

## The Lesson of the Vineyard

### John 15:1a I am the true vine

1. Jesus is the true vine (true Messiah), unlike the false Messiahs who preceded Him

John 10:7 So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

John 10:8 "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

John 10:9 "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

2. Jesus acts as a channel or conduit in the process of salvation

John 6:51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Lesson: we must accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior

John 17:3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

### John 15:1b My Father is the vinedresser

1. The Father guides our growth just as a vinedresser takes care of his vineyard

Isa 64:8 But now, O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.

2. The Father is sovereign over all things; He is in charge of our lives

Isa 45:9 "Woe to *the one* who quarrels with his Maker— An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making *say*, 'He has no hands'?"

Lesson: we must surrender to God's will in all things

Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

### John 15:2a Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away

1. The branches represent individual Christians

John 15:5a I am the vine, you are the branches

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Rom 12:5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

### 2. Fruit is a common metaphor for deeds or actions

Tit 3:14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

Eph 5:9 for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth

### 3. Believers can be unfruitful

Mt 13:22 And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

### 4. God actively intervenes in the life of the unfruitful believer

Luke 13:6 And He [Jesus] *began* telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any.

Luke 13:7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'

Luke 13:8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;

Luke 13:9 and if it bears fruit next year, *fine*; but if not, cut it down.'

Lesson: we must actively produce the fruit that God desires

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

John 15:2b every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

### 1. God will cut us back so we can bear more fruit

Heb 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

### 2. God actively trains us to develop Christian character

1Pet 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

1Pet 1:7 so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ

Lesson: we need to understand that trials and discipline are for our own good

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Rom 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

1. The term “clean” refers to pruning
2. The disciples were already cleaned, or pruned, by God’s message

John 14:24b the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

Lesson: we must live by God’s word

Deut 8:3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

John 15:4a Abide in Me, and I in you

1. The Greek verb for “abide” (*meno*) is an imperative, a command
2. Christ must abide in us

1John 4:24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Rom 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Lesson: we need to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

John 15:4b As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me.

1. The carnal mind cannot please God or produce good spiritual fruit

Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,  
Rom 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

2. Only converted individuals can produce good spiritual fruit

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John 15:5b for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Lesson: we must be converted to produce spiritual fruit

Php 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

John 15:5 he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit,

1. Christ gives us the potential for great spiritual accomplishment

Rom 8:37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

Php 4:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

2. The Bible is filled with many examples of fruitful spiritual lives

Lesson: we need to develop our spiritual gifts

1Cor 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

1Cor 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

John 15:6 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.

1. Rejecting the gospel means rejecting salvation

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

2Pe 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2. The angels will gather these branches for burning

Matt 13:40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

Matt 13:41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness

Lesson: we must actively oppose false teachers who reject Jesus Christ

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

1. Christ's words are to abide in His disciples

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Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

### 2. Abiding in Jesus Christ brings great blessings

1 John 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

Lesson: we must study Scripture carefully to learn God's will

2Pe 3:18a but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

John 15:8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

### 1. Good works bring God honor if done for the right reason, motivation

Mt 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

1Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

### 2. Genuine Christianity involves faith that is put into practice

James 2:18 But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

Lesson: we should have a tangible record of accomplishments

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

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

### 1. Jesus demonstrated His love by dying for us

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

### 2. His love is so powerful that nothing can separate us from Him

Rom 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

Rom 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lesson: we need to believe in God's love for us

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Php 1:6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Heb 13:5a for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

Heb 13:6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

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.

### 1. Abiding is synonymous with obeying Jesus

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

### 2. The commandments define godly love

1John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

Lesson: we must follow Christ's teaching, example

1John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked

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.

### Summary

1. We must accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior
2. We must surrender to God's will in all things
3. We must actively produce the fruit that God desires
4. We need to understand that trials and discipline are for our own good
5. We must live by God's word
6. We need to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
7. We must be converted to produce spiritual fruit
8. We need to develop our spiritual gifts
9. We must actively oppose false teachers who reject Jesus Christ
10. We must study Scripture carefully to learn God's will
11. We should have a tangible record of accomplishments
12. We need to believe in God's love for us
13. We must follow Christ's teaching, example