

The Parables of Jesus

The Parable of the Vine and Branches

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I. Introductory Remarks.

The new birth is not the end, but rather the beginning of a new life in Christ, which involves abiding in Jesus and Him in us. As we abide in Christ, we will have His presence and power and we will be fruit producers and thus be true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John's gospel, Chapter 15:1-7 we find the Parable of the Vine and Branches. We will discover that this parable is about the demand that our discipleship to Jesus imposes upon us and the conditions that make it effective.

What is easier to say, "I'm a Christian" or "I'm a disciple?" It doesn't take much to say that I'm a Christian, but there is more involved when you tell someone you are a follower of Jesus and a disciple.

The truth is; what makes you a Christian is whether you are willing to abide in Jesus and His love.

II. The Components of this Parable.

1. Jesus is the True Vine.

John 15:1-2 *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.*

Jesus' description of Himself as the true vine or 'genuine', vine implies that Israel had been an imperfect foreshadowing of what God had called Israel to be, but what Israel had never become.ⁱ

With Jesus, therefore a new Israel emerges, the members which draw spiritual substance from Him alone.

When Jesus spoke of the Vine, the people of Israel understood the concept of the nation of Israel being referred to as the vine; so here we find Jesus challenge their old concepts once again.

Jeremiah 2:21-22 *Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?*

²²For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, Yet your iniquity is marked before Me," says the Lord God.

The prophet, Jeremiah describes Israel here as a vine that had been brought out of Egypt by God and planted by Him in a godly land, which had failed to yield fruit to the owner He had a right to expect.

They had allowed the philosophies of the world to be molded into their way of life, of which we are warned against as well.

Colossians 2:8 *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

The prophet Isaiah describes the same condition that Jeremiah describe with Israel as the vine.

Isaiah 5:1-2 *Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. ² He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. ⁱⁱ*

In this parable, Jesus is saying that He is the True Vine. In other words He is saying, "If you want anything to do with the Vinedresser, who is the Father, you must come through Me."

We should ask ourselves the question, ***"Is Christianity today a true representation of what God expects it to be?" "Are we abiding in the True vine or have we adopted the philosophies of the world?"***

John 1:4 *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

1 John 5:12 *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

2. The Father is the Vinedresser or Caretaker with a Concern for Spiritual Growth.

John 15: 2 *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.*

Jesus said, *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He (the Father) takes away and even those branches that bear fruit He prunes for the purposes of bearing more fruit.”*

Remember what Isaiah said. He said the Father expected the vineyard to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. The Father is concerned that His new vineyard does not bring forth wild fruit so he prunes it and cuts out that which is not producing.

Our Caretaker takes away that which may hinder real spiritual growth in our lives.

Illustration: Orchardist who prunes his apple trees to keep them from growing wild and not producing good fruit.

What happens to trees that are not pruned? The fruit is very small, ugly and distorted.

Proverbs 3:11-12 *My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; ¹² for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.*

3. We Are Clean Through the Word.

John 15:3 *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

Jesus makes this powerful statement: *“You are already clean because of the Word which I have spoken to you.”*

Our cleaning process comes as a result of the blood He shed for us on the cross. We have now become totally righteous in Him.

In one sense we are totally clean and justified because of His blood. In another sense we are still being sanctified and cleansed through the Word.ⁱⁱⁱ

The first aspect of our cleansing process comes when the Word of God enters our hearts and we accept Jesus, the Word of Life into our lives, but the second part of this process continues as we apply His Word to our lives.

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Ephesians 5:25-27 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

4. As Branches of the Vine We Must Abide in the Vine to Produce Fruit.

John 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.*

To abide in Christ is to have continuous fellowship and dependence upon Him. Our ability to produce fruit in our lives stems from our fellowship and dependence upon walking with the Lord Jesus Christ in obedience.

2 Corinthians 3:4-5 *And we have such trust through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,*

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

The spiritual fruit that Jesus wants to produce in us is brought forth by continually abiding in Him and allowing Him to be our sufficiency.

In order to adequately abide with Christ, we must obey Him and walk as He walked. The Bible says, How can two walk together unless they be agreed.^{iv}

1 John 2:6 *He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

Over the years, as a pastor, I have observed people who supposedly come into the kingdom, who never seem to produce any kind of fruit whatsoever. The thing

that I have observed is that they do not make any kind of a separation from the world and sin.

They chose not to abide in Christ by putting the old behind them and becoming new in Christ. As a result the new remains unnourished, buried deep within them.

5. The Blessings of Abiding In Christ.

- **The Father will be glorified.**

John 15:8 *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

- **We receive those things we ask for.**

John 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.*

1 John 3:22 *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

- **The love of Jesus will remain in us.**

John 15:10 *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.*

- **Our joy remains full.**

John 15:11 *These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. They are to show their love to him by keeping his commandments.— *Matthew Henry Concise*

- **We come into a deeper relationship and friendship with Jesus.**

John 15:14-15 *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*

¹⁵ *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.

III. Concluding Remarks.

Are you abiding in Christ? Do you walk and talk with Him daily? Are you growing daily – producing fruit – and reaching out to the lost for Christ?

If you don't grow, there's a possibility that you could fall by the wayside.

Allow Jesus to abide in you and remove those things from your life that keep you from being the best for Him

ⁱ Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – The Gospel of John by R.V.G. Tasker, page 174.

ⁱⁱ See Romans 11:17-24

ⁱⁱⁱ Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

^{iv} Amos 3:3