

## Gospel of John Chapter 15B

Last week we began to consider what it means as Christians to ABIDE in Christ.

We learned that the word “ABIDE” describes our relationship to Jesus Christ.

- You may have been in a conversation with someone and they referred to your “religion” and you corrected them, saying it is not a religion but a relationship w/ Jesus.
- If you were called upon to explain that relationship, how would you best describe it?
  - Would you compare it to Friendship? (Jesus is my best buddy)
  - A Strong Brotherhood? (One where Jesus would die for you and you for him)
  - A Father and Son relationship? (picturing - Authority love and respect)
  - A Bride and Groom? (Revealing the passion, love, commitment)
- I believe that Jesus defined our relationship BEST here in John 15 when he compares it to a vine and its branches.
  - As believers we grow together in Christ.
  - We receive ALL of our life from Him. In ourselves we can do nothing.
  - Our lives are filled with his energy, his power, his resources.
  - Our lives can only be truly fruitful as we abide in Him.

John 15:1 **“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”** 7<sup>th</sup> “I Am” statement

- Jesus is the TRUE vine. Israel was a type or shadow of the True Vine to come. Jesus is the true seed of Abraham, the ultimate planting of the Lord. The true vine.

The Father is the Vinedresser / The Lord describes the work of the Vinedresser in this way:

John 15:2 **Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**

- Takes away – (original language) to Lift Up
- Prune – To cleanse ridding the branch of disease, mold, pruning that which is unproductive

Vs 3 **Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.**

- The disciples were declared to be clean through faith in God’s living Word, they trusted in the Lord Jesus and believed his Gospel.

These are the points I introduced Last Week: (we covered the first 2)

1. Who is the Vine? (Jesus)
2. Who maintains and cares for the vine? (the Father)
3. What is a true believer’s relation to the Vine?
4. What is the evidence of a true believers union with the vine?
5. What kind of fruit does the vine produce in its branches?

What is a true believer’s relation to the Vine?

The illustration that Jesus uses is that of a branch in its natural union with a vine.

- The branch did not produce the vine the vine produced the branch by its own accord.
- Jesus is describing a living union where the life of the vine flows freely into each branch.
- Any branch that is not joined in living union with the vine is dead and cannot produce fruit.

John 15:4 **Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.**

- Because true believers abide in a vital union with the vine they naturally produce fruit. True Believers are those branches who abide in Christ the vine.

ABIDE – (MENO - describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state or endures) In this context the word refers to unbroken communion with Jesus Christ.

- ABIDE is a relational word.
- Through FAITH we have been JOINED as one with Christ.
- I performed a wedding yesterday and was confronted once again with the mystery of how God could take a man and a woman and make them ONE FLESH. 1x1=1
- Through Faith we have been joined and are ONE with Christ.

Just as the branches are in the Vine so true believers are “In Christ.”

Ephesians 1: 7 **In him (In vital union with Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight**

- Think about this: a branch remains “IN THE VINE” despite the heavy snows of winter, the torrential downpours of Spring and the baking heat of the Summer, so a True Believer will inevitably remain IN CHRIST despite the treacherous surroundings.
- By Grace through faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice we have been joined with Christ, the vine. Now we live our lives “In Him.”

Colossians 2: 6 **Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk (present active indicative [walk now]) in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.**

8 **See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.**

- To ABIDE is to Remain at rest in Him despite the philosophical or pseudo-science deceit that masquerades as knowledge in our present world.
- The simplicity of Christ is wiser than the greatest philosophical theories of men.

SECOND POINT What is the evidence of a true believers union with the vine?

John 15:5 **I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.**

- The evidence of a true believers union with Christ is the fruit of Christ in his life.

In Galatians 5 the Fruit of the Spirit is the INTERNAL characteristics or qualities produced through our living union with Christ.

- Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control.
- The New Testament also portrays WORSHIP as “the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name.” Hebrews 13:15
- Romans 6:22 **now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.**
- Ephesians 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

- So you see the fruit of Christ in us takes many forms BUT they are all evidence of His life in us.

NOW, we would all agree that the VINE (Jesus) is a good vine; (RIGHT?) so all of the branches ABIDING in him should produce good fruit.

