

John #8: The Vine and the Branches John 15: 1-17

Objectives: We want to see Jesus as the source of life who loves his followers so much that he died for them. We want to understand and believe that he knows us and considers us a friend. We want to see that we if we stay connected to Jesus that we will bear fruit.

Launch

First, take some time to reflect on the semester as a group and look ahead by using the discussion questions in the second attachment.

Share what stood out to you from your Thirsty devotion the past week.

The past few weeks we have been looking at “gifts” Jesus gives his followers in order to help them follow Him. What gift did we focus on last week? (community). What did we focus on the week before? (The Holy Spirit). This week we are going to look at a passage that takes place at the very end of Jesus’ life. After Judas went to betray Jesus, the other 11 followed Jesus to the Garden where he would be arrested. As they walked Jesus continued to prepare them for life without him.

Explore

Read John 15:1-17 (*print out a copy of the passage for each person. A copy of ESV is included with this study*)

An important skill to learn when we study the Bible is to slow down and observe what it actually says. Today we are going to walk through this passage and make some observations.

(note for leaders. The context for this passage is important because it’s easy to get off track about the “branches that get cut off”. Jesus was sharing these truths to encourage and prepare his disciples for life without him. He was not trying to scare them into thinking they could be “cut off”. The repeated phrases of “abide” and “love” are what we should focus on.)

1. One of the best skills to learn when studying the Bible is observation. **What do we observe about Jesus from this passage? Take a few minutes to underline everything you learn about Jesus. Then share observations in the large group.** Write on a white board.
(He is the True Vine- 1, He has branches- 2, He has spoken something that makes them clean- 3, He can be dwelt in and he can dwell in us, He causes fruit to grow- 5, He prunes (for good!), He has designed us for connection with Him 4-6, He is the son to the father, the father

loves the son, He loves us- 9, desires joy for his followers- 11, chooses-16, He is the active agent- (chooses for fruit), has authority, calls followers friends, wants us to keep His commandments, He kept the fathers commandments, wants us to use his love to love others, makes known the will of the father, He is joy)

- **As you look at this list, which one is most meaningful to you? Why?**
2. **Now, go back to the passage and circle everything you observe about His followers? Share observations in the large group.** Write on the white board.
(dependent on Jesus for life and fruit- 4/5, chosen for the purpose of bearing fruit- 16, loved by Jesus- 9/12, friends of Jesus, Jesus abides in us, we are designed to abide in Jesus, we can glorify the Father, able to love Jesus and obey, already clean- 3, get pruned, truth has been made known to us, can ask anything if we abide, have freedom to ask, we have His Word- 11)
 - **As you look at this list, which one is most meaningful to you? Why?**
 3. **Let’s go back to the passage one more time. Put a box around commands that Jesus gives his friends.** Share in the large group/write on the white board. *(To abide/remain/dwell 11 times!; Love one another)*
 4. **What do you think it means to abide or remain in Jesus?** *(sticking with the metaphor to remain in Jesus is to receive life from him in the same way a tree trunk provides life to the branches. We have to stay closely connected to Jesus in order to receive the life he offers)*

Apply

- **From the passage, how is a follower of Christ to remain/abide in Christ?** *(Allow the words of Jesus to abide in you (7); ask! (7, 16); keep His commandments (10, 14); know and stay connected to His love for you (9))*
- **What is promised to those who abide in Christ?** *(bear fruit (5,16); bring glory to God (8); receive joy (11); live as a friend of Jesus*

(14); direct access to the Father (16); ability to love one another (17))

- **Practically speaking, how can we abide in Christ while at college?** *(share best practices. The Word and prayer are 2 things that stand out from this passage).*
- **Pray in small groups that we would abide in Christ.**

15 “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. ⁹ 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.