



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Vine and the Branches, Part II

John 15:9-16

April 30, 2006

BACKGROUND

- It is crucial to understand that the words of Jesus, here, are spoken in light of His coming arrest, trial, and crucifixion...just hours away

Verse 9

- Notice the significance of the relationship of the Father and the Son...it forms the basis for every Christian relationship [which will be clear in Verse 12].
- Jesus is, therefore, clearly stating that He loves His disciples in *the same manner* in which the Father loves Him.
- However, this is not just some general love, similar to how we often use the term; rather, it is a **peculiar, particular love with specific objects of love and affection in mind** ⇔ His disciples.
- Jesus says, “Just as the Father has love Me, I have also loved you; ***abide in My love.***”
 - As we meditate upon Christ’s love for us, it should drive us to our knees, passionately seeking His face, “abiding” or “remaining” in Him.

But **HOW** are we to “abide in” Christ’s love?



Verse 10

- Jesus, then, explains *how* we abide in Christ’s love: “**keep My commandments...**”

But **HOW**, or **WHY** do we keep Christ’s commandments?



- In John 14:15, Jesus says, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

- Therefore, it is **our love for Christ** *that causes us to obey His commandments* *which causes us to abide in Him.*

But we cannot love that which we do not know!

Therefore, we must daily, continually, seek to know the Triune God through His Word, prayer, and dependence upon the power of the Paraclete [the Holy Spirit].

- It is absolutely necessary to understand, however, that to “remain” or “abide” in Christ requires supreme trust in His will and purposes.
- This week, during a video presentation at the *Together for the Gospel*, one man said, “We must get to the point in our ministries where we can say, ‘If God does not bless the teaching of His Word, this ministry will fail.’”
- Our we willing to do this?
- If often hear Christians saying, “I just want to love Jesus,” without any idea as to what it means to “abide” in Him.
- True “abiding” involves complete and total submission and trust – forsaking all for the sake of Christ – picking up our Cross and following Him **daily**.
- What is also important, here, is that Jesus sets forth Himself as the supreme example of obedience: “just as I have kept My Father’s commandments...”

Verse 11

- Jesus now tells His disciples **WHY** He has told them “these things” [love Him, keep His commandments, abide in His love]: **so that My joy may be in you...**
- In other words, Jesus has already explained **HOW** we are to KNOW the joy of Christ: by loving Him, obeying Him, abiding in Him.
- Jesus has already promised “My peace” (14:27); now He promises “My joy.”
- NOTE: this is not just *any* joy...it is **My joy**.
- Therefore, this joy, true joy, cannot be found in any other way.
 - Even people who call themselves ‘Christians’ attempt to seek this ‘joy’ in other ways such as positive thinking, Christian music, involving themselves in multiple ministries, etc.
 - Even listening to solid Christian preaching/teaching will not evoke this sort of joy that Christ is speaking of.
- The only way such joy can be known is by **remaining in Christ through a life marked with love for Him and obedience to His commandments.**

- ❑ Christ, then says, "...and that your joy may be made full."
- ❑ **HOW** can He say this?
- ❑ It is because "our joy" is truly "His joy"...It is a **foreign joy**, a joy independent of ourselves and our circumstances.
- ❑ Just like our justification involves the imputation of a foreign righteousness through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, the possession of true joy, Christ's joy, involves abiding in the Him through love and obedience.
- ❑ Therefore, since Christ's joy is independent of ourselves, it can never decrease [or increase] base upon our circumstances...even more, it can never be taken away!
- ❑ But, what is the nature of "Christ's joy"?
- ❑ Read **Hebrews 12:1-2**.
- ❑ The "joy" of Christ, therefore, can never be separated from His death on the Cross – the place of supreme obedience to the Father's will.
- ❑ Therefore, as we obey Him, pick up our Cross daily and follow Him, abide in Him, we then know the joy that the world will never know – a joy that is independent of ourselves and our circumstances...a joy found only in the intimate knowledge of our the triune God through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Now to the world, a many [of not most] evangelicals, this is foolishness. For, to them, joy comes through outward blessings. However, this is contrary to Scripture.
- ❑ This week, John Piper referenced this passage, noting that we "see" the glory and joy of the Lord only through the hearing of the word and meditation upon it.
- ❑ Read **Philippians 3:7-11**.
- ❑ As Jesus speaks of true joy, His joy, He knows He will be crucified in only hours. Further, He knows that the disciples of His to whom is speaking will each endure great suffering, persecution, and [the majority of them] even martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel. Yet, they will know Christ's joy, not in spite of their hardships, but **because of them**.

