**Fixing Our Hearts on Jesus**

**Untroubled: Relying on the Comfort of Christ**

**The Blessing of being Branches in Christ**

**John 15:1-16**

Good to be back in the saddle, so to speak. We’re continuing our series on **Fixing our Hearts on Jesus.**

In order to get our minds to have some theological footage, I want to start off by saying that our setting takes place in Jesus’ private ministry to his disciples.

Jesus’ public ministry is over – that was chapters 1-12.

Now, we’re into Jesus’ private ministry. We know this as the Upper Room discourse, where our Lord prepares them for what comes next.

So he encourages them by telling them what’s going to happen in advance in order for his people to understand that He’s not only in control over what is about to happen to Him, but that nothing can nor ever will thwart God’s purposes.

So in the case of Jesus’ disciples, their Lord’s betrayal is not outside of his sovereign control. Because His death would bring about the redemption of many.

So he tells them that – “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.” And they were deeply grieved.” – Matthew 17:22-23

They needed to understand what they are about to face, Jesus goal and purpose for his disciples encompassed the great commission. And part and parcel of that commission entails seasons of Gospel plenty.

But it also entails seasons of trouble. We understand that, right?

But when the bad seasons roll in, not even the gates of Hades would not prevail against God’s people, the church.

And we see that throughout the book of Acts because we understand that despite all that God’s people have ever faced, neither *“affliction, or turmoil, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword”* could ever thwart God’s purposes.

Even those things could never separate God’s people from him because “we are kept by his power” (Romans 8:35-39; 1 Peter 1:5)

For this reason, we pray that you don’t have a noisy soul and that you are **Untroubled: Relying on the Comfort of Christ.** Christ leaves no room for a third class.

True believers enjoy the blessing and benefit of abiding in their Lord and Christ. It’s not that unbelievers don’t to some degree or another enjoy the benefits of God’s grace – *they do* – but it’s *temporal.*

What they experience is not salvation life. We enjoy the blessings of God’s salvation love, they do not.

With that said, let’s turn to John 15:1-16.

We’re titled our sermon for today **The Blessing of Being Branches.**

So then our goal for today is to explain Jesus’ parable, and to give to you **4 responses to the call to abide in Christ.**

If you weren’t aware of this, now it as good a time as any to tell you that you and I have been grafted into the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

What was originally intended for the Jew now extends to us Gentiles who believe like Abraham believed, which is by faith alone.

No sooner than we did that that we were spiritually “grafted into the olive tree” that Paul described Romans 11.

Now that doesn’t make us “Israel”, but is to say that we now partake of salvation blessings that Israel received.

Jesus’ disciples believed in Christ. They were clean. And they received salvation blessing in Christ alone who is the true vine.

**I. Rejoice that Jesus Is the True Vine**

Jesus said that apart from him we can do nothing, right (John 15:5)? Learning to be untroubled is not found in our own self-styled achievements.

Learning to have a quiet and untroubled soul is centered in *who we are connected to*. We understand that…

**A. Jesus is the true substance that the Old Testament points to**

Notice verse 1 –

**John 15:1** *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.”* (stop)

Now, Jesus’ disciples had to have been conversant with the Old Testament enough to understand that our Lord had alluded to two things. First, Jesus frequently referred to himself as I AM. For instance, in

* John 6:35 – “I am the bread of life.”
* John 8:35 – “I am the light of the world.”
* John 10:7 – “I am the door of the sheep.”
* John 10:11 – “I am the good shepherd.”
* John 10:25 – “I am the resurrection and the life.”
* John 14:6 – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

Now, if you know anything about the I AM statements, you will come to understand that it is a theological reference to the *self-existence of God.*

It was first mentioned in Exodus 3:14 where God calls Moses both in terms of salvation and calling into the ministry.

So then, in order for God to distinguish himself from the gods of the nations, He referred to Himself as “I AM.”

That is to say, unlike the gods who are not self-existent but derived from something, the God to whom Moses spoke to at the burning bush is not derived from anything at all. *He simply is!*

God is I AM…the *self-existing One!* Moses understood that, and that is precisely what Jesus was ascribing to Himself in speaking to his disciples because they are so troubled by what Jesus has said to them what is going to happen.

