

John 15:1-8 (Teaching)

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[0:00] Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. You all flip with me to John's Gospel in chapter 15.

We wrapped up chapter 14 last week. Moving right along in the Gospel of John. We're officially two-thirds the way through it.

But last week, when we ended chapter 14 in John's Gospel, we ended naturally with verse 31, says, actually beginning at verse 30 in chapter 14, says, Hereafter I will not talk much with you for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me, but that the world may know that I love the Father, as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do, arise, let us go hence.

That being where we left off last week, and I said last week that those last few words that Christ spoke there were really manly words for him to say arise and let us go hence, because what he had been talking about was the crucifixion.

He'd been talking about the crucifixion. He'd been talking about how he must be put to death. And of course, he also talked about resurrection and all these other things that go along with it, but specifically he'd been talking about being put to death.

[1:34] And he says, arise, let us go hence. In other words, I'm not afraid to do this. Arise, let us go. And he was leading the way for the whole thing.

And I praise God for that. And that should encourage us to do likewise, arise and let us go hence. A lot of times we'll feel like the Lord, as it's commonly said, laid something on our heart.

Or we're supposed to do this. We're supposed to talk to that one. We're supposed to do this or to do that. And a lot of times we get that human fear about us, folks, we shouldn't have that.

I've sat in here before preaching and teaching both as well as other places. Christ has done one of the victory. We have no choice but to move forward in this thing. No choice because the victory is already won.

So arise and let us go hence. And all that being said, we'll pick up in verse 1 of chapter 15. Don't know how far we might get.

[2:40] I know how far I'd like to get through verse 8. I'm not positive that we'll get that far this morning, but that's OK. So Gospel of John chapter 15 verse 1, Christ says, I am the true vine and my father is the husband.

So Christ beginning in chapter 13. And remember the context that we're speaking of all this in. Christ is alone with 11 of the original 12 disciples.

Judas Iscariot has already left. He's already gone out into the night. He's already making preparations and purposed in his heart, quite frankly, to betray the Son of God, to betray the Son of Man.

And so the context that we have here is still the last supper. It is still Christ alone with 11 of his disciples.

And he's telling them here in John 15 and verse 1, I am the true vine. And you would think after three years of them traveling around with Jesus Christ, they would realize that.

[3:46] The folks in here right now, me being one of them, that I've been walking with Jesus for 15 years now.

Some of you all been walking with him a lot longer than I have. I still need this reminder though. And you still need this reminder that Christ is the true vine.

Christ is the true vine. He has nothing to do with me. He has nothing to do with you. He has nothing to do with denomination. He has nothing to do with so many other things that people like to throw in there traditionally.

Christ is the true vine. Now this word true here that he is using, he's not speaking that he is the true vine as opposed to something that is false.

He's saying I'm the perfect vine, I'm the chosen vine, I'm the one that stands here and I'm blameless. It's kind of like most of you all know, or a lot of you all know, I was a mechanic for years. [4 : 47] I haven't been in that field for 14 years now, but I was a mechanic for a long time. And a lot of times people would come in the shop and they'd say, I'm going 50 mile an hour, hitting my brakes and my vehicle shutters.

You say, well you need to true up your rotors. I'm not talking about your rotors are false. I'm talking about you need to make them straight. You need to bring them back into factory specifications. And folks, Jesus Christ when he says I'm the true vine, he's saying I'm the straight vine, I'm the only vine, I'm the perfect vine. I'm the spotless and the blameless vine. But nevertheless, he says I'm the true vine and my father is the husband.

And this is the part, the second half of this verse that a lot of people like to cut off. They like to say, well Jesus is the true vine, but they forget all about the father being the husbandman.

And the father was the husbandman now, the father was the husbandman then. And he is the husbandman now.

[5 : 48] Now in the Old Testament, when we read about Israel being a vine, and we read about that several times in the Old Testament, we read about in the book of Isaiah, we read about in Hosea, we read about in Ezekiel, we read about in Psalms, we read all about Israel and them being a vine or a vineyard for God.

