

I. Introduction.

II. Jesus is the true vine. v. 1a, 5a

- A. In the Old Testament Israel was God's vine/vineyard. Ps. 80:8ff Ezek. 15:1ff 17:1ff
1. She failed to bear fruit for God. Isa. 5:1-7 49:6 Jer. 2:21 12:10-11 Gen. 12:2
  2. She is to be judged. Is. 5:5-7 Je. 5:10 Eze. 17:1ff 19:10ff Hos. 10:1-2 Mt. 21:33-44
- B. Jesus comes as the *true* Vine. 1:9 6:32 2:19-22 10:11 Rev. 21:22 Psalm 80:14-18
1. He is the new Israel, fulfilling and surpassing the Old Covenant shadows.
  2. He brings forth fruit unto God: perfect obedience, testimony to the nations.
  3. Jesus is the source of life, strength, and fruitfulness for His people. v. 4 14:6
  4. Only God could make such a claim.

III. You are the branches. v. 5

- A. You are united to the Vine in the closest possible way. Gal. 2:20 Col. 3:1ff Ro. 6:1ff
1. You are totally dependant upon the Vine.
  2. The Lord carries out His mission through His disciples.
- B. Without Christ you can do nothing (Divine sovereignty).
1. Spiritual fruit is not the product of human achievement.
  2. Jesus again declares the total spiritual inability of the natural man. 1:12f 3:3-5 6:44,65 7:34,36 10:29 12:39
  3. This is why the unbeliever cannot do one solitary good work. Ro. 14:23 8:5-8
  4. The natural man is unable to come to God on his own. 6:44 Eph. 2:1ff
  5. You cannot do one good thing for God apart from Christ. I Co. 3:5-15 II Co. 3:5
  6. The glory for all fruit goes to God alone! v. 8 Ro. 11:33ff I Co. 1:30-31 3:7 Zec.4:6
- C. Abide in Christ (Human responsibility) v. 4, 9 Phil. 2:12-13  
How does one abide in Christ?
1. Have His Word in yourself. v. 3,7 8:31 6:56 I Jn. 4:15-16 Psalm 1
  2. Seek His glory in prayer. v. 7 14:13 I Jn. 5:14 Mt. 5:6
  3. Delight in His love for you. v. 9 Isa. 62:5 61:10
  4. Obey His commandments. v. 10 12:24-26 14:15 I Jn. 2:6
  5. Love the brethren. v. 12-13,17 I Jn. 2:10
- D. Those who abide in Christ are very fruitful. v. 5b, 8 4:36-38 12:24 Mark 4:8
1. We are expected to bring great glory to the Father (the Vine-dresser). 13:31-32
  2. Do you have holy optimism? Phil. 4:13
  3. Some are more fruitful than others.
  4. A person without fruit has no right to call himself a disciple. v. 8
- E. There are great blessings for those who abide in Christ.
1. Answered prayer. v. 7 14:13 Js. 5:16
  2. Fruitfulness. v. 5,8
  3. Assurance of salvation. v. 8
  4. Joy. v. 11 3:29 16:24 17:13 I Jn. 1:4 5:3 Ps. 1

#### IV. God the Father is the Vine-dresser. v1b-2, 6

- A. His objective is to maximize the fruitfulness of the Vine.
  - 1. What is the fruit He seeks? All that glorifies God. v. 8 Heb. 13:15 Js. 3:18
    - a. The fruit of the Holy Spirit: Godly character. Gal. 5:22-23 Eph. 5:9
    - b. Obedience to Christ's commandments. v. 10,14 Mt. 3:8
    - c. Love for God's people. v. 12-13 II Co. 9:10ff
    - d. Converts: the harvest. v. 16a 4:35-38 Col. 1:6
  - 2. God will do anything necessary to make the branches fruitful!
  
- B. Unfruitful (useless) branches are cut off. v. 2a, 6 Mt. 3:10 I Co. 3:11-15 Ezek. 15:1-8
  - 1. Jesus is not saying that people will lose their salvation. 10:28
  - 2. Conversion is not merely a human decision, but a work of God which always produces fruit. Phi. 1:6 II Co. 5:17
  - 3. Jesus warns that some with a superficial connection to Him are not truly saved. 14:15 Js. 2:1ff Mt. 7:15-23 12:33 13:8,23 I Jn. 2:3-4,19 II Jn. 9
  - 4. He has cut some off – Judas and the unbelieving Jews. 13:18,21-30 Mt. 21:43 Ro. 11:17ff
  - 5. Those who are fruitless are under God's judgement. v. 6 3:18 6:27 Mt. 3:10 7:25 13:30,41-42 21:19 25:46 Ezek. 15:1-8 Rev. 20:14-15 21:8 Ro. 11:17 Ti. 2:14
  - 6. They did not lose their salvation. Rather they never had it. 6:37,39 10:27-28 1 Jo. 2:19 Mt. 7:21-23
  
- C. Even the good branches are pruned/cleansed so that they will be more fruitful. v. 2b Heb. 12:11 Eph. 5:26
  - 1. Take comfort, true branches are not perfect. v. 2b-3
    - a. The disciples, whose faults were many, were considered clean. v. 3 13:10
    - b. They are cleansed by the Word which they received by faith. 3:16 I Pet. 1:23
    - c. Even true branches need some pruning. v. 2b
  - 2. God is committed to our holiness: sanctification. Eph. 5:26
  - 3. God the Father disciplines us. Heb. 12:1-11 II Co. 12:7ff 4:16
  - 4. What pruning is God doing in your life right now?
  
- D. God cuts and prunes through the process of church discipline.
  - 1. Removing fruitless branches. I Co. 5:1ff Mt. 18:15-18
  - 2. Pruning/cleansing real branches. II Ti. 3:16-4:2 Heb. 13:17

#### V. Final Applications: Examine yourself.

##### Discussion questions

1. What did the vineyard represent in the Old Testament?
2. In what sense is Jesus the *true* vine?
3. What spiritual truths about our relationship to Christ are illustrated by this figure?
4. What does this figure teach about God's sovereignty and our responsibility in our growth?
5. What fruit does God seek from us?
6. What are the blessings of abiding in Christ?
7. What is the role of the Vine-dresser in this figure?
8. Who are the useless branches which are cut off and burned?
9. How does pruning take place?
10. Are you abiding in Christ? Do you see fruit?