**JESUS: THE TRUE VINE**

John 15:1-11

Introduction:

The last verse in chapter 14 tells us that Jesus and the Disciples are about to leave the upper room. They are headed to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus will pray His great High Priestly prayer and will later be arrested by the mob led by Judas. Apparently, Jesus speaks the words which make up chapters 15 and 16 in route to the garden.

"Why did Jesus give them this teaching now?" Jesus is going away and leaving them to carry the Good News to the world. These instructions will prepare them to bring forth fruit and to teach others to do the same -- including Twin Lakes Baptist Church.

The Seven "I AM'S"

1. The Bread – 6

2. The Light – 8

3. The Door – 10

4. The Good Shepherd – 10

5. The Resurrection and Life - 11

6. The Way, Truth, Life -14

7. The True Vine – 15\*\*

I. **THE PERSONALITY OF THE TRUE VINE – 15:**1-3

1. **The Genuineness of the True Vine** – 15:1a

“I am the true vine,”

Jesus alone possesses life within Himself (John 14:6) He alone is the true source of everlasting, abundant life. All other vines are counterfeit.

“No, it won't be old Buddha that's sitting on the throne. And it won't be Mohammed that's calling us Home. And it won't be Hare Krishna that plays that trumpet tune. And we're going to see the Son, not Reverend Moon”

1. **The Gardener of the True Vine** – 15:1b

“and My Father is the vinedresser.”

The word vinedresser, refers to the gardener, the one who has the responsibility of caring for the vineyard. Jesus says that the Heavenly Father is the Gardener. The Gardener is involved in everything that has to do with the Vine. This verse zeros in on three specific duties the Gardener in regard to the Vine.

1. **The Gardener Challenges the Branches – 15:2a** ﻿ ﻿﻿

“Every branch in Me (ἐν ἐμοὶ) that does not bear fruit He [takes away] ﻿﻿lifts up;”

“in Me” = relationship. If He wanted to say with me, He could have used παρʼ (ἐμοὶ) with Me, (John 14:17). There He said that the Holy Spirit is with you and He shall be in you.

“lift up” - to raise higher or prop it up. If left on the ground, it will take root and get it’s nourishment from that source instead of from the vine. This will give it a better chance to be productive.

Illustration: There are times when the Lord can accomplish this only through chastening; which, if responded to with repentance, will help us to be fruitful for His glory. Remember that, in chastening, God is not dealing with us as enemies, but as his children. ﻿ “For ﻿﻿whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” (Hebrews 12:6)

If, however, we choose to go on in our sins, there is a sin unto death (1 John 5:16)

1. **The Gardener Cleanses the Branches** – 15:2b

“and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear ﻿﻿more fruit.”

That is, the Gardener removes things from the branch that sap its vitality and strength. Things like sucker branches, useless buds, misdirected shoots, spots, discolored leaves. They produce no fruit

Note: "Pruning" by its very name sounds painful, and it isn't always easy to cut the junk from our lives, but if we don’t do it, the Lord surely will! Notice the advice given in Hebrews 12:1,

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, ﻿﻿let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset *us,* and ﻿﻿let us run ﻿﻿with patience the race that is set before us,”

Question: How is this pruning accomplished?

Answer: By the Word of God – 15:3

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

1. **Like a Mirror - the Word of God reveals problems**,

“For ﻿﻿if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;﻿ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (James 1:23-24).

1. **Like a Knife, the Word of God cuts to the heart**,

“For the word of God *is* ﻿﻿living and powerful, and ﻿﻿sharper than any ﻿﻿two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is ﻿﻿a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)

II. **THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUE VINE – 15:**2-8

1. **There is a Distinct Purpose** – 15:2

The Vine has but one purpose: to produce fruit: through the believer. In the first creation, God commanded that each species produce, “after its kind.” In this instance, that could mean produce other Believers. There is also the fruit of the Spirit produced in us, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, ﻿﻿self-control.” (Gal.5:22)

The Vine exists for that purpose alone. Without the fruit, the vine and all of its efforts are wasted. The True Vine has a singular purpose and that is to bear fruit to the glory of the Lord, The Father. (MORE LATER)

B. **There is a Distinguished Purpose** – 15:8

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; ﻿﻿so you will be My disciples.”

The reason the Vine desires to produce fruit is so that the vine dresser might receive the honor. When fruit is yielded in a vineyard, the credit does not go to the Vine, the branches, the soil, even the fruit. All the glory passes on to the Gardener. So it is with the Lord Jesus. Everything He did was to glorify His Father.

Note: This ought to be the burning desire of every child of God. That is, so to live our lives that every waking minute is bringing glory to the Father in Heaven, (1 Cor. 10:31). There is something wrong in any life when there is no desire to bring glory and honor to the God who loves us, sustains us and cares for us along the way.

1. **There is a Delegated Purpose** – 15:1a, 4-6

Notice this truth. The Vine, itself, does not bear fruit! Its fruit are the branches. The branches have the obligation of bearing the fruit. The Vine supplies its life to the branches and they take that life and use it to bear fruit. Here is a word to the branches about our fruit bearing.

1. **The Qualifications for Bearing Fruit** –

1. **The Branch Must Be Attached To The Vine** – ﻿﻿

“Every branch in Me…” (15:1a)

 If you are not in the Vine, then there is no way for you to share in the Vine's life. This is all about a vital union between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ, the True Vine.

b. **The Branch Must Abide in the Vine** – 15:4

“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.”