Verse 12

- ❑ Now, Jesus distills His commandments in Verse 10 down to one ⇨ to love one another in the same manner in which Christ loved us.
- ❑ What is so significant in Verse 12 is that loving one another is predicated upon loving God first. (Recall the greatest commandment [and the second].)
- ❑ In other words, we will **never** truly love one another [and experience truly biblical fellowship] apart from loving Christ, obeying His commandments, and abiding in Him.

But, what is the nature of this love that Christ is speaking of?



Verse 13

- Jesus says, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”
- Therefore, the love we are to demonstrate toward fellow believers is one of sacrifice – a willingness to lay down our lives for one another.
- Yet, Jesus Christ displayed this supremely – by laying His life down [as the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep] for His friends.
- NOTE: The word for “friends” [φίλοι, *philoi*] could also be translated “those He loves.”

But, who are the friends of Jesus?



Verse 14

- Jesus answers this question clearly in Verse 14, “You are My friends if you do what I command you.”
- Therefore, if we love Christ, we will keep His commandments; If we keep His commandments, we will abide in His love; If we do these things, His joy will be in us, and we can have to certainty that Jesus laid down His life for us.

Verse 15

- Now, since we love Christ and obey His commandments, we can know that He died for us.
- Since He died for us, we can know that we are no longer slaves, but friends.
- This puts us in the same “category” as Abraham (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23) and Moses (Exodus 33:11).
- Slaves do what they are told and obey their master simply because they do not want to suffer to the punishment and consequences of disobedience. Love for their master does not drive them to obedience.
- However, since Christ died for us, we, unlike slaves, are His friends and love Him and **desire to do that which glorifies Him.**
- Furthermore, a master never told the slave why he acts the way he does; yet, as Christ’s friends, He reveals to us “all things that I have heard from My Father.”

Verse 16

- Jesus concludes this section by ensuring that the disciples will not become prideful concerning their status as friends of God.

- He tells them, “You did not choose Me but I chose you...”
- This should be a most humbling statement, knowing that there is nothing that we did to become ‘friends’ of God.
- As the Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 4:7, “...What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”
- John the Baptist states in John 3:27, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.”
- Jesus, however, does not stop here, for He tells His disciples that He **chose** them and **appointed** [or “set them apart”] that they would **go** and **bear fruit**.
 - Not only this, the “fruit” that we will bear is described here: fruit that “**would remain.**”
 - This is PERMANENT fruit.
 - This could be a reference to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), fruit that will last.
 - However, these words reflect the idea of **mission** – “GO and bear fruit.”
 - Recall the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples...”
 - Therefore, the ‘fruit’ here is likely **new believers**.
 - **As the Father loved the Son, so the Son loves us; as the Father sent the Son, so the Son sends us.**
 - May we never forget that God has chosen us as the means to fulfill His redemptive purposes in the world, through the **proclamation of the Gospel**.
- Finally, Christ says, “so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”
 - In this context, Jesus is stating that the **means** of fruit-bearing is prayer to the Father in the name of Jesus.
 - Remember, this type of prayer, in the name of Jesus, is prayer in accordance with His will and eternal purposes.
 - Notice the intimacy of the Father and the Son, the basis of our relationship with God: in Verse 9, Jesus states, “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you.” Now, He says, “whatever you ask **of the Father** in **My name** He may give it to you.”