Then when Israel was being spoken of of a vine or a vineyard, God, the father was the proprietor. He was the owner of that vine.

Not that he isn't now, even today, but that's how he was portrayed in the Old Testament. But here, Christ says the father is the husbandman.

He's the caretaker. He's the one that cares for the vine. And folks, these few verses that we're going to get into here in just a few minutes, if the father is taking care of the vine, rest assured, if you are a branch extending from that vine, you are being cared for as well, and you are being taken care of as well.

If he is taking care of the vine and the branches are attached to that vine, you remember that God the Father is the husbandman. He is the caretaker. He is the one that is paying attention to that vine and taking care of it.

[7 : 07] So, Christ again says, I'm the true vine and my father is the husbandman. Verse 2, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

There's something very important in this verse that we must keep in mind when reading it, because this verse has been misconstrued by particularly certain denominations, but it has been misconstrued over and over and over to mean something that it does not mean.

Christ says, every branch in me, in me, every branch is in me. What is it to be in Christ?

What is it to be in Christ? If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. To be in Christ, according to Romans 8 and 1, means there is no condemnation to those that be in Christ.

So, every branch that is in me, he's not talking about people that aren't in him. When he's stating this, we must remember that. Remember, he's talking to 11 disciples.

[8 : 17] 11 disciples. Judas has done love to sing, so he is talking to his own. He is talking to his chosen, the ones that three years before this, three plus years before this, he was hand picking them and saying, follow me, follow me, follow me, and these 11 are the ones that truly followed him.

Every branch in me, we must remember that when reading these verses. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.

Folks, if someone is in Jesus Christ, why would they not be bearing fruit? The question is not, what exactly is this taking away?

The question is, why would they not be bearing fruit if they are indeed in Christ? Every one of us should be bearing fruit. Jesus speaks of this in the Gospel accounts himself, and he says, some might bear more fruit than others, some might bear 40-fold, some might bear 60-fold, some might bear it 100-fold, but either way, we should all be bearing fruit.

What might cause us to not bear fruit? I'll tell you what, when we let our relationship with Jesus Christ dry up. Remember, we're talking about branches that are already in him.

[9 : 39] They are already saved, they are already washed into blood of Jesus Christ. They are already sanctified, they are set aside for the purposes of he and God the Father. So we're talking about people who belong to Jesus Christ in this verse.

And he says, every branch that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. He taketh away. I don't spend a whole lot of time getting into the original Greek that the New Testament was written in. However, when something's imperative, I will get into the Greek that the New Testament was written in, as well as getting into the Hebrew and some of the Aramaic that's in the Old Testament. And this is pretty imperative here. When he says, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. The Greek word that you use there for he taketh away is Iroh. Iroh. It has two specific applications. One is to lift up. That's the first. That's the first definition of it, the first use of it.

[10 : 46] The next one would be to prune it, to cast off the things that aren't needed with something. And of course, we're talking about agriculture here, and this is something that these people that he was speaking with, these 11 that would have been very familiar with, was agriculture and how to raise crops and how to care for vines out of 10 for vines.

He says, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. Let's go ahead and finish that verse off. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it that it may bring forth more fruit. So when we're reading about, he takes it away, are we talking about if someone quits bearing fruit, God just plucks them up and casts them off to the side, no use for them anymore? No. Does God really do that with his own? No. God doesn't do that. So what's the only other alternative here? God lifts it up.

Any of y'all that have ever done any gardening, you know that if certain plants start dragging the ground, you've got to lift them up. There's a reason why we've made our sticks in the ground and we tie those vines to the sticks.

[12 : 00] It's to keep them off the ground and keep them upright so that they do what? So they produce fruit because they won't produce it on the ground. And that's what we're talking about here.

When he says, every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. If he wasn't talking about branches that were in him, we could get a different interpretation of this verse, a very, very different interpretation of this verse.

But he's talking about people that are in him. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. He lifts it up to do what?

