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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

John 15:01-17

## THERE IS LIFE IN THE VINE

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As I was thinking about an introduction for this teaching and searching for content I found one that I believe gives us a great start to this chapter.
1. *It comes from Jon Courson: "In the previous chapter, Jesus had said, "There's hope for you—hope in heaven. See the big picture. Get a handle on your destiny. Let not your heart be troubled." Here, in **chapter 15**, He puts in the clutch, changes gears a bit, and gives us a message not so much dealing with hope in heaven but rather about help on earth. The last phrase in **chapter 14** being, "Arise and let us go from here," Jesus and the disciples left the Upper Room, made their way through the city of Jerusalem, and headed toward the Garden of Gethsemane via the Kidron Valley. Thus, it would seem that **John 15** is actually given to the disciples when they are en route from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane. It being Passover season, they would have been traveling under a full moon and would, very possibly, have seen the magnificent temple structure, with its massive vine-engraved doors, off in the distance. The vine being the historic as well as the religious symbol of Israel (**Isaiah 5**; **Ezekiel 19**; **Psalms 80**), perhaps it was the gold-covered vine reflected in the moonlight that inspired the masterful teaching that follows."*
    - a) Definitely set the mood doesn't it?
  2. The God of the universe calls Himself **I AM**. Moses had said, "When I go down to Egypt and the people ask me who sent me, what shall I tell them" (**Exodus 3:13**). God said, "You tell them that I AM sent you."
    - a) Jesus "fills out that statement" when He says, "I am" 7 different times in the book of John.
      - (1) First, He said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger" (**John 6:35**).
      - (2) Second, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (**John 8:12**).
      - (3) Third, Jesus said, "I am the door" (**John 10:9**).
      - (4) Fourth, Jesus said, "I am the true vine" (**John 15:1**).
      - (5) Fifth, Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (**John 10:11**).
      - (6) Sixth, Jesus said in **John 11:25**, "I am the resurrection and the life."
      - (a) We could spend weeks on each one of these "I AM's" but today, our journey through the Gospels brings us to #4.

### II. **JOHN 15:1 (NKJV) — 1 "I AM THE TRUE VINE, AND MY FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER."**

- A. I want to point out that He didn't just say, "I am the vine", He said he is the "true" vine!

1. Why would He say it that way?
  - a) As I pointed out the vine was the historic as well as the religious symbol of Israel! (Actually Jon Courson did)
    - (1) We are going to see in the next couple of chapters, that His disciples will be kicked out of the temple, and basically ostracized from what use to be the very center of their lives - Judaism!
    - (2) That would be enough to shake their faith in everything that they had believed in for their entire lives.
2. I believe this is Jesus saying, *"Faith is not about religion nor any particular nation. It is about Me!"*
  - a) We also can get caught up in "doing" church that we forget we "are" the church.
  - b) We can get so caught up in fear that we forget that love cancels out fear.
  - c) We can get so caught up in nationalism that we forget that Jesus is still on the throne.
  - d) We can get so caught up in putting faith in everyone and everything but Jesus.
    - (1) And when all of these things let us down – we can lose faith in people, and the church and yes, even Jesus.

B. Jesus also states that His **Father is the vinedresser!**

1. As a young man I use to work in the fields – and one of those jobs was in the grape vineyards, so I know a little bit about this first-hand.
  - a) It is going to appear that this is a warning from Jesus – but it is just the opposite.

### III. **JOHN 15:2 (NKJV) — 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.**

- A. It is the vinedresser's responsibility to care for the vineyard and one of the ways he does that is to cut off the branches that are not producing, to free up resources for the ones that are.
1. In real life we refer to those as "sucker branches" – they consume but they do not produce.
    - a) Now I think the natural response is, "Is that me? Am I the 'sucker branch' He is referring to?"
      - (1) But look at what Jesus says next:

### IV. **JOHN 15:3 (NKJV) — 3 YOU ARE ALREADY CLEAN BECAUSE OF THE WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU.**

- A. When the vines have a lot of grapes on them, they sag. And depending on how much fruit is on them, they can sag all the way to the ground.

1. Another responsibility of the vinedresser was to take those branches, wash them off, and re-secure them to the vine, so they could continue to flourish.
2. Jesus is reminding His disciples that they are already “clean” because of the washing of His word.

**V. JOHN 15:4–5 (NKJV) — 4 ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU. AS THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT OF ITSELF, UNLESS IT ABIDES IN THE VINE, NEITHER CAN YOU, UNLESS YOU ABIDE IN ME. 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.**

A. What happens when you break a branch off a tree? It dies right?

1. Why? Because the “life source” is not in the branch, it is in the root system.
  - a) All the branch has to do is just stay attached and everything is supplied for growth and fruitfulness.
  - b) Remember the statement I made earlier, “We also can get caught up in “doing” church that we forget we “are” the church.
    - (1) Without the “life-source” running through us – we can do nothing.

**VI. JOHN 15:6–7 (NKJV) — 6 IF ANYONE DOES NOT ABIDE IN ME, HE IS CAST OUT AS A BRANCH AND IS WITHERED; AND THEY GATHER THEM AND THROW THEM INTO THE FIRE, AND THEY ARE BURNED. 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.**

A. What do you do with dead branches? What do you do with the cut-offs when you trim your roses?

They are “cast out” into the trash can right?

B. Where does firewood come from?

1. They are cut-off from trees right?
  - a) This is encouragement to Jesus’ disciples to not dis-attach from Him.
  - b) To not become that branch that is cut off and useless because it has no “source” of the miraculous.

**VII. JOHN 15:8–11 (NKJV) — 8 BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED, THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT; SO YOU WILL BE MY DISCIPLES. 9 “AS THE FATHER LOVED ME, I ALSO HAVE LOVED YOU; ABIDE IN MY LOVE. 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. 11 “THESE THINGS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU, THAT MY JOY MAY REMAIN IN YOU, AND THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.**

A. I think this wonderfully sums up Jesus’ heart in telling this story.

1. It brings Him great joy when we bear fruit and He also know that if we do what

He asks us to do – it also brings us great joy.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. **John 15:12–17 (NKJV) — 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 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. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.**

1. I am guessing that the largest library in the world could not contain all the books written about love!
  - a) But may we remember that there is no greater love than the Love of Jesus.
    - (1) It is not the kind of love the world gives – that is to superficial.
    - (2) It is the kind of love that takes people that have been rejected by everyone and everything around them and calls them His friend, His sons and daughters.
    - (3) It is the "REAL" love that the world need now and we can provide that love is we will abide in Him and He is us!