Bu to despite what’s going to happen, he tells them to rest their souls in him and abide, like a branch is to a vine.

Thus, we get a parable by our Lord that serves as an analogy – *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”* (stop)

The disciples would have readily understood the analogy because it comes from the OT. It was common for to think of God’s people as a “vine” and God as the “gardener.”

It’s a simple analogy alluded to in the OT…

**Isaiah 5:1-3, 7 *Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard…****My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it and also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones…****For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant.****Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.*

**Psalm 80:14-19** *“O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine, even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, and on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. Then we shall not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. O Lord God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.***”**

The analogy is simply this: The branches cannot live without the vine for support.

**“The real people of God are those who are branches in the true vine: this is what chapter 15 tells us. Just as Jesus’ body is the true temple (John 2), and he is the true bread from heaven (John 6), the water that truly quenches thirst (John 4), the good shepherd (John 10), and the life which resurrects men from the dead (John 11), so is he the true vine. All of the shadows of the Old Testament disappear in the light of his substance (compare Col. 2:17).” (Carson, D. A. 1988.**[**The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus: An Exposition of John 14-17**](https://ref.ly/logosres/frwldscpryjsusjn?ref=Bible.Jn15.1-16&off=2571&ctx=ciation+in+John+15.+~The+real+people+of+G)**, p. 91. Baker Book House)**

**Colossians 2:17** *- …things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.*

Here’s a simple application – Remember who the vine is and it’s not you. Remember who it is who causes his people to grow. Israel was supposed to be a channel of blessings to the nations.

And when they were not, he came in and pruned the useless branches. The OT prophets often called on Israel to bear fruit for God.

So then, our Lord being a master storyteller that he is, takes OT imagery and applies it universally to all those who are abiding in Him.

**B. The Father prunes so that the Son would be glorified by our fruit**

**John 15:2** *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.”* (stop)

The analogy is simple: dead branches are removed, while the ones that do bear fruit he continues to prune.

There are two categories of people. Those who outwardly profess attachment to Jesus but are dead and bear no fruit. The Lord will remove them and send them to hell. Then there are those who genuinely abide in Christ whom the Father prunes in the church.

God prunes his people through trials and tribulations, and even church discipline in order to wean them away from the world.

In fact, we get an idea of this in Hebrews 12:7-11 “It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? **8**But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9**Furthermore, we [[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2012&version=LSB#fen-LSB-30222g)]had [[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2012&version=LSB#fen-LSB-30222h)]earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of [[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2012&version=LSB" \l "fen-LSB-30222i" \o "See footnote i)]spirits, and live? **10**For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for our benefit, so that we may share His holiness. **11**And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, but to those who have been trained by it, *afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”*

**C. Jesus truly is life giving**

**John 15:3-4** *“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.*”

One writer said that suffering is merely the handle of the Father’s knife and the blade is the Word of God that removes the sucker branches that retard our growth in Him. Our Lord said that “they were already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

**II. Understand the Mark of a True Disciple**

**A. A genuine disciple is in dependent union with Christ**

**John 15:5-8** *“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.***”**

**Psalm 1:1-3** *“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.*

**B. A genuine disciple bears fruit**

**John 15:7-8** *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”*

**John 8:31** *“So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine…”*

**1 John 2:19** *“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*”

**III. Embrace the Fullness of Joy in Jesus**

**A. Joy from the very love of the Father and Son**

**John 15:9-11** *“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.”*

**B. Joy of obedience**

**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.*”

**C. The full joy of Christ in us**

**John 15:11** *“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”*

**Psalm 16:11** *“You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”*

**IV. Bear Fruit as Friends of Christ**

**A. Fruit that excels at Christ-centered love**

**John 15:12-13** *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”*

**B. Fruit that is based on intimate friendship with Christ**

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

**C. Fruit that remains based on the sovereign plan of God**

**John 15:16** *“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”*

**John 13:34-35** *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*