

Abiding John 15:1-8

Introduction: Jesus prepares his disciples for three big changes:

First, they would be expected to live in the vine, Jesus.

Second, they would be expected to bring forth ever-increasing fruit.

Third, they should expect that life in Christ involves pruning and seasonal set backs.

The Metaphor - John 15:1-8 - This is not the first such metaphor (Matthew 20:1-16; Matthew 21:28-32; Matthew 21:23-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 13:6-9; Luke 20:9-16).

The vine metaphor is far more intimate and prepares the way for a shift from the 'physical presence of Jesus, the Good Shepherd' to the 'internal presence of the Holy Spirit, the fruit maker'.

John 15:1 - The True Vine is Jesus

Precept: Before the Holy Spirit's arrival Jesus would set things straight between the Vinedresser and his vineyard—it would take place at the cross.

John 15:2-3 - A strong contrast

Precept: The Father and Jesus are fruit inspectors and they are never fooled. Fruit is vital to life in the vine; it is evidence that God's redeeming life exists. That always means that living branches joyfully respond to the chastening of the Lord (Hebrews 12:6-11).

John 15:4 - Jesus makes it plain that it is not possible to bear fruit apart from abiding in Jesus. Will I abide in the vine?

Precept: Taking credit for things that are of the Spirit is arrogant and contrary to God's Word. (1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Philippians 3:12-16)

John 15:5-6 - We either remain in the vine and bear fruit or we do not and are burned. (Matthew 3:8; Matthew 13:23; Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 15:28; Philippians 4:17; Colossians 1:10; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 13:15)

Precept: Abiding in Christ is essential to true lasting fruit; and that means that the Holy Spirit has full sway in my life and I am obedient and submissive to his direction.

John 15:7-8 - First, abiding in Christ is the same as abiding in the Word (7). Second, my abiding in the vine is the evidence that I am a disciple of Jesus (8).

Precept: I take this to mean that God's Word is a growing part of my understanding of life and its issues and it speaks into all of my relationships.

Conclusion & Application: First, it is important to see that the Father, the vinedresser, has

his role and Jesus, the vine has his role.

Second, John's gospel makes a clear distinction between believers and true believers (John 2:23; 8:30-31), between disciples and true disciples (John 6:65-66) and Jesus knows his true 11 and his one imposter (John 6:64; 17:12). So a branch in John 15:2 is someone who talks the talk and walks the walk; it is someone who brings forth fruit that remains, it is someone who submits to the pruning work of sanctification.

Third, Jesus is preparing the Church for fake believers, hypocrisy, scam artists and ruthless, pagan haters. (John 15:1-17; 18-27)

Finally, The Son is the life-source for all who believe, he gives the confidence and empowers them with the gift of the Holy Spirit. All the while the Father prunes and cares for the outward circumstances of life. Submitting to pruning and vine connectedness is the path to joy, all lasting joy (John 15:17).