- In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus instructed his disciples how to recognize False Prophets. They might look like real sheep but the FRUIT of their lives identifies them as wolves.

Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Luke 6: 43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,

- In Matthew, Jesus compares the wolves, false disciples to dead trees. The only thing that dead trees are useful for is fire.
- Here in JOHN, Jesus speaks of “*Those who do not abide in him*” in the same way:

John 15:6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

- I believe that the branches who do not abide and never produce fruit, those who end up in the fire, have never truly been connected in a living union with the vine.
- The comparison of branches who abide and branches who do not abide is much like the comparison between the wheat and the tares. (Matthew 13) They both grow in the same field but only the wheat produces fruit.

1 John 2: 18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued (MENO – ABIDE) with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

- They were part of the fellowship BUT never truly one with Christ therefore they did not remain.

John MacArthur: “There may be times when true believers have lapses, when they fail to be faithful to their life in Christ. But true branches, through whom the life of the vine flows, cannot ultimately fail to produce fruit.”

(As a side note) I gather from Vs 7 – 8 that prayer plays an important part in the bearing of fruit in the life of a true believer.

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. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

- This is a glorious, sweeping, all-encompassing promise, very similar to the one we saw in John 14:

John 14:13 **Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.**

The conditions behind this sweeping promise hinge on the word “ABIDE.” (our focus word)

- If you ABIDE in me (remain in vital union with the Vine)
- AND (IF) my Words abide in you.
  - The “Words” of Jesus are (RHEMATA) All of the individual utterances that together constitute Jesus’ word. These utterances must lodge in the mind and heart of the true disciple bringing all of his prayers in line with the will of God.
  - SO effectual prayer springs forth from a living communion with the Lord Jesus directed by continual meditation on His Word.
- This is the effectual prayer life of the living branch that brings glory to God and produces much fruit.

Psalm 37: 4 **Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

LAST POINT: What kind of fruit does the vine produce in its branches?

John 15:9 **As the Father has loved me, so have I 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.**

- Jesus himself is the perfect example of one who ABIDES in the Father.
- He perfectly kept the Father’s commandments and continually REMAINED in his love.
- NOW he calls us to emulate his example, his fruitfulness and because we NOW ABIDE in HIM. We should display the glory of God through the bearing of good fruit.

Bearing fruit is to my father’s glory, and (thus) you will be my disciples – John is saying that Fruit bearing is so closely bound to genuine discipleship that the terms are virtually interchangeable.

The fruit produced in a believer brings glory to the Father AFTER all God is the life giving source that produces the fruit.

Remember Vs 5 **I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.**

What does that fruit look like?

- 11 **These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.**
- 12 **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**
- 13 **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.**
- 14 **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

Here are Just a few: Joy - Brotherly Love - Obedience

Joy – The fruit of joy in the lives of true believers is the joy which belongs to the Lord Jesus himself. (that MY JOY may be in you)

John 17: 13 **But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.** (This is the Joy of the Vine in the Branches)

- Joy of communion with the Father, Joy of true freedom from the bondage of sin

The Love of God

Only those who ABIDE in Christ have the capacity to love divinely as Jesus loved. At our New Birth, the Love of God was poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5: 5 **and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**

Obedience: 14 **You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

Romans 6: 17 **But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,**

18 **and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.**

2 Thessalonians 1:8 tells us that God will inflict: **vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**

True Believers WILL ABIDE in Christ.. And they will produce fruit in season...

Because the life of Christ is in them, they will walk as he walked... Not saying they will never stumble in that walk but in the end they will continue to abide.

In the center of the TOWN of Lahina on the Island of Maui there is a huge Banyan Tree, the tree takes up one entire city block.

The Banyan tree is UNIQUE – the branches of the Banyan reach high into the air and span a great distance, eventually they run back down to the ground. When they touch the ground they actually grow roots and create a support for new branches those new branches will eventually grow roots and support additional branches.

As a mature branch ABIDING in Christ you will become a support for new branches who will grow and become fruitful because the life of the vine abides in you and you in the vine.

The root system of the Banyan Tree helps us understand the call of Jesus when he says:

John 15:16: **I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,**