That is, we must maintain a close fellowship with the Vine if He is to live through us and produce His fruit in our lives. This is accomplished only by "abiding" in Him!

How does one abide? -- Prayer, my talking to God study the Word, God’s talking to me deny self, draw nigh to God!

The closer we abide to the Vine, the more His life can flow through us to produce the fruit He desires.

c. **The Branch Must Be Available to the Vine** – 15:5

“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.”

Fruit bearing is a passive activity on the part of the branch? If the branch will simply abide in the Vine, then the Vine will most certainly produce its fruit. I don't know about you, but I find that truth liberating! I am not required to do anything but abide. It is the Vine's responsibility to produce His fruit in my life. That frees us from having to work and labor to get His approval. If we will yield, He will live through your life and mine!

Note: When we speak of fruit, what do we mean? What will be produced in our lives when we yield? How will we know if fruit is being produced through us?

There are three basic fruits the Lord bears in the lives of His children,

1)  **Sanctification** - That is, we **become** more like Him - Rom. 6:22; Phil. 1:11;

 Colossians 1:10

“that you may walk worthy of the Lord, ﻿﻿fully pleasing *Him,* ﻿﻿being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the ﻿﻿knowledge of God.”

2)  **Spirituality** - That is, we **behave** more like Him - Gal. 5:22-23 – the fruit of the Spirit.

3)  **Soul Winning** - That is, we are **burdened** like Him

Matthew 9:36-38

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were ﻿﻿weary and scattered, ﻿﻿like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ﻿﻿“The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

Do you think they prayed? Of course they did. Wouldn’t you? Will you? Be careful! What happened when they prayed? He sent them out. Check out Isaiah 6 – the vision – the Call – the answer.

2. **The Quality of our Fruit**

This is not the branches' responsibility! When we are abiding in the Vine and He is reproducing His life in us, we can rest assured that the fruit that is produced is honoring to the Lord. Again, this is a liberating truth!

3. **The Quantity of our Fruit**

Again, this is not the responsibility of the branch. Some will produce much, some will produce little. Which depends upon the will of the Vine. Our duty, to repeat myself, is to abide!

Note: However, it is clear from these verses that God anticipates a steady progression in the level of our fruitfulness. Notice verses 2 & 8 - no fruit (15:2a), fruit, (15:2b), more fruit (15:2c) much fruit! (15:5).

The closer we abide in the Vine, the more fruit He will yield through our lives.

4. **The Quagmire of Fruitlessness** – 15:6

“If anyone does not abide in Me, ﻿﻿he is cast out as a branch and is withered; [and this is how worthless withered branches are] and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”

Not every branch abides in the Vine as it should. It is still attached, but it has ceased to draw life from the Vine's fullness. As a result, it is fruitless and withered. When this happens, there will be three certain results,

1. **Loss of Fellowship** – “cast out”

By not abiding one cannot lose his relationship to the vine. The withered branch still possesses the same nature as the Vine, but it is no longer attached in the sense of life-drawing fellowship.

1. **Loss of Vitality** – “is withered”

The branch is possessing no life! Dead and dried up. It didn't use to be this way, but now there is deadness where there used to be life. There is weakness where there used to be power. There is emptiness where there used to be fullness. The remedy for that is to come back and renew that fellowship. Once again start to draw that life-giving juice from the Vine and begin again to produce fruit for Him.

1. Loss of Usefulness – “they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”

You don’t expect an unbeliever to abide. He has not entered in the first place. These are believers who have failed to abide. Now they are worthless to the vine –> Jesus and His church. They are like the branches that these disciples have seen cast into fire because they are worthless.

d. **Loss of Reward**

When this life is over, there will be many who name the name of Jesus and were unfruitful. They will experience the loss of every reward (1 Cor. 3:13-15). Many think they will be content just to get to Heaven, but there should be a desire to have rewards to lay at His feet. Will you hear, "Well done?" Only if you are a fruitful branch!

1 Cor. 9:27﻿

﻿﻿“But I discipline my body and ﻿﻿bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become ﻿﻿disqualified “ἀδόκιμος” (disapproved)

III. **THE PROMISE OF THE TRUE VINE – 15:**7-11

Those who abide in the True Vine can rest assured of God’s sure and precious promises!

1. **An Unhindered Prayer Life** - 15:7 ﻿

“If you abide in Me, and My words ﻿﻿abide in you, ﻿﻿you ﻿﻿will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

(John 14:13-14) How can this be?

When we are abiding as we should be, and when we are drawing our life from Him, then His will, will be our will. That is, every time we pray and everything we pray for will fit perfectly with His will and He will grant our requests.

B. An Unparalleled Glory – 15:8

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“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; ﻿﻿so you will be My disciples.”

Don’t the angels give glory to God? Yes, but angels were never lost. Jesus did not die for angels.

“Holy, holy” is what the angels sing, and I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring. But when I sing redemption’ story, they will fold their wings. For angels never felt the joy that my salvation brings.

B. **An Unending Love** – 15:9-10

“As the Father ﻿﻿loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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 loves all men always, but those who are abiding in Him have entered into a special, ever-deepening relationship with Him. This is the promise of the Vine to the branches!

C. **An Uncommon Joy** – 15:11

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”

Note: Joy is not happiness, which depends upon happenings, but it is a deep settled inner pleasure.) It is the deep settled assurance and confidence in our relationship with the Father and with His Christ that fills the heart with "joy unspeakable and full of glory", and that ignites the heart to serve God.

Conclusion