

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 16

The True Vine

The True Vine

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To show the students that we receive life from Jesus in the same way that branches only have life when connected to the tree.

Key Verses

John 15: 1-17—Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 7:15-20

Matthew 12:33-37

Memory Verse - Romans 10:13 (November Memory Verse)

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Hook

Gather the class around the plant that has been placed in the room. Have them point out the leaves, the roots, the branches, and the trunk. Ask them how the leaves stay green. Ask them what happens if the leaves fall off the tree. Do the leaves stay alive?

Read John 15 and show them that we are like the leaves or branches, and Jesus is like the trunk of the plant. Only when the branches and leaves are connected to the trunk do they continue to grow and have life.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In John 15, we come to the last of Jesus' "I am" statements. Our final "I am" promise is found in verse 5, "I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit." The discussion of fruit really needs to take place in the context of Matthew 7:15-20, where Jesus speaks about false prophets who will come like wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus says that we will know them by their fruit. He goes on to say that good trees bring forth good fruit, and bad trees bring forth bad fruit. Fruit therefore is an analogy for our actions. Our actions demonstrate who we are spiritually on the inside.

Christ promises us that if we abide in Him we will bear much fruit. He then goes on to describe what some of that fruit, or actions, are: love one another (verse 12), lay down our lives for others (verse 13), obey His commandments (verse 14), and live not as slaves to God but as friends (verse 15), not obeying out of fear of punishment, but out of mutual love and trust. Christ uses this passage to compare Himself to the source of life. When we are connected to Him, we thrive, grow, and produce fruit. When we are separated from Him, we wither and perish.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

In autumn, if you look outside you will see the leaves changing colors and getting ready to fall. Your parents might have to start raking them up outside when they fall to the ground. Leaves are wonderful, amazing things. Their colors are so vibrant, they have such wonderful shapes, and they actually turn sunlight into energy for plants to grow. However, an important thing to know about leaves is that they need to be connected to the tree to live. If a leaf gets taken off the tree, it loses contact with the very thing that provides its food and water.

In John 15, Jesus tells us that we are like branches or leaves, and that He is like a strong tree trunk. In the Bible, Jesus actually uses the term "vine." That is because Jesus was showing His audience something very familiar to them, a grape vine. You might not know what a grape vine looks like, but I think all of you know what a tree looks like.

Jesus says that we need to be as connected to Him as a branch is to a tree. He tells us that if we want health, growth, and life, we need to be set together with Him. There is a very specific reason that Jesus tells us that we need to be joined with Him, and that is to bear fruit.

LOOK (Continued)

Jesus tells us that you can tell a good tree by the fruit it produces. If the fruit is juicy, plump, and delicious, then you know that you have a healthy tree. If the fruit is bruised, rotting, and full of worms, then you know that you have a bad tree. We are like branches on a fruit tree. We are supposed to produce good fruit. Our fruit isn't bananas, apples, or oranges. Our fruit is actually the things that we do: our deeds. Jesus tells us that if we are connected to Him, then He helps us to have good fruit, or to do good things. If we are not connected to Him, then we cannot bear good fruit. Jesus is like the life-giving trunk of a tree. He sustains us, His branches, and helps us to be spiritually healthy and strong so that we can bear good fruit and live for Him.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking what it means to stay connected to Jesus. What is the "fruit" that our lives produce when we remain connected to Jesus?

Pray: Praise the Lord that He desires us to be united with Him. Thank Him for His life giving love, and for strengthening us to do good deeds in His Name. Ask to be daily drawn closer to Him.

Parent Question: If Jesus is the Vine, what are we?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on John 15:1-17 by David Guzik

John 15 - The Departing Jesus Teaches His Disciples about Life In Him

A. When Jesus is gone, they must still abide in Him and bear fruit.

1. (1-3) Jesus: the **true vine**.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."

a. **I am the true vine**: Jesus may have said this in view of or as they passed by the great golden vine that set as a decoration on the front of the temple. This vine symbolized the nation Israel, because the vine is a familiar Old Testament symbol for Israel (Psalm 80:8-9). Yet it is often used in a negative sense (as in Isaiah 5:1-2, 7 and Jeremiah 2:21).

i. In contrast, Jesus is **the true vine**. We must be rooted in Him (not in Israel) if we will bear fruit for God. In the New Covenant community, our first identification is in *Jesus Christ Himself*, not in Israel or even in the church as such.

ii. "He had often said it to Himself, but this was the first time He had ventured to announce it to His disciples. And what made Him speak so plainly that night was because He had just had the wine-cup in His hand, and had distributed it to His disciples; that wine-cup into which, as He looked down into it, He saw crushed all the grape-clusters of His whole life, as well as His heart's-blood in Gethsemane that night and on Calvary next morning." (Whyte, *The Walk, Conversation and Character of Jesus Christ our Lord*)

b. **And My Father is the vinedresser**: In the Old Testament use of the vine as a picture of Israel, God the Father was also presented as the one who cultivated and managed the vine. This role is also applicable to the believer under the New Covenant.

i. The New Covenant participant has relationship with both the **Father** and the Son; with both the **vine** itself and the **vinedresser**.

c. **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away**: The branches that are taken away were never properly abiding in the vine, demonstrated by the fact that they did **not bear fruit**.

i. There is an alternative understanding of this passage that bears consideration. James Montgomery Boice (among others) believes that the ancient Greek verb *airo*, translated here as "**takes away**" is more accurately translated "lifts up." The idea is that the Father lifts up unproductive vines off of the ground (as was common in the ancient practices of vineyard care). They lifted them up off the ground that they might get more sun and bear fruit better.

d. **Every branch that bears fruit He prunes**: This word for **prunes** is the same word translated *cleanse* in other places. They used the same word could apply to either "pruning" or "cleansing" in ancient Greek.

e. **You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you:** The word of God is a cleansing agent. It condemns sin, it inspires holiness, it promotes growth, it reveals power for victory.