It tells us at the end of the verse that it might bring forth more fruit. Now, I understand he's talking about two different circumstances there, two different situations, but he still, he would lift up that branch or that branch so that it would produce fruit.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. And every branch that beareth fruit, these are the ones that haven't let their walk with God go dry. These are the ones that continually study the Word of God.

[13 : 04] These are the ones that their prayer life is called up. They're in an awesome relationship with God. They go to God for everything. That's the type of person that's the type of Christian I want to be.

Is this person, every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it that it might bring forth more fruit. He purges it. Now, when we think of purging something, we think of, and this is normally interpreted and taught and preached as pruning.

You know, you've got branches stemming off of the branches. You get rid of those branches that are coming, that are not producing fruit. All they got is leaves poking out on them.

And you get rid of those so that the ones with the blooms where the fruit is going to come from, they're fed with more water. They're fed with more nutrients. And that's what we think of when we think of purging.

[14 : 03] But again, there's a Greek word that's used here. There's a Greek word called kathaira. What does that word mean for purging?

It doesn't mean prune. It means to cleanse. It means to clean. And we know that that is the purpose of that word being used here because of verse 3.

Now you are cleaning through the word which I've spoken to you. He's not talking necessarily about pruning. When he says that every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now, first of all, he purges it not just to be doing something. He purges it not just because he was bored. He purges it for a purpose. He cleanses it for a purpose. What would he cleanse it for? Because there's insects that get upon it. There's moss that grows up on it. There's a particular moss over there in the Middle East that is prevalent to this day as well as in Jesus' time.

[15:05] For creeping up upon plants that people are trying to raise and you have to clean that stuff off of these plants. And he is talking about cleansing here when he says purging.

He purges it that it might bring forth more fruit. He doesn't clean us necessarily just because we're dirty. He cleanses us that we might bring forth more fruit.

Why? Because the more fruit we bring forth, the more God is glorified. When we bring forth fruit to the glory of God, to the kingdom of God, for the purpose of God, God is very satisfied.

And God is very happy with such a thing. So again, verse 2, every branch in me, we must remember that in me that barath not fruit, he taketh away, where he lifts it up.

And every branch that barath fruit, he purges it that it might bring forth more fruit. There is a purpose in all this and it is that we bring forth fruit for God.

[16:05] Verse 3, now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Again, back in verse 2 where he says he purges it that it might bring forth more fruit, he says now you are clean.

So when he is using that word, cthai hiru, there in verse 2, for purges. He is talking about cleaning. He is talking about cleansing. He says now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Why are so many Christians, why are so many Christians, now I am talking about true, blue, born again believers. Why do so many feel like failures? Why are there so many born again people that are seemingly not producing fruit for God?

He says you are clean through or by the word that I have spoken to you. It is because they have not been in the word. It is because they have not been in the word.

Now folks, we are not talking about the cleansing that brings salvation. Only Jesus Christ can do that and only the power of the gospel is able to do that. We are not talking about our initial salvation.

[17:17] It is just like back in John 13 when we read where Jesus was washing the disciples' feet. And of course Peter is arguing with them saying Lord you will never do this for me.

I will not let you do this for me. He says Peter if you do not let me do this for you you will have no part with me. And Peter says not my feet only but start up here and work your way down.

I want to be cleansed completely. I want to be cleansed holy but what does Christ tell his disciples then? He says he that is cleansed need not be cleansed anymore save his feet.

Save his feet there in John 13. And when we were going through John 13 I explained that and I said it is because your feet carry you to the places of the world. Your feet carry you to your lost loved ones houses.

Your feet carry you through your own house where you might have lost loved ones dwelling with you. They carry you to work. They carry you to the store. Your feet carry you all over this world and I compared it then and I've done it several times in the past but I will do it again now.

[18:21] It is much like the labor in the tabernacle when God made the labor you walk into the tabernacle. You had to brazen alter to your right and you sacrificed an animal there. Then the next place you went to was the labor and that was to cleanse you.

