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.**
- **V11: I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.**
- **V12: My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.**
- **V13: Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.**
 - V9 begins a transition into the idea of love and not only abiding in Christ but abiding in his love
 - Obedience is how we show the Lord that we truly love him. Jesus admonished his disciples in many of his final discourses - If you love me you'll do what I have said, you will follow my commands.
 - If we REALLY believe something it changes our actions and behaviors. It HAS to. Otherwise we don't really believe it
 - ***This isn't saying that we have to love him and then he'll love us.***
 - If we truly love the Lord then we will already be in his love because we will have chosen to abide in him.
 - His love is already there (the VINE)
 - We must choose to be part of his love (BRANCH)
 - John Courson - *Everyone is as close to the Lord as we choose to be*
 - We choose to remain in the vine or not.
 - When we choose to not remain in the vine we do not produce fruit
 - When we choose to remain in the vine we are given our sustenance and we bear fruit
 - Abiding in his Love brings his Joy
 - This is TRUE joy – COMPLETE joy
 - Read John 14:27
 - This is how God gives.
 - In the context of that verse he is talking about Peace – another fruit of the spirit
 - But the same is true for his joy. It's not like the world gives.
 - Read Phil. 1:12-16
 - James 1:2-4
 - *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*
 - All of this fruit bearing is directly connected to our actions and attitudes towards others and to the Lord. Earlier I talked about our fruit being directly linked with love and here the Lord is repeating his earlier statements in the context of Love.

- If we are commanded to love each other – the ULTIMATE FRUIT – then what does that look like?
 - Read 1 Cor. 13:1-13
 - 2Pe 1:5-10 (ESV)
 - For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with **love**. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being **ineffective or unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to *make your calling and election sure*, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.
 - Election? Better save that for another discussion ;)
 - Ask yourself this question – Where do we fall short in this and therefore keep ourselves from bearing fruit?
- The ultimate act of love is to lay down our life for our friends.
 - Live a sacrificial life not for ourselves but for the ones we love
 - This is the ultimate act of love – this highest thing we can do to love someone
 - It really is about **sacrifice**
 - Of course this is a prophetic word to the coming crucifixion but it is also true for us in our lives today.
 - True Love is sacrifice. Its about laying our own wants, needs, desires whatever aside for the sake of others, for the sake of Christ.
- **V14: You are my friends if you do what I command.**
- **V15: 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.**
- **V16: You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.**
- **V17: This is my command: Love each other.**
 - V 13 introduces the concept of being a friend of the Lord
 - V14-17 essentially reiterate the prior verses but again changes the context
 - Not as servants but as FRIENDS
 - The title of Friend is an honor and the Lord delights in being able to call us friends
 - As we've gone through these verses, Jesus is teaching the disciples about Love and in doing so is also *showing them how He has loved them*.
 - He's love them first and is telling them to follow his model.
 - Calling them friends is another step in understanding how the Lord has Love them

- **V20: Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.**
- **V21: They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.**
 - We cannot expect to escape the hatred of the world if the Lord did not.
 - Because we are his servants (but still friends) we are not greater than Him
 - We will suffer the same persecution
- **V22: If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.**
- **V23: He who hates me hates my Father as well.**
- **V24: If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.**
 - Remember back to John 3:19-21
 - He is speaking again to this idea
- **V25: But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'**
 - Ps 69:4
- **V26: When the Counselor 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.**
- **V27: And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.**
 - There are three commands in this passage
 - The first is to abide in him
 - Second, to love as we have been loved (our fruit)
 - The third is to testify about Jesus
 - We bear fruit when we abide in him
 - Our testifying IS fruit
 - By obeying these commands, we abide in him
 - Almost a circular reference for those logic geeks out there
- **Chapter 16 V1: All this I have told you so that you will not go astray.**
- **V2: They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.**
- **V3: They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.**
- **V4: I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.**
 - This is really in summary of the end of 15
 - Jesus is hammering home the idea that they are to be persecuted and hated because of him
 - 16:1-4 really ties in the TRUE VINE concept

- **Summary and Conclusion**
 - One of the most difficult things for me when it comes to abiding in Christ is that the closer I get to him - the more I abide in him - the more I realize how lacking and how undeserving and how far from him I really am and how LITTLE fruit I actually bear.
 - This can be discouraging!
 - But we should not be discouraged!
 - 2Cor. 9:8
 - *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*
 - And take stock of the fact that you are in a process as we see in Eph. 2:22
 - *And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*
 - Seek Him and cooperate with the leading the Holy Spirit puts in you.
 - **We must focus on abiding in him and he will take care of the tending and pruning and fruit production.**
 - Eph 2:10
 - *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
 - The pain of pruning comes now, ***but the fruit comes later.***
 - Pruning in our lives is seasonal. Even though the duration, depth, and breadth of pruning seasons will vary, no season lasts indefinitely
 - Consider the many trials Paul endured... Paul's branch is still yielding fruit today.
 - **You will bear fruit** - Phil. 1:6
 - *...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*
 - **How do we abide in him?**
 - **We commune with him daily**
 - **Prayer**
 - **Reading of his word**
 - **Keep his commandments**
 - **Testify to him through words and actions**
 - **LOVE each other**
 - When we have chosen to abide we will receive his joy and when we receive his joy we will be able to endure and persevere through the trials and persecution from the world.