

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

TEXT: John 15:1-17

PLACE: Jerusalem, upper room

TIME: Thursday evening

NOTE: The main context of this section is the Living Union of Christ and His disciples. The relationship between Christ and the Christian is not organizational but organic, vital and living. There is no life or fruitfulness except in living union with Christ. Apart from Him, even though an organization status be maintained, there is only withering, decay and death. To every Christian who wants that relationship, the 15th chapter of John is essential!

◆ The Vine, vs. 1a

➔ Jesus makes another claim to deity when He says, "_____."

- Can you think of the other time He used this expression

➔ "... the _____ vine, ..."

- What other words could be used here to help define what Jesus meant?
- The "I" is an emphatic verb-pronoun literally meaning "I, Myself, am the Vine, the real Vine!"
- How does this compare with John 14:6?

◆ The Vinedresser, vs. 1b

➔ "My _____ is the Vinedresser."

◆ The Vine Branches, vs. 2,3

➔ Who are the branches? Cp. verse 5.

➔ "_____ branch in Me that does _____ bear fruit, He _____; and every branch that bears fruit, He _____ it, that it may bear _____ fruit."

- It is essential that we understand that the branches are disciples/Christians who have a relationship with Christ, who is the Vine.

1 - The Non-fruit bearing branches: Apostates
Cp. Hebrews 6:4-6

- What is the end of such a disciple? 2 Peter 2:20-22
- Illustration of such: Judas, Demas 2 Timothy 4:10

2 - The fruit bearing branches: Christians

- "He prunes it..." What does this mean and how?
Cp. Hebrews 12:4-14 (note vs. 11)

- Verse 3 says God used the "_____" to cleanse His disciples.

⇒ How does God's Word cleanse and discipline us?

⇒ What results in this pruning?

◆ Abiding In Christ, vs. 4-11

NOTE: Verses 1-3 have concentrated on the pruning and cleansing of the branches. Now in verses 4-11 the concentration is upon the vital union of the branch in the vine and the results of abiding (or failing to abide).

➔ " _____ in me, and _____ will remain in you."

- Note the two-fold blessing of abiding in Christ: 1) You are in Him, 2) He is in you.
- A key verse: vs. 4 (KJV) "As the branch _____ bear fruit of _____, _____ it abide in the _____; so neither can _____, unless you _____ in _____."
- Also note verses 8-10 - How do we "prove" our discipleship? " _____ in my _____." Read verse 10.

◆ The Blessings And The Burning

➔ Blessings:

- o Verse 5 - "he who abides in me... _____ fruit." What fruit?
- o Verse 7 - What blessing in this verse?
- o Verse 11 - What blessing in this verse?

➔ Burning

- o Verse 6 - read verse. Being cast into the fire undoubtedly means being cast in hell. (cp. Matthew 3:8-12; Matthew 7:19; Matthew 13:22; Matthew 25:41)

SUMMARY: Verse 11 is the crowning point of this whole discussion. Jesus has laid down the divine formula for finding real joy: 1) Abide in Him; 2) bear fruit; 3) glorify the Father. Why are so many Christians not finding the real joy in their Christian life? Why so many withered and dead? Because they have not allowed the life-giving, fruit-bearing substance of the Word of God and the Spirit of Christ to flow through them.