And that was the word and this right here that we all holding our lap or in our hand we've all got a copy of it. And if you don't shame on you this is our labor and this is our water.

This is what will cleanse us and people don't like that. People don't like to hear that. They don't like to hear only God can cleanse me. This is true.

God cleanses you when you are born again. God cleanses you but folks there are some commands that are given us that we are to do ourselves.

It's just like later on in this very scripture in this very passage here cross makes the commandment abide in me. It's a commandment to the people that they abide in him.

[19:22] It's just like James in chapter 4. He says to cleanse your handji centers and purify your heart. She double-minded that is commandment to the people to do something.

And we are and we are told here now you are clean through the word which I've spoken under you cross to spoken the word. We have the words of Christ right here in our Bibles.

But it is up to us to take up this Bible. It is up to us to read this Bible. It's up to us to memorize this Bible to remember the things that Christ said to remember his teaching.

And when we remember these things when we're called out in the world and when we're tempted by the devil and when things come our way. When negative things enter our life we remember the teachings of Christ.

And this is what cleanses us. And folks that ain't my interpretation that is what Christ is saying to his disciples and I'm a disciple of Christ.

[20 : 15] I'm just as much a disciple of Christ as Andrew was and as Peter was and as John was. I follow Christ and if I follow Christ I must do the things that he is commanding these 11 here and John 15 to do.

Now you're clean through the word which I've spoken unto you. Verse 4, abiding me. That's what we were just talking about. Abiding me and I and you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself excepted abide in the vine.

No more can ye accept ye abide in me. Folks these are sobering words. I don't care if you've been saved for a day or for 50 years.

These are sobering words abiding me and I and you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself excepted abide in the vine. No more can ye accept ye abide in me.

If we are not abiding in Christ we are not going to bear fruit. We will not bear fruit but remember who he is speaking to from verse 2.

[21 : 17] He is speaking every branch in me, in me. But we are given commandment to abide in him. Is it possible for a Christian to stray to the right or to the left?

Absolutely. Absolutely it is possible for a Christian to stray. It is possible for a Christian to get away from the word. It is possible for a Christian to put their prayer life off.

It is possible for a Christian to ignore corporate worship. It is possible for a Christian to ignore so many commandments in the word of God that we have.

But when this happens folks you will quit producing fruit and that is the eye-opener. When you stop producing fruit, when you stop having an influence on your family, when the lost world begins to actually like you, that is an eye-opener.

The only reason they would like you, the only reason they would want to affiliate themselves with you is because you are not producing fruit for God. We are given a commandment, abide in me.

[22 : 23] It is a commandment, it is just as much a commandment as thou shalt not kill. It is just as much a commandment as thou shalt not have any gods before me. It is just a commandment as any of the ten that we find in Exodus chapter 20.

Christ says abide in me. What is it to abide? That is where you dwell, that is where you make your home, that is where you live, that is where you do everything, that is where you abide.

We need to abide in Christ, we need to stay there. It is much like Boaz told Ruth in chapter 2 when he said, don't go to another's field. He said, you stay right here, you stay in my field, you stay with my handmaidens.

I will take care of you, you abide here. God is telling us the same thing. Jesus Christ is saying the same thing here, abide in me.

Abide in me and I and you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abides in the vine. We cannot bear fruit ourselves, we must be attached to the vine.

[23 : 23] No more can ye accept ye abide in me. Verse 5, I am the vine and ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I and him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.

For without me ye can do nothing. Again, sobering words without me, without Jesus Christ, ye can do nothing. And folks, that one statement, not necessarily this verse, but that one statement, without me you can do nothing, that applies to lost people just as much as it does saved people. No one can do anything without our maker. No one can do anything, we can't breathe, we can't eat, we can't sleep, we can't talk, we can't move, we can't wake up.

We can't do any of these things without Jesus Christ. Again, verse 5, I am the vine, ye are the branches. He keeps reminding them of this.

