

No words are more beautiful, more wonderful than the actual words of Jesus. That is probably why John is the favorite gospel for many. Jesus' words are clear, comforting, convicting. So, let's enjoy John 15 as we stroll through it together.

Scene: Jesus in Chapter 14, "Get up. Let us go from here". So, this is an evening conversation, as they walked from the upper room to Gethsemane, doubtless amongst many luscious, green gardens, a perfect picture!

15 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 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. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also 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. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. ¹² "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. ¹⁷ This I command you, that you love one another.

18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it* hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' **26** "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, ²⁷ and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

To understand some of this discourse by Jesus – really best to look at the situation as He spoke to them that evening.



Leaving the Upper Room, Jerusalem, by city of David

Crossing the Valley of Kidron, going to Garden of Gethsemane,

Judas had just left them, Judas will betray Jesus to His death

Verse one begins easily enough, but then, What's this in verse two? Has this verse caused you any confusion? How about including verse 6?

Gardening tips for Fruit Bearing

What is this branch that does not bear fruit? Judas branch- no fruit, no Holy Spirit life, sap, flowing through it, it is spiritually dead still- God doesn't have to break off this branch, just take it away, it isn't attached, isn't abiding in Jesus. Judas bore no fruit of God. (These distinctions are all true to the original words that Jesus chose to use!)

- 1- We "**bear**" fruit, We carry or hold fruit, we don't produce it. It isn't our responsibility to strain to produce fruit. It is merely the result, the "fruit" of staying in, living in, abiding in Jesus. Focus on Jesus, not on fruit production. Imagine a branch, deciding they were going to excel in this fruit producing category, and off he goes, clinched teeth, furrowed brow and determination in his little branch heart. Walking off, away from the vine, to produce a bumper crop of fruit. Alas, he won't even be able to squeeze out a raisin for all his efforts. Besides his unfruitfulness, he looks kinda silly out there, without a vine, no roots, just a lone branch struggling in vain.
- 2- He **prunes** it so that it may bear more fruit. Prune, Clean it. Suckers on plants. Tomato plants. God will remove wasteful diversions from our life so that we can bear, carry much better and more fruit.
- 3- IF we **abide**, live in Christ, WE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT, No other option, statement of fact.
- 4- **Apart from Jesus**, our source, we can do nothing! Of course, makes logical sense.
- 5- What is the **purpose of fruit**? Verse 8, As you produce much fruit, my Father is glorified. Taste, beautiful, makes vine look wonderful, glorifies God, but what else, what is in the fruit? The Seed. As people enjoy, experience the fruit from Christians (fruit produced by God), they encounter the seed, the seed is left behind. Exegetically, for a parable, this may be a step too far, but it works, unless you have these modern seedless grapes.
- 6- Be clear, in this word picture, Fruit is **not** other Christians. Other Christians are branches, "You are the **branches**". We don't produce other Christians, other branches, they must all come off of Jesus. Especially good picture in a vineyard, as all branches sprout off main trunk vine, not off each other.
- 7- Jesus says He is the **TRUE VINE**. Vines that branch off at the ground, below the desired grape variety graft, produce "incredibly nasty" grapes (per Youtube) So people that have a different source for their life, not Jesus as their source, will have a different outcome or fruit than God's blessed, Holy Spirit fruit. Rev. 14:18-20 speaks of trampling down the grapes produced by evil. Grapes deserving God's wrath, i.e. Grapes of Wrath.
- 8- So **what should we do**? Just cling to, rely on, trust in Jesus. Hang on to Him. He is your life. He is your source for everything good.

Now verses 9-17 are all about Love. Also remember 13:34, a new command! Greatest power in the universe. The power that God chooses to use to save us, convert us. It was His motivation (3:16), His reason for saving us. He wants us to share this same amazing love- for Him and for each other. And the greatest love possible, dying for us, Jesus did that!

There is a church tradition, evidently a pretty reliable tradition from Jerome, which says, that when John was an old man in Ephesus, he had to be carried to the church in the arms of his disciples. At these meetings, he was accustomed to say no more than, "Little children, love one another!" After a time, the disciples wearied at **always** hearing the same words, asked, "Master, why do you always say this?" "It is the Lord's command," was his reply. "And if this alone be done, **it is enough!**"

So far it's all been about love, for the last two chapters, encouragement, peace. But now, Jesus changes the tone in verses 18-25. Why? Is this helpful? Why not all lollipops and cotton candy?

It is going to happen. If, when it happened, and we hadn't been warned, we might think that God was not in control, that perhaps Jesus' promises were not as strong as He let on.

So, what does Jesus promise our relationship with the world will be like? Are these words comforting? Is this helpful?

Interesting note: In each of the previous gospels, there are only 30 verses covering these dinner and after dinner conversations. In John there are over 155 verses relating to us these precious words of Jesus, things He wanted them to know before He was to be taken away and crucified. I guess John wanted us to know what happened in these last few minutes. Is this is what makes John so special? I never knew how much of his gospel was devoted to this time period.