

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 17TH-18TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

## THE VINE (JOHN 15:1-8) FAMILIAR IMAGERY

Jesus' example of a vineyard would have been very understandable for Jews. Throughout the OT, the vine was a regular symbol of Israel.

- Jesus' analogy is about the vineyard owner being God, Jesus is the vine, and His true followers are the branches that remain connected to the vine.

## PRODUCING FRUIT

Jesus tells His disciples that branches that don't produce fruit God removes from the vine, they "wither," and are "throw[n]...into the fire." Is this referring to salvation or just living productive Christian lives? One could say it touches both.

- **Salvation enables us to live God-honoring productive lives.**

## DOES THIS MEAN WE CAN LOSE SALVATION?

**If one is truly saved, there will be a desire to know God and follow His commands (John 14:15).** If one claims salvation but doesn't strive to live in Jesus' words (John 8:31), they haven't shown evidence of true salvation.

- **If we "know a tree by its fruit" (Matthew 7), what can we say when one produces no fruit?**

## "... PROVE TO BE MY DISCIPLES"

Being a true follower of Jesus is evident in our consistent adherence to His Word (John 8 and 14) and production of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) in this life.

- **Most likely, the "burned branches" are those who falsely claim a life in Christ but really live for themselves (Judas).**

## THOSE WHO REMAIN PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT

True Christians abide in Jesus. This doesn't mean we don't fail or "backslide" at times, but true Christians repent and seek to live righteously and produce the fruit of being connected to Jesus.

- **When we abide in Jesus, how we live, treat others, and grow in God changes drastically!**

## LOVING OTHERS (JOHN 15:9-17) "REMAIN IN MY LOVE"

The Father loves the Son, and that love is reflected onto us. We're to live in this love, but in order to do that, we must "keep [His] commands."

- **We can't live in God's love if we choose to live in rebellion of His Word. It is only in the truth of His Word we're set free and have knowledge of real love.**

## POSSESSING CONTENTMENT

In Jesus' love, we have "complete joy." This is not happiness like the world promotes, but a deep contentment regardless of circumstances.

- Remember, the disciples were about to experience horrific futures. **We learn that circumstances don't determine the joy and peace of the true Believer.**

## BEING A "FRIEND" OF GOD?

Not since Abraham had God called anyone His friend. Now we see the circle is expanding and we are now included in this intimate relationship with God.

- **This shouldn't diminish our reverence of Jesus. Jesus is still Lord and the all-powerful Creator of the universe.**

## THE COMMAND TO LOVE OTHERS

Jesus said, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." Though this applies to all of His teachings, Jesus is really alluding to how we love and treat others.

- **Friendship with God involves obedience and obedience to God results in loving and serving ALL people around us.**

## "WHATEVER [WE] ASK...IN [HIS] NAME"

We talked about this in the last chapter. When we pray for things in the will of God, we receive those things because God already wants us to have them.

- This goes back to living in the Vine and submitting to the will of God instead of our own selfish desires.

## CAN WE LOVE WITHOUT CONDONING?

We live in a narrative that if we disagree, we must hate each other. The Word teaches us to radically love, but to also not compromise our biblical integrity.

- **There is no true love without truth. If we claim to love others, we must be honest, especially with eternal truths!**

## PERSECUTION (JOHN 15:18-27) FROM LOVING OTHERS TO BEING HATED

Satan is the "ruler of the world" (culture), so we shouldn't be surprised that people who adhere to the "world" hate Jesus and His followers.

- **This hatred is from a rebellion to God's authority and absolute truth. When life is all about us, we hate anything that stands in our way.**

## HATE WILL EVENTUALLY TURN TO ACTION

Jesus tells us that a "servant is not greater than his master." This means that **as Christ suffered for the truth and principles of the Kingdom, His servants will as well.**

- The hatred of "the world" will manifest in social and physical persecution. This has always existed, but will intensify.

## HATRED IS ALSO BIRTHED FROM IGNORANCE

Jesus said they hate "because they don't know the one who sent me." This should inspire us to **look beyond people's hatred, love them, and try to spread the truth regardless of the possibility of harm.**

- We see such love from Jesus in Luke 23 and even Stephen in Acts 7.

## "NOW THEY HAVE NO EXCUSE FOR THEIR SIN"

Though we are to spread the gospel, people who live in opposition of it still have the responsibility to seek the truth and repent. **Because Jesus came and we have access to His Word, humanity is without excuse.**

- **God will reveal truth to anyone who is humble and seeks the answers.**

## BUT WE ARE AN IRRESPONSIBLE PEOPLE

The problem isn't clarity or accessibility to the truth of God. The problem is our **selfishness and unwillingness** to see it. We're also a culture with a **victim mentality that rarely accepts personal responsibility.**

- **It is impossible to see the work of God if we only look at ourselves.**

## "THEY HATED ME FOR NO REASON"

Jesus quotes Psalm 35:19 and 69:4 that David wrote about a righteous person being persecuted for no reason to highlight the audacity of people hating their Creator.

- **God loves and knows what's best for us. His commands are for our benefit, but many hate accountability, therefore hating God.**

## WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO (V26-27)

The world is a mess because people are a mess. Christians are called to be a reflection of Jesus' light until He returns, but this is only possible with help from "the Counselor."

- **Just as Jesus testified about God and the Kingdom, we're to do the same until He returns. This is every Christian's call.**

## LIVING IN THE VINE

- **Living in Jesus produces much fruit in our lives.** God transforms our minds, hearts, and actions to build us up, honor Him, and bless others.
- To live in Jesus we must ask the big questions, **seek and accept the truth, humble ourselves and repent, and be obedient to God's Word.**

## LOVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FRUIT

- Jesus first loved us. In this love, we find "complete" joy, peace, and fulfillment.
- **If we truly love Jesus, we will also love others because it is His second great command.**
- Loving and putting others first isn't always natural, so we must ask God to supernaturally change our hearts.

## TRUE LOVE IS BIBLICAL AND DIFFICULT

- **We're called to love ALL kinds of people.** Can we honestly say we do this?
- Loving others is not turning a blind eye to sin. Only the truth sets people free, so withholding truth is not love. **The tension is that we must love radically without compromising biblical integrity.**

## DON'T GROW WEARY

- Truly living in Jesus, holding onto the truth, and loving others in a biblical manner will bear fruit, but it will also garner hatred.
- Are we not only prepared for the cross we will have to bear, but **are we willing to continue advancing the Kingdom in the face of social and physical persecution?**
- **Galatians 6:9-10**

Are we living in the Vine?

Are we properly loving others?

Are we fighting the temptation to give up by going back to the Vine?