Christ has brought this up several times, He began it with it. I am the true vine, my father is the husband, and every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purchased it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

[24 : 28] Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you, abideth me and I and you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, excepteth abideth in the vine, no more can ye accept ye abideth in me.

I am the vine. So it began with I am the true vine. Now he's saying I am the vine, he's reminding them of all this, but he's also reminding them, you're the branches.

You're what stems off of me. And later on when the Great Commission is given, not necessarily in John's Gospel, but toward the end of Matthew's Gospel, and you also see it in Mark's Gospel, but when the Great Commission is given, folks, those are the branches going out into the world.

To do what? To do what? To hopefully make more branches, to help make more branches, not that they can save people, but to produce fruit, to produce fruit.

Where do the seeds come from? The seeds come from fruit. You know, if no tomatoes had any seeds, we wouldn't have no tomatoes, if no apples had seeds, we wouldn't have any apples.

[25 : 33] So seeds come from the fruit, I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, now that word abideth is present perfect tense.

What does that mean? He that continually abides in me. He that perpetually abides in me. He that forever abides in me. He that doesn't stray to the left or the right.

He that, as we said before, keeps his nose in the word. He keeps himself prayed up. He keeps in a good, strong, and wrought relationship with God. He that abideth in me, and I in him, praise God for the I in him.

It's one thing for somebody profess, well, I live with Jesus. I abide in Jesus. Folks, people can say that all day long. Lost people can say, I have a relationship with Jesus.

But if Christ is not abiding in them, there is no relationship. There is no relationship. And there's a lot of professing believers out there that will say things like me and Jesus are tied.

[26 : 35] I've heard people say that. Me and Jesus is like this. And folks, there's life, there's no fruit. What so ever.

But the one who abides in Christ and Christ abides in them, that's the life that will have fruit. That's the life that we can look at and we can say that is a man that's walking strong with God.

That's a woman that has a good relationship with God. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same, bringeth forth much fruit. Folks, it has got to be that way.

That way, and it has got to be in that order. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same, bringeth forth much fruit. Again, your much might be more than mine.

In fact, it probably is. But regardless, we must be producing fruit of some kind. Regardless, and it doesn't matter who's producing more fruit.

[27 : 34] If you produce more fruit than I do, I will praise God with you. And I'll praise God that he's getting that much fruit out of another individual. Do I want to produce a whole big bunch of fruit and bushels full for the kingdom of God?

Absolutely I do. But if someone seems to be producing more than I am, I'm not going to sneer at them. I'm not going to get jealous of them and I'm not going to envy them.

I'm going to praise God that he's using an individual to bring glory to himself. For without me, ye can do nothing. And none of us can do anything without Jesus Christ.

Now specifically what's he talking about here? Producing fruit. Again, people can say they're with Jesus all they want to. And people can even to an extent live like they know Jesus.

All of y'all have probably seen it in your lives, in your church walks. People that you thought was just as close to God as a person could get. Next thing you know, they're out in the world.

[28 : 39] They're out in the world and those are the top of people. Now like I said, Christians can stray. They absolutely can. They can get off the path. Praise God for the good shepherd that'll come after his own sheep.

Praise God for that. I'm talking about the people that may have lived 5, 10, 15 years in the church. They were faithful to church. They threw their money in the offering plate.

They led singing some of them out of even preached. Known people like that. And the next thing you know, they're out in the world. They're out in the world. They're leaving their wives. They're leaving their kids. They're doing dope.

They're drinking. They're getting drunk. They're doing all these things. And those are the top of people that John tells us. First John in the second chapter, he says, they went out from us but they were not of us.

They were not of us. If a man abid not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. And men gather them and cast them into a fire and they're burned.

[29 : 40] We've gone from one group of people that Christ is talking about to another. Because remember, in verse 2, every branch in me, we're talking about people that are in Christ there.

But here in verse 6, he says, if a man abid not in me, this is where it changes. This is where it changes. Not in the first five verses, but here in verse 6 is where we can get the interpretation that a lot of people begin with verse 1.

