

John 15vs1-17

Jesus – the true Vine

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John 15 vs 1-17

The “four questions” of discipleship in chapters 13 + 14 ended with a question about how the world will come to see God. In this study, we are going to discover our part in that work.

Let's start by looking at vs 1-8:

Read ch 15 vs 1-8: *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

The picture is one of fruitful discipleship to the glory of God! Jesus, the true vine, is the key to it all!!

v 5: *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*

- v7 is the key verse – it is clearly a promise:

v 7: *“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*

Fruitful discipleship comes from dwelling in Christ and his WORD; and from praying according to his WORD!

- On the other hand these verses are a warning:
 - If we separate ourselves from God – what is the outcome?!

Our responsibility is therefore to make sure that the WORD dwells in us.

Time for some research! Let's look back 1000 years to Psalm 80, and back 700+ years to the prophecy of Isaiah:

Psalm 80 vs 8-11: You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

⁹ You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.

¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.

¹¹ It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.

Isaiah ch 5 vs 3-4, v 7: And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

What does God want from his vine/vineyard?

Isaiah 5 v 4: What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

Isaiah 5 v 7: For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

- God wanted worldwide 'fruit'... but Israel did not deliver.

So where will that fruit come from?

*Psalm 80 vs 14-18: Turn again, O God of hosts!
Look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
¹⁵ the stock that your right hand planted,
and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.
¹⁶ They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down;
may they perish at the rebuke of your face!
¹⁷ But let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!
¹⁸ Then we shall not turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call upon your name!*

- Through the 'son of man' – ie Jesus Christ!

And as a result, God's people will produce worldwide fruit, just as he had promised:

Isaiah ch 27 v 6: *In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.*

Entry into & membership of the true Vine

Now, back to John 15:

v1: What is Jesus claiming by saying: ***“I am the true vine”***?

- He is the fulfilment of all that Israel never managed to do
- He is claiming to be THE key to all the Old Testament promises which said that God would have a 'fruitful' people who bring glory to God!

v2: Part 1 - Goodbye to God's people who refuse him (*Enough warning already!!*):

“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away”

v2: Part 2 - A promise for God's people who are joined to him - pruning for strengthening and enrichment:

“...and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

How then will fruit be produced?

- The route into the vine comes via Jesus' WORD:

v 3: *“Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”*

- And God's pruning comes the same way!

The fruit bearing nature of the true Vine:

- IF we separate ourselves from God, what does it lead to?

v 4: *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.*

- Are we fruitful in our own right? How are we fruitful - what part do we play?

v 5: *I am the vine; you are the branches. **Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.***

- Ignore this truth and we get quite some warning!

v 6: *If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.*

- In contrast to the warning – what a promise!

v 7: *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

- This promise is NOT a “blank cheque”! The passage says IF we “abide” in his word – we can ask for anything that is in line with his word:

v 8: *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

- Why? ...Because “**By this my Father is glorified**”

Do you see how this compares with the words of Psalm 80?

- ✓ the language of the vine growing tall – spreading wide
- ✓ a worldwide church through the teaching of Jesus’ WORD
- ✓ His WORD simply does NOT return empty!!

Read v 8 again:

v 8: *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

- ✓ The result of such abiding = **MUCH FRUIT!**
- God is glorified as people get to trust in his WORD!

So in John 15 vs 1-8 we have seen how a person can be part of the true fruit-bearing vine....

vs 9-17 will now spell out what being “fruitful” involves.

Defining the ‘fruit’ and ‘abiding’

Read John 15 vs 9-17: *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 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. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

¹² *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

¹³ *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

¹⁴ *You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

¹⁶ *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

What does Jesus talk about more than anything else in these verses?

LOVE!! Just look again at:

v 9: *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.”*

v 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.”*

v 12: *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*

v 13: *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

v 17: *“These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”*

Jesus begins in v9 by speaking about his love and his Father’s love:

v9: **“As the Father has loved me...”**

...but how has the Father loved the Son?

- The answer was given to us by Jesus back in John 5 v 20:

John 5 v 20: *“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.”*

- God the Father loved God the Son by showing the Son all that he (the Father) is doing.

How then has Jesus (God the Son) loved us?

- By showing us the love of the Father....
- So this has to do with both Revelation AND Salvation
- He has loved us by showing himself to us
- He has loved us by showing us the way to the Father

Now he commands us to remain in his love.

- But what does it look like to remain or “**abide**” in his love?

v 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.”*

- It looks like keeping his commandments!
- What will be the outcome of such obedience?

v 11: *“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”*

- Being FULL of JOY!
- THIS is the key to THE happy life!!

So - WHAT are Jesus' commandments?

Let's look at vs 12-15:

v 12: *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*

- What, then, does it look like to “**love one another**” as he has loved us?

Self-sacrificial love:

v 13: *“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”*

- Jesus has shown us his Father’s and his own love. He now calls on us to exercise this love amongst our Christian brothers and sisters.

As we do so what will we find are the benefits?

- Being friends with our Saviour:

v 14: *“You are my friends if you do what I command you.”*

v 15: *“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”*

- This is the loving community of God’s family
- The “fruit” IS this loving community that is sacrificially self-less... or selflessly sacrificial
- This is TRUE and complete JOY!!

So far this “fruit” may all sound a little bit inward looking – BUT this is NOT a community that is closed off! How does v16 prove this?

v 16: *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”*

- Expressed differently: *“I chose you so that you should go and bear fruit that remains”* – ie ‘fruit’ = others that also remain/abide in Jesus.
- Remember Jesus’ new commandment in John 13 v 34:

ch 13 v 34: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”*

- A loving community that is open:

ch 13 v 35: *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

- And a proactive outgoing community - bearing MUCH fruit... impacting the world around them.

So – in summary:

- No one can ‘do’ God on their own!
- It means being in a church family – joining the ‘vine’!
- **“Abide in my word”** – a Bible-based, praying, outward-looking church.

And how are you going to do that?

- If you are prepared to - let’s research together where the nearest good Bible-based church might be to your home.

v 17: *“These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”*

What next?

How will living like this be received by the world?

John 15 vs 1-17

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