

"Jesus Wants to Pour His Life in You"

John 15:1-8

In the Gospel of John, Jesus gives His disciples powerful word pictures to convey truths that He wants them to hold on to so that they will live a fruitful life for His Father's glory. John uniquely emphasizes the 'I am' statements of Jesus.

"I am the door/gate"

"I am the Good Shepherd"

"I am the Light of the World"

"I am the Bread of life"

"I am the resurrection and the life"

"I am the Way, truth and Life"

"I am the true vine"

Each 'I am' statement that Jesus made was a direct reference to His deity. The phrase 'I am' is identical to God's statement to Moses in Ex. 3:13 when God called Moses to go back to the Israelites in Egypt and bring them out of bondage.

13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Now God sent His own Son to the Israelites again (and us too) to call them to follow Him and free themselves from the bondage of sin. So each 'I am' reference is a reminder to God's people that He is with them and wants to dwell with them and even needs them to make a difference in the world by telling them how to be free from the sin's bondage.

As we come to this last 'I am' statement in John 15, we are in the middle of Jesus' farewell message to His disciples, whom He has just told He is leaving to go back to His Father and they can't come with Him right now. But He will not leave them as orphans. He will send the Holy Spirit who will remind them of the things Jesus said by dwelling in them. He knows this has unsettled them because twice in Ch. 14 He said

'Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid' (v.1, 28)

Jesus has talked openly about His future suffering, arrest, crucifixion, death and resurrection. His followers are troubled by these words alone and now He tells them He's leaving! So Ch. 14-16 are Jesus' words of reassurance to His disciples (Judas has left) who will take over His ministry and even do "greater things" than the things Jesus has done (14:12). Ch. 14 was table talk (Last Supper) and now in 15:1-16:33 they are walking towards Gethsemane, and Jesus gives them another word picture, another picture of assurance of His ongoing presence and power in their life even though He will leave.

"I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser".

How is this word picture reassuring and empowering to all those who follow Jesus? We're going to spend two weeks on this: this week focusing on the reassurance of Jesus' presence in our life and next week on how He empowers us to produce fruit. So what did Jesus want to reassure His troubled disciples of with this imagery:

Faith in Jesus Unites Us to Jesus (Himself) **15:1-3, 6**

This is why Jesus will tell them a few verses later in 16:7 *"It is for your good that I am going away. If I go the Counsellor will not come to you ... [The Spirit].* And in 14:17 He also said not only will the Spirit be with you but He will be in you (14:17). Faith in Jesus as the only way to God unites you to Jesus Himself. You don't just get a membership card with more privileges; you and I get Jesus Himself. He unites Himself to us through faith. What He wants us to know as His disciples is

He is our source of life (v.1a)

The Vine and the branches imagery communicate connectedness. Just as the sap from the vine flows to the branches resulting in fruit, so Jesus' life is poured into ours so we can produce spiritual fruit; outward evidence of acting and speaking like Jesus because we are allowing His life to change us on the inside (mind and heart). While we often focus on our responsibility to bear fruit, take a moment to reflect on what Jesus is saying. I want to pour my life into you. I want you to know my love (vv.9-10) and My joy (v.11). I am putting My Spirit inside you so that you can be reassured that I am with You always even to the end of the age.

Since Jesus is the way, the truth and the life so that no one can come to the Father except through Him, by being united to Him it also means,

He unites us to God (v.1b)

"My Father is the vinedresser." It is His job to prune the branches and harvest the fruit. Jesus gives us not only access to God but unites us to God and the Spirit in one holy relationship. Any religion that teaches you can get to God without Jesus is a false religion. Only Jesus unites us to God. This is assurance language. I'm going away but I won't abandon you as orphans I will unite myself to you and the Father through the Spirit. And that happens when we

Trust in His Word (v.3; 13:10)

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

Jesus uses a play on words here in the Greek. The Greek word for 'prune' in v.2 and 'clean' in v.3 are actually the same word 'kathairo' and 'katharos'. In v.3 Jesus says 'you are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you.' He is speaking to the 11 (not Judas). These 11 have believed that Jesus is the Messiah. Their faith will grow and develop as ours does. 'Clean' is also used to speak of the 'unblemished' those who have been accepted by God. Back in Ch. 13 when Jesus washed the disciples' feet and Peter initially rejected, Jesus said,

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.*

This reference is important because it is in the same context of the same event. 'Clean' is a reference to those who have trusted the Word of God about Jesus. Jesus clearly says Judas was not clean because ultimately even though he spent 3 years with Jesus and the disciples, even though no one else suspected Judas of unbelief and even though he even went on the short term missions' trips, possibly casting out demons and healing a few people and seeing all that Jesus did and said, he still after 'tasting' all that evidence chose he did not want Jesus in his life.

This is important in understanding v.2 and 6:

² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit,

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.