Verse 6, if a man abid not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. This is for the people who are not abiding in Christ, who have never known Christ.

These are the people that Christ and the Sermon on the Mount says, will come to him saying, Lord, Lord, have we not done many wonderful things in your name? Have we not cast out demons in your name?

Have we not worked miracles in your name? And Jesus says, I will look at them. I'll say depart from me, either work iniquity, for I never knew you. He doesn't say I knew you once upon a time, but 20 years ago you went astray and I ain't known you since.

[30 : 54] He says, I never knew you. These are the people that we're talking about here. Verse 6, if a man abid not in me, not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into a fire and they are burned.

This is plainly and simply talking about the judgment of God for those that have not and are not abiding in Christ and have never done so.

This verse is talking about judgment, pure and simple. Verse 7, if he abid in me and my words abid in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.

Now, we went over this in the last chapter, in chapter 14. We've gone over it several times since I've been teaching here. When Christ says anything that you ask, I'll do that unto you or I will grant that or wherever the case is, not only here but in 1 John and several other places that we read such things in the Scripture.

That's not a blank check. That is not God. When I get home from church today, I want there to be a \$3 million mansion sitting on my half acre lot.

[32 : 14] That's not what God is saying here. That's not what Christ is saying here. What have we been talking about through this whole thing? Through this entire passage? Abiding in Christ. I promise you, I promise you, if you are abiding in Christ and I'm abiding in Christ, our prayers will line up with the heart and with the will of Christ.

Think about Hannah. Think about Hannah that Samuel wrote about. She wrote about how she went to God and she poured her guts out to God wanting a son. She was barren.

The Bible says her husband loved her but God had shut her womb up and she goes to God and she says, if you'll just give me a son, I promise you I will dedicate him to you. He will be yours.

And what happened? She received a son and she named him Samuel because he was a gift from the Lord. But what does that tell us?

It tells us one, Hannah was like we're talking about here, Hannah was cleansed. Hannah was in a right relationship with God. Hannah was prayed up as some people say.

[33 : 28] But she also prayed in alignment with the will of God. If her having a son went against the will of God, I promise you, Samuel would have never been born.

But she prayed a prayer in alignment with the will of God. Samuel grew up to be a great prophet and worker for God.

God used Samuel. That's just an example of praying in the will of God. Again, we've been talking about abiding in Christ for this whole thing. If we are abiding in Christ and the longer that we abide in Christ and the deeper that we abide with Christ, the more our prayers will line up with the will and with the heart of Christ.

One more verse here. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.

Not herein is my Father glorified that ye win theological debates. Not herein is my Father glorified that ye have 150 people walking through the door every Sunday morning.

[34 : 44] Not herein is my Father glorified that ye've memorized the entire Gospel of John. Or the entire one chapter book of Obadiah for that matter.

Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit. God is glorified in the fruit that we bear. But that verse doesn't just end there that you bear much fruit.

He says, so shall ye be my disciples. When you are bearing fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Folks, bearing fruit is not what causes us to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Like I said, I've been fooled by people in the past, and you all have probably been fooled by people in the past. We thought that they were bearing much fruit for the kingdom of God, and it turns out that they were never in part of the kingdom of God.

He says, so shall ye be my disciples. Our fruit bearing is testimony that we are disciples of Jesus Christ.

[35 : 49] It's testimony of the fact that we are disciples of Christ. Once again, our fruit bearing isn't what makes us disciples. Christ makes us his own disciples by cleansing us with the word, by cleansing us with his blood, by renewing us, by regenerating us, by making us a new creature.

Christ and Christ alone is capable of doing that, but the evidence that we are Christ is in our fruit bearing. And it's not only in our fruit bearing for a season, it's in our continual, again, and perpetual fruit bearing.

And that's as far as I wanted to get this morning I ain't going to go any further, as much as I would like to. Anybody got any questions or comments on any of that?

Alright, God bless y'all, I appreciate you.