

Who was Jesus? – Answers from the Gospel of John

Jesus – The True Vine (John 15:1-17)

8-16-09

Set the Stage

We're going to go through this passage verse by verse today so if you were to keep your Bibles open to it I think it would be beneficial.

Thursday evening the night of the Passover. Jesus and his disciples are gathered in the upper room eating the Passover meal which Jesus knew would be their "Last Supper" together. Jesus has already...

- Washed the disciples' feet
- Predicted His betrayal by Judas Iscariot
- Predicted Peter's denial
- Told the disciples that in His Father's house there are many rooms and that He is going to prepare a place for them.
- Taught His disciples that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no can come to the Father except through Him
- And promised His disciples that He will not leave them alone but will send them the Holy Spirit to be with them when he goes

We pick up Jesus' own words in 14:25...

John 14:25-31 (NIV)

²⁵ "All this I have spoken while still with you.

²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

²⁸ "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

³⁰ I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me,

³¹ but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. *"Come now; let us leave.*

We know from 18:1 that Jesus and the disciples then went on their way across the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane where he would plead with His Heavenly Father three times to take the cup of suffering on the cross away from Him before being betrayed and arrested. While they were on their way you can just imagine Jesus walking by a vineyard, and in the moonlight, using one of its vines as an illustration...

Read John 15:1-8 illustrating as you go...

John 15:1-8 (NIV)

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

- "Jesus" the Vine / "God the Gardener" above

² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

- Fruitless severed branch / Fruitful connected branch, extra growth, and pruning sheers

³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

- Drooping branch

⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- Add more fruit to fruitful branch

⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

- Fire with arrow from fruitless branch

⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:1 (NIV)

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

- What does Jesus mean when He says, "I am the *true* vine."

- God often referred to His chosen people Israel as His vine or vineyard in the OT.
 - **Isaiah 5:1-7 (NIV)**
 - ¹ I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.
 - ² He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.
 - ³ "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.
 - ⁴ What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?
 - ⁵ Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.
 - ⁶ I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it."
 - ⁷ The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.
- Israel had been planted and cared for by God in order that they would bear fruit and bring glory to Him. Because they did not, God sent Jesus, and all those connected to Him by faith, to replace them. Unlike Israel, Jesus and His disciples would not fail, but would instead bear much fruit and bring much glory to God their Father

- my Father is the *gardener*...
 - Jesus never acts independently of God the Father
 - Like the gardener, the Father is in control of (or over) the spiritual fruit bearing process
 - He tends to the branches of the vine in two ways...

John 15:2 (NIV)

²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

- 1) Cuts off or takes away (ESV) the fruitless branches
 - a. Fruit is the identifying mark of all true Christians. Inward spiritual life is evidenced by outward spiritual fruit. If you continue in fruitlessness you will be cut off permanently from Jesus the Vine.

- i. **John 15:6 (NIV)**

⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

1. Clearly a picture of final judgment

- b. Some prefer “lifted up” to “cut off” because “in me” makes it seem as though Jesus is saying you can lose your salvation, but it is unnecessary to press the metaphor that far.

- i. Jesus has already clearly established that those who are in him will remain in Him

1. **John 6:37-40 (NIV)**

³⁷All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

³⁸For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

⁴⁰For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

2. **John 10:27-30 (NIV)**

²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is

greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

- 2) Prunes the fruitful branches so that they will bear even more fruit
 - a. Necessary and unavoidable
 - i. Necessary because there are things in our lives that keep us from bearing fruit e.g. people, attitudes, hobbies, habits, etc.
 - ii. Unavoidable in that it happens to all
 1. **John 15:2 (NIV)**
² He cuts off *every* branch in me that bears no fruit, while *every* branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.
 - b. Painful but worth it
 - i. **Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV)**
⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have *suffered the loss* of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

John 15:3 (NIV)

³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

- “Clean” has the same root word in the Greek as “prune”
- Jesus is assuring His disciples that they are fruit bearing branches that will not be cut off from Him just as He did earlier in 13:10-11
 - **John 13:10-11 (NIV)**
¹⁰ Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."
¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

John 15:4-5 (NIV)

⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

- 1) It is *impossible* to bear fruit on your own apart from Jesus the Vine. All good fruit comes through Christ.
- 2) Jesus promises to remain in us and sealed that promise with the Holy Spirit. We can count on Him to do His part
 - a. **John 14:15-17 (NIV)**
 - ¹⁵ "If you love me, you will obey what I command.
 - ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you *forever--*
 - ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.
- 3) Jesus gives us the responsibility to remain in Him. How do we do this?
 - a. Word, prayer, and obedience (explain and then illustrate through texts below)
 - i. **John 15:7 (NIV)**
 - ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.
 - ii. **John 15:9-10 (NIV)**
 - ⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.
 - ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

John 15:6 (NIV)

⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

John 15:7 (NIV)

⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask *whatever you wish*, and it will be given you.

- This is perplexing because it hasn't been our experience. We've all asked for lots of things and not received them. What does this tell us?

- It tells us either that God is saying wait, or that to one degree or another we are not remaining in Him and His Words are not remaining in us.
- God's will is always best, and God's will will always be done. The more we remain in Christ and the more His words remain in us, the more our will will be conformed to His will and the more our prayers will be answered.
- Ex. Unanswered evangelistic prayers. We need to be praying more for ourselves, the evangelists.
 - **Colossians 4:2-6 (NIV)**
 - ² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
 - ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.
 - ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.
 - ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.
 - ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

John 15:8 (NIV)

⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- Bearing much fruit brings glory to God because it can only happen through Him. Without Him we can do nothing.

- **John 15:5 (NIV)**

⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:9-11 (NIV)

⁹"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

- We NEVER miss out when we obey.
 - Moses had it right
 - **Hebrews 11:24-26 (NIV)**
 - ²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.
 - ²⁵He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin *for a short time*.
 - ²⁶He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because *he was looking ahead to his reward*.

John 15:12-15 (NIV)

- ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
- ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
- ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command.
- ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

- All Jesus' commandments regarding how to treat others can be summed in one: "Love each other as I have loved you."
 - Paul said it this way...
 - **Romans 13:8-10 (NIV)**
 - ⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.
 - ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
 - ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
 - Augustine said it like this...
 - "Love, and do what thou wilt"
 - HWJL – How would Jesus love?

- To be able to answer this correctly you need to ask Him into your life, get to know Him through His Word and prayer, and stay in touch with Him by being sensitive to the leading of His Spirit
 - Loving my girlfriend means being physically affectionate toward her
 - Loving my non-Christian coworker means not questioning their unbiblical belief system
 - Loving my children means never spanking them and giving them lots of material things

John 15:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

- Chosen and appointed to advance the Kingdom of God through God dependent prayer and love.
- Jesus call to His disciples that night is the same call to us today

TWE Mission Statement

To bring glory to God and many to Jesus by raising up disciples who are so passionate about being new creations in Christ and ambassadors for Him that they joyfully and sacrificially dedicate their lives to representing Jesus well in all they say and in all they do, and to teaching and encouraging others to do the same, wherever God has planted them.

Call Worship Team Up

- RELAUNCH – Sept. 13th
- Closing Prayer

