

John 2021 #31 (11.28.21) #21097

John 15:1-17
The True Vine

I. When God entered his own creation, everything changed forever...

A. We will look into the incarnation over the next few weeks.

II. But in the Farewell discourse, at the end of the Lord's earthly life, we see just how New everything really is... The night before the crucifixion...

A. He institutes the New Covenant. 14:6 (Luke 22:20)

1. People who belong to God come into Him.

B. He supplies the new relationship with God.

1. As Father. 14:15-17 (16:26-28; 20:17)

2. Through the Holy Spirit. (14:15-21)

C. He gives the new command. (13:34-35)

1. Loving as Jesus loved his friends.

2. The love within the Trinity is now regenerating fallen humans.

III. He reveals three stunning, new realities. 15:1-17

A. He Himself as the True Vine: *The Ultimate Israel. 1. The whole Bible is about Him!*

1. Jesus Messiah is the True Israel.

a) This is the seventh time Jesus uses the "I Am" statement.

b) This time he says essentially that he is Israel.

(1) At least eight times in OT Israel is YHWH's vine, yet fruitless and failing.

(2) **Ps.**80:8-16; **Isa.**5:1-7, 27:2-6; **Jer.**2:21; **Ez.**15:2-6; 17:5-10; 19:10-14. **Hos.**10:1-2.

c) Jesus did what Israel (and Adam) failed to do. He lived faithfully, defeating the Devil, fulfilled the Law—and absorbed the punishment for disobeying the Law!

2. He is the only source of spiritual life and fruit.

B. His disciples as his living branches. 2-11

1. These are the only living branches of God's life on earth. (!) Jn.1:12-13

a) The branches are alive because of him.

b) They rely on and are utterly dependent on him.

2. The Father tends them and trims them for fruit.

3. The fruit of their lives is their purpose.

C. His (trinitarian) Love as the evident fruit of his life in his disciples. *Not acting religious.* 12-17.

1. So, they love as Jesus did. 12-13

2. Because they are his friends, not simply slaves. 14-15

a) They obey, but for a different reason than slaves—because they love, and trust Christ and he has taken them into his confidence.

b) The Mission and the Message of the Gospel.

3. Because their discipleship was his idea before it was theirs. 16a (Eph.1:4)

a) They did not choose him? They did choose (6:66-69), but after he chose...

4. Because he intends to use their prayers and their lives to produce fruit in his name. 16-17.

a) The regenerating Spirit love of the Trinity.

b) Expressed in prayer and obedience in the mission.

c) Producing the forgiveness, regeneration, and transformation of redeemed humans and the spread of the kingdom, the message of the gospel. Eph.2:1-10

IV. Two clarifications:

- A. The fruitless branches are not Jesus' true disciples. (They have no signs of life)
1. The unbelieving Jewish generation that rejected Christ. (The fruitless vine from the OT)
 - a) They thought of themselves as "in the Vine" of Israel.
 2. The fake believers who associated with Jesus, but do not really trust or obey him. (Judas Iscariot)
 - a) All apostate "believers" (1 Jn.2:19)
 - b) These do not "remain" or "abide" in Christ. They turn away.
 3. The phrase is simply an illustration saying that spiritual life is only found in Christ, and the only other option is spiritual death. (Rev.20:
 - a) All of creation disconnected from Christ will be "thrown away" and burned.
 4. *It cannot refer to true, regenerated believers who somehow get thrown away because they didn't work hard enough to produce enough fruit.*
 - a) Jesus said he loses none of his (Jn.10:27-30)
 - b) Jesus said that his real disciples were already "clean" because of his word had that effect on them.
- B. The fruit among his disciples is the result of abiding in the Vine, not the other way around.
1. The "fruit" is produced by the Spirit, the life of Christ. Gal.5:22-24
 - a) The personal loyalty and obedience to Jesus.
 - b) Character of Christ transforming us internally.
 - c) Evidenced in our love for one another. Jn.13:34-35; 15:12,17
 - d) Mission of Christ bearing witness externally. Eph.2:8-10
 2. We focus on Him and He flows in and through us.

V. Abiding in Christ is not difficult, *but we must cooperate.* Three things:

- A. Lean into the Father's pruning. 2
1. *We are fruit-bearing branches, not ornamentals.*
 - a) Pruned for spiritual fruit, not impressive looks.
 2. *We don't prune ourselves.*
 - a) He does it through the hardness of life itself.
 3. *We are all a work in progress, and so are all churches.*
 4. But we view it properly and faithfully. Heb.12; Jas.1:1-4
- B. Take in the Son's Words. 3,7
1. The Word of God is the way the Spirit nourishes and cleans our souls. 3, 7
 2. The Word is the gospel, conveyed through Scripture. (Rom.10:17)
 3. It has a powerful impact on our spirit, our mind, our character.
- C. Submit to the Spirit's transformation. 7,16b Rom.12:1-2.
1. Starts with Prayer. The prayer, shaped by the pruning, the nourishment in gospel thinking, brings about the transformation, loyalty, and mission = the fruit.
 2. Produces Love, the fruit of the Spirit. Gal.5:22-24