The way we can know we are united to Jesus and that His life is being poured through us is

Evidenced by fruit of identifying with Jesus (vv.2, 6)

We need to be clear that the vine/branches is an image, a word parable and not to make every detail mean something. For example, some people say that since these branches that get burned up and thrown away were "in" the vine then they must be those who lost their salvation. However, because Jesus clearly made references to 'clean' [offering language] and Judas here, it is more natural to understand as Jesus points out in many places, that an initial 'decision' to follow Jesus doesn't mean a genuine commitment. In the parable of the four kinds of soil, the second, third and fourth examples all made initial decisions.

²⁰ The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. ²² The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

Why does Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount there's a blessing for those who are persecuted for His Name? This is what Jesus will go in John 16 to tell the 11 that they will be hated by the world because of His Name. Worry and fear of persecution are often a deciding line where people say 'No, I don't really want to identify with Jesus'. Again, Jesus is talking to His disciples and He wants to reassure them they truly know Him but at the same time send out a warning that those who want to follow Him without counting the cost will give up and it will be evident by the lack of fruit in their life. Even in the image, it is God who makes the decision to burn the dead branches and the vinedresser only does that at the end of the harvest when enough time has been given to see if there was any genuine fruit.

So then how does one produce fruit?

Fruit Comes from Relying on Jesus **(15:4-5, 7-8)**

The word "abide" or remain" dominates this middle section. Jesus wants to stress to His disciples that they, as His branches, can produce the evidence of Jesus' life being poured into them. This is important for us to realize:

Jesus produces the fruit, not us (vv.4-5)

We are not commanded to produce fruit. We are told to abide/remain in Jesus and fruit will result. The branch gets its nutrients from the sap connected back to the vine. God trims those parts of our life which hinder growth or will prepare us to grow more fruit. James 1:2-4 and 1 Pet. 1:6-7 both say God refines us through trials in our life. Trials shake us and show how flimsy other 'vines' are. Jesus says He's the True vine, implying there are other vines we try to get nourishment from but they never satisfy us or give us what we need to grow.

'Abide' means to dwell, to stay, to depend on. The passage is directed to disciples about spiritual growth. This is our responsibility. Jesus expands on how we stay/remain/dwell with Jesus in v.7:

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

How do we remain in Jesus?

Jesus' Word is what we rely on (v.7)

Remaining in Jesus' words is the same as remaining in Jesus. Back in v.3 Jesus said His disciples are clean because of the "Word" He spoke. The word for "Word" there is Logos, referring to the word of God. Here in v.7 Jesus uses the word 'rhema' for Word. Rhema refers to the individual words and verses from God's Word. We show we remain in Jesus when we make decisions based on what His Word says. That's what it means to trust/abide in Jesus; we live according to the Word of God. When we obey the Word of God Jesus' life pours through us by His Spirit.

Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Living by faith means we believe what His Word says and obey it. Does Paul's words describe us: *'The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God ...'* When we live by His Word, we are thinking like He does and praying like He wants us to pray. What we ask in according to his Word and He will answer our prayers by His Word. When we live like this, His life pours through as and

This accomplishes our purpose: glorifying God (v.8)

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

As Jesus' disciples we must remember God's purpose for our life is to obey the Word of God by faith, which produces the evidence of Jesus' life in us which makes others aware of God's existence and power. If we produced the fruit of patience, love, kindness, etc. ourselves then we would get the glory. But when God does it through us, we recognize its not from us and we tell people God is doing this through me, when I abide in His Word and as Jesus enables me to do what He desires me to do. We're going to flesh that out in more detail next week.

But for now, I just want us to take Jesus' words to heart; *I am the vine, you are the branches* and our need to abide in Him. By saying He's the Vine He wants to pour His life into you and me. He does that through His Spirit dwelling in us whose main ministry is to remind us of what God's Word says. We will produce the evidence of Jesus in us when we rely/remain in the specific verses that we need to apply to our life. Jesus was assuring His disciples (then and now) that He's committed to us

and sees us as worth pouring His life through. To help us work on that image, let's abide in a couple of other passages:

Phil. 1:3 I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Judas never committed himself to Jesus. Many, try Jesus out and give up on Him. He doesn't give up on us. We who have made that commitment through faith will grow because God is committed to doing this good work until Jesus returns. Again, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are fully committed to pouring their life into us and through us so we produce the fruit that points people to God's glory.

Col. 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

God constantly assures us of His commitment to us. He is a 'For us' God. We're already 'seated' in the heavenlies positionally. Keep reminding yourself of that. If we're going to produce the evidence of Jesus' life in us we need to keep our mind on that. Our life is hidden, securely with Christ in God. Jesus is our life.

Words of assurance, security and love. We won't experience His power if we doubt His assurance. Jesus has freed us from the future penalty of sin, now Jesus is still working at freeing us from the bondage sin's power has in our life. Next week we'll see how abiding in His Word helps us experience freedom from sin's power.

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