

Eternal Life Through Believing in Jesus

37) Abiding in Christ

'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'
(John 15:1-2)

This was spoken the night before the cross

Is it a reference to salvation and the possibility of losing it, or fellowship and fruitfulness?

**Jesus is not speaking here about salvation, but
concerning the fruitful life**

***'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'
(Jn.15:2)***

***'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'
(Jn.15:4)***

***'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'
(John 15:5)***

'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples'
(Jn.15:8)

'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'
(Jn.15:16)

The Christian life is Christ in us and us in Him

No grape can be better than the vine that produced it

When a branch is grafted into a vine it receives the life of the vine

- ✓ Jesus is the true vine. 'True' (*alethinos*). As opposed to counterfeit, simulated or replicated. Or, in contrast to a type, '*...a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man*' (Heb.8:2). An earthly picture portrays a heavenly reality. God created the vine to teach Jesus
- ✓ Others will pose as vines to us and we may attach ourselves to them for well-being. A church, another Christian, a teacher, etc.
- ✓ God uses these but don't get caught up in false loyalties. Our loyalty is to Christ. Expect every church and leader to have something wrong with them. Don't replace Christ-dependency for co-dependency

- ✓ **The gardener tends, waters, protects and cultivates it so that it will give maximum yield. The gardener has a vision for the vine. He is going to take care of the vine and the branches**
- ✓ **The vine is the glory of the gardener and the branches are the glory of the vine**
- ✓ **A vine needs branches to bear fruit. Branches exist in the vine for the purpose of bearing the fruit of the vine. The vine produces the fruit, and the branches bear the fruit**
- ✓ **Where there is no fruit, His desire is for fruit. Where there is fruit, His desire is for more fruit. Fruit, more fruit, much fruit**

1) Every branch that does not bear fruit he lifts up (not takes away). The Greek word *airo* is frequently translated 'lifted up.' E.g.: To lift up voices (Luke 17:13), eyes (John 11:41); hand (Rev.10:5), etc.

2) Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. *kathairo* – to cleanse or purge from that which hinders fruitfulness, 'If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ... For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness' (Heb.12:7,10)

- ✓ **So, we must connect *kathairo* with v3: 'You are already clean (*katharos*) because of the word which I have spoken to you' (Jn.15:3). This is justification. *Kathairo* is sanctification. Sanctification does not determine my union with Christ. If I do wrong behavior, God rejects that behavior but He doesn't reject me. My relationship is determined by justification**
- ✓ **Fruitfulness is a gradual process. Yet, His purpose is for fruitfulness – conformity to His image. He will use chastening to bring change**
- ✓ **The Vine is one tree that needs constant pruning. Otherwise, the long shoots will just keep growing wood and taking the sap. The sap is for fruit. Dead wood can harbour disease and decay**

'You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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'
(John 15:3-4)

The word 'abide', is found 15 times in the first ten verses

After the cross, following was replaced by abiding

- ✓ **To be in Christ and to abide in Him are two different things. The first is union (2 Cor.5:17). The second is communion, i.e., fellowship or relationship with Christ**
- ✓ **As we abide in Him we participate in divine life**
- ✓ **We abide in Him and He produces the fruit. The secret of the Christian Life is that He does it all. Everything we do will be burned up**
- ✓ **When a branch is grafted into a vine there is a 2-fold process. The small roots and fibers of the branch grow into the stem of the vine, and the stem grows into the branch**

'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'

(Jn.15:5-6)

***A branch cannot bear fruit by itself. 'Your fruit is found in Me' (Hos.14:8). '...being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God' (Phil.1:11). 'Abide in Me and let Me work through you'**

***The branch abides, rests. Don't be occupied with the abiding. Be occupied with Christ**

The wood of the vine is useless for anything other than bearing fruit. It cannot be made into furniture because it is too soft

A branch that doesn't bear fruit is good only for fuel; not even the fire of the altar, only bonfires

'Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire'
(1 Cor.3:13-15)

'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'
(John 15:7-8)

What is to abide?

1) Jesus connected abiding to the idea of faithfulness to His words, as before, 'Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me"' (Jn.14:23-24)

'Words' – remata, i.e. specific instructions rather than logos of the Word (v.3)

2) He also connected abiding to the idea of answered prayer, 'whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it' (John 14:13-14)

So, communion is maintained by a conscious acceptance and obedience of His word, and a constant dependence upon Him in prayer. 'Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him' (1 John 5:14-15). 'You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures' (James 4:3)

***This promise is in relation to their mission. He was sending them into the world. It was not a blank cheque for anything they wanted for themselves**

***This is how Jesus dwelt in His Father's love, *'Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, "I do not know Him," I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word'* (Jn.8:55)**

***Just as Jesus glorified the Father by His life so we will honour Him by our fruit. It is the honour of the vinedresser to have good, strong, vigorous vines, plentifully laden with fruit. So, it is the honour of God to have strong, vigorous children, bearing the fruit of love and obedience**

'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...'