2. (4-8) The vital relationship between the branch and the vine.

"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. 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. 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. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

a. **Abide in Me, and I in You . . . the branch cannot bear fruit of itself . . . He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit:** Fruit bearing is impossible without abiding; but it is inevitable with abiding. The quality and quantity of the fruit may differ, but the presence of fruit will be inevitable.

i. It is a simple fact: **the branch cannot bear fruit of itself.** Apart from the life of the vine***

i. The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit. People don't raise grape vines to look at the pretty leaves. They take the trouble to cultivate, plant, water and tend the vines so that fruit can be enjoyed. In this sense, we can say that fruit represents Christian character (such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5).

ii. Fruit also implies inherent reproduction. Virtually every piece of fruit has seeds within it, seeds that are meant to reproduce more fruit.

iii. The concept of abiding is not restricted to our abiding in Jesus; it also includes His abiding in us (**and I in him**). It is a mutual dynamic that expects us to live spiritually and practically in vital connection with Jesus, *and* that expects Him to indwell us in an active, real way. In no way is the responsibility for abiding only upon the believer.

b. **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered:** What was Jesus saying here? There are basically three views regarding what this passage says about the believer's position in Jesus.

i. The first view believes **cast out** branches are ones who, though once true believers, end up in Hell for a lack of fruit. They were once saved, but are now **cast out**.

ii. The second view is that the **cast out** branches are pseudo Christians who never really abided in Jesus, and therefore go to Hell (like Judas).

iii. The third view sees the branches **cast out** as fruitless Christians who live wasted - burnt up - lives (like Lot).

c. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit:** There is an easy way to avoid being one of the **cast out** branches. They are the ones who do **not abide in Me**, said Jesus. If we abide in Jesus, we have full confidence and assurance.

i. Real fruitfulness is only determined over an extended period of time. "Genuine conversion is not measured by the hasty decision but by long-range fruitfulness." (Erdman) This principle is displayed in the Parable of the Soils (Matthew 13).

d. **You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you:** Answered prayer is a privilege of close abid-

ing; we find our prayers in tune with Jesus' will.

e. **By this My Father is glorified:** The purpose of fruit-bearing is to bring glory to God, not man. If people look at our lives and praise *us* for the glorious fruit, something is wrong. The whole purpose is to glorify God.

B. When Jesus is gone, they must love one another all the more.

1. (9-11) The link between love and obedience.

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

a. **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love:** We know that we abide in God's love by obedience, not by our mystical experiences.

b. **These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full:** When we fail to abide in Jesus' love, and thereby fail to keep His commandments, then we do not have the fullness of joy He promises to those who do abide in His love and obedience.

i. "No one is more miserable than the Christian who for a time hedges in his obedience. He does not love sin enough to enjoy its pleasures, and does not love Christ enough to relish holiness. He perceives that his rebellion is iniquitous, but obedience seems distasteful. He does not feel at home any longer in the world, but his memory of his past associations and the tantalizing lyrics of his old music prevent him from singing with the saints. He is a man most to be pitied; and he cannot forever remain ambivalent." (Carson)

ii. It begins with abiding in the love of Jesus; much of our low level of Christian living comes from not being persuaded of the love of God for us. This is, in part, what kept Israel out of the Promised Land at Kadesh Barnea (Deuteronomy 1:27)

c. **If you keep My commandments:** The foremost commandment to obey is *love one another* (John 13:34), and while Christians are ready to describe the delights of love in the new heaven and new earth, we often still hoard our resentments, animosities and bitterness down here. An old poem puts it well:

To live above with those you love: Undiluted glory.

To live below with those you know: Quite another story.

d. **That My joy may remain in you:** When we think about the joy of Jesus, we understand that it isn't the same as what we often think of as "happiness" or "excitement." The joy of Jesus is not the pleasure of a life of ease; it is the exhilaration of being right with God, and consciously walking in His love and care. We can have that **joy**, and have it as an abiding presence.

e. **That your joy may be full:** This is the result of abiding in Jesus' love, and obedience flowing from that abiding relationship.

2. (12-17) Jesus speaks of the extent of His love that they are to imitate.

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 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. 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. These things I command you, that you love one another."

a. **That you love one another as I have loved you:** They are commanded to love in a particular way, according to the way Jesus loved (**as I have loved you**). What was the love of Jesus like?

b. **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends:** It is a love that will **lay down** its life for others; it is a love that treats **servants** as **friends**.

i. "The friend is a confidant who shares the knowledge of his superior's purpose and voluntarily adopts it as his own." (Tenney)

ii. The difference between a servant and a friend is not between diligent obedience and disobedience (or even casual obedience). The difference is between understanding and not understanding. Because friends have a close relationship, they understand while servants do not.

c. **You did not choose Me, but I chose you:** It is love based on Divine election; love that takes the initiative. Jesus introduced this thought right at the point where the disciples might feel proud that they are the friends of Jesus, bearing great fruit for God.