Topical Study - Jesus Teaches His Disciples about Life in Him – Part 1

Here is a concise study **John Chapter 15**, focusing on the core themes of the True Vine, abiding, sacrificial love, and the world's reaction.

Let's go through this chapter of the book of John as we study Jesus' teaching to His disciple when He was to depart.

A. Relating to Jesus – The True Vine.

1. (John 15:1-3).

Q: There are three metaphors in the scripture. What do these metaphors represent? The True Vine, The Vinedresser and the Branch?

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."

Q: What does 'fruit' represent in these verses that the branches are commanded to bear? Examples – in the kingdom and in our world.

Q: There are 2 types of fruits mentioned. Mention them and what is associated with each of them?

a. **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away**: vs 2 & 6 The branches that are taken away were never properly abiding in the vine, demonstrated by the fact that they did **not bear fruit**.

The branches that are taken away were never properly abiding in the vine, demonstrated by the fact that they did not bear fruit.

Can we say that, the branches that are not bearing fruits are not well rooted in Him?

b. **Every branch that bears fruit He prunes**: This word for **prunes** is the same word translated *cleanse* in other places. The same word could apply to either "pruning" or "cleansing" in ancient Greek. The vinedresser cleans up the fruit-bearing vine so it will bear more fruit.

What are the examples of things that God may want to prune from us or we should consciously prune by ourselves?

c. **You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you**: The work of pruning, of cleansing, had already begun in the eleven disciples Jesus spoke to. They had heard and received much of His teaching and were in some sense **already clean because of the word**.

i. The word of God is a cleansing agent. It condemns sin, it inspires holiness, it promotes growth, and it reveals power for victory. Jesus continues to wash His people through the word (Ephesians 5:26).

The means by which pruning or cleaning is done is by the Word of God. It condemns sin; it inspires holiness; it promotes growth. As Jesus applied the words God gave him to the lives of the disciples, they underwent a pruning process that removed evil from them and conditioned them for further service.

2. (John 15:4-5) The vital relationship between the branch and the vine.

Q: What is the primary condition Jesus gave here for the branch to bear fruit and achieve in life?

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 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."

Q: "Abide in Me, and I in you". How? What does that mean?

a. **Abide in Me, and I in You**: Jesus emphasized a *mutual* relationship. It isn't only that the disciple abides in the Master; the Master also abides in the disciple. Something of this close relationship is described in Song of Solomon 6:3: *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine*.

b. **As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine**: It is impossible for the branch to bear grapes if it isn't connected to the **vine**. **The disciple can't do true good for God and His kingdom if they do not consciously connect with and abide in Jesus.**

In this sense, we can say that fruit represents Christian character (such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5). God's work in us and our connection to Him should be evident by fruit, and perhaps by much fruit.

c. **Without Me you can do nothing**: It isn't that they disciples could do no *activity* without Jesus. They could be active without Him, as were the enemies of Jesus and many others. Yet they and we could **do nothing** of real, eternal value without Jesus.

"Paul says, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Galatians 2:20), and 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13)."

3. (John 15:6-8) The price of not abiding and the promise to those who do abide.

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Q: Identify the consequences of not Abiding?

a. **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered**: Jesus warned His disciples that failing to abide means that life fails. A **branch** only has life as it is connected to the stock of the vine; a disciple only spiritually lives as they are connected to the Master.

i. The phrasing Jesus used here was important. He didn't say, *If anyone does not bear fruit he is cast out*. He said, **if anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out**. *He* knows who abides and who does not, and this can't be perfectly discerned by our outward estimation of fruit.

b. **They gather them and throw them into the fire**: The lifeless branch bears no fruit and even its wood is good for nothing but burning. This reference to burning and **fire** raises the association of punishment in the life to come and warns of the great consequences of failing to abide.

i. We think of how these words would impact the eleven disciples who first heard them. Jesus told them He would depart; yet they would not be disconnected from Him. The work of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, would be to keep them connected to Jesus. If they were disconnected from Him, they would be ruined — perhaps as Judas was.

c. **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you**: Jesus connected the principle of abiding to two ideas previously mentioned in this upper room talk.

- **My words abide in you**: Jesus connected abiding to the idea of *faithfulness to His words*, as previously mentioned in John 14:23-24.
- **You will ask what you desire**: Jesus connected abiding to the idea of *answered prayer*, as previously mentioned in John 14:13-14. "Prayer comes spontaneously from those who abide in Jesus... Prayer is the natural out gushing of a soul in communion with Jesus."

i. Abiding in Jesus means abiding in His **words**, and having His words live in the disciple. "We should not overlook the importance of the reference to 'my words'.

d. **By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit**: The purpose of fruit bearing is to bring glory to God, not to the disciple. A branch that bears **much fruit** brings honor to one who cares for the vine, and a disciple who bears **much fruit** in a spiritual sense brings honor to God.