

Title: The Husbandman, the Vine and the Branches
Scripture: John 15: 1-8
Date: September 27, 2009
Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, New Jersey

The night the Prince of life delivered himself into the hands of those who would crucify him, having loved his own, he loved them till the end. The last 6 chapters of the book of John, we find the Lord Jesus comforting his apostles with precious promises, by which he gave them confidence and assurance and encouraged them to continue trusting him alone. One of the most comforting words for every believer, one of the most blessed words of assurance for every child of God, is found in John 15; 1.

John 15: 1: I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Yesterday, my family and I joined several of your families as we enjoyed each others company with another day of apple picking. As we walked around in the orchard, this was the verse that kept coming into my mind. It became apparent it would be our text this morning. In verse 5, the Lord Jesus assures his 11 apostles with these words:

John 15: 5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches

I can think of nothing more assuring than the relationship set before us here: God the Father is the Husbandman, Christ Jesus the Son of God is the Vine, we who have been given faith to believe on our Savior are the branches.

John 15: 1: I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman...ye are the branches.

I. CHRIST JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE (v1)

Christ is the Life of the believer. He communicates life, sap, nourishment, fruitfulness to the branches which are in him. Christ our Vine causes the branches to bring forth and bear fruit in clusters.

But this seems to have reference to Christ Jesus who is the Righteous Branch as opposed to the wild vine of Judah and the house of Israel. Abraham, as the father of the faithful, begot Isaac, the son of promise, who begot Israel. Yet, the house of Israel and the pleasant plant of Judah proved to be all unrighteousness.

Isaiah 5: 7: For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

The anti-type is God, the Father, who begot the Lord Jesus, the Son of promise, who begot true, spiritual Israel.

Jeremiah 23: 5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Christ Jesus is the True Vine and his Father the Husbandman.

All spiritual blessings that God the Father has for his people are in only in Christ Jesus his Son. The Father chose us in Christ, he predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, he made us accepted in his Beloved Son, Christ Jesus. Those who are called are holy and without blame in Christ, justified by God in Christ, sanctified by Christ through the washing of regeneration, and complete in him.

I John 5: 11: And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12: He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Illustration: As we walked around in the apple orchard yesterday I noticed that when the lady told us where we could find the various varieties of apples she did not speak of the tree as the branches, she only mentioned the tree. That is because the tree and the branches are one. Just as the branches of those apple trees were one with the vine, so every chosen, blood-bought child of God is one with Christ the Vine.

1 Corinthian 6:17: But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Add to this blessed assurance, that the Sovereign God of heaven and earth is the Husbandman.

II. GOD THE FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN.

The Husbandman sees to it that from his Vine, the branches bear much fruit.

John 15: 2: Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Every regenerated, believing, child of God is united to Christ in an inseparable union by the Husbandman.

I Corinthians 1: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Every believer brings forth fruit by the grace of God from Christ Jesus the Vine.

Galatians 5: 22:... love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance:

Because the Lord says,

John 15: 8: Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;

Therefore, the Husbandman alone shall be praised as Jesus Christ the Vine makes you to bring forth much fruit.

Philippians 1:11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Ephesians 1: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

One way the Father protects the branches and makes them fruitful is by taking away branches that are not truly fruit bearing branches.

John 15: 2: Every branch in me that beareth not fruit HE taketh away.

It is not that some can abide in Christ then cease abiding in Christ, these are men who never were in Christ from the beginning.

Illustration: Yesterday, we saw apple trees that were well-cared for. Sometimes, branches must be pruned from the vine. They appear to be true branches. But they have no fruit bearing sap flowing to them from the vine. In reality they are not part of the vine, they are "suckers" which are like parasites. But they look so much like the branches that only the wisest Husbandman knows which ones are the true and which ones are not.

Likewise, there are many false professors in religion: men like Judas, Simon Magus, Demas. They appear to be in Christ the Vine by an outward profession, by association with the true branches, by the performance of church duties. But those things can be produced without spiritual union with Christ. The reality is that God never chose them, Christ did not die for them, and the Holy Spirit has not given them life in Christ.

This is a word to comfort and not to frighten the true branches. Since only God knows the heart, therefore, only the Husbandman can take away those who are not true branches (like as he did with Judas). But the promise is that he shall, that he might grow the true branches.

The Husbandman purges the true branches so that they bring forth more fruit.

John 15: 2: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, HE purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3: Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Believers--the branches--are purged, cleansed through the word which Christ speaks to us, washed in his blood through the Holy Spirit, and our hearts are purified by faith.

Ephesians 5: 25:...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Hebrews 2: 11: For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Illustration: But sometimes insects get into the branches. Birds build nests in the branches. A blight may come on the branches. These all must be removed.

Likewise, the believer finds the insects of our old dead man and the fowls of worldliness cumbering us about.

HE purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

The Husbandman cleanses us continually through the word, through trial, and affliction that we may grow thereby--he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

Malachi 3:3: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

I Peter 1: 5: [Believers are] kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6: Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7: That the trial of your faith, [precious faith is tried and the refining fire proves it to be more precious than gold] being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Through these light afflictions, he causes us to lift our eyes heavenward,

2 Corinthians 4:18: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

III. YE ARE THE BRANCHES.

John 15: 4: Abide in me, and I in you. 4: As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The Lord first assured his brethren of our eternal security in him, protected and nurtured by the Husbandman, now he exhorts us to do what he has promised to keep us doing.

Abide in me and I in you.

Read these words--read this entire passage--in light of the everlasting covenant:

Jeremiah 32: 40: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. 41: Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul."

This is not a condition but a promise. When the Lord speaks his, "I will", saying "Abide in me and I in you", we can be sure he gives the grace so that "we shall not depart from him." When he says live, he gives life and we live; when he says repent, he grants repentance and we repent; when he says believe, he gives faith and we believe; when he says, Be ye holy, he cleanses us and separates us from defilement and we come out and are separate; when he speaks "Abide in me and I in you" then our only desire is to abide in him.

Hebrews 3: 12: Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13: But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

It is not our holding fast that makes us partakers of Christ and fruitful, but the fruit of faith and perseverance are the result and proof that we are made partakers of Christ.

Example: Proof of never been joined to the vine: John 8: 31: Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33: They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Proof of this inseparable union: John 6:68: Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

John 15: 4: 4: As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Why don't we have life in ourselves?

Illustration: As we looked out across that large garden full of trees yesterday, Art said to me, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat." There were rolling hills full of trees as I looked across the orchard. Then Art pointed to one tree in front of us and said, "But in the day you eat of this one tree, thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2: 16-17.)

That is the one tree we ate of. And all mankind lost all spiritual union with God--died--in Adam.

John 15: 6: If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

Illustration: None of those apple branches that we saw yesterday had life in themselves. If you severed one branch from the tree, the branch would immediately begin to wither. The caretaker of the orchard has no regard for those, he gathers them up and burns them in the fire.

So it is with men who do not believe on the Lord Christ Jesus. They are withered branches, good for nothing but to be gathered and cast into the fire and burned.

John 15: 5: for without me ye can do nothing.

What is it to abide in Christ?

John 15: 7: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

To abide in Christ is to have his words abiding in us. Has he made his everlasting covenant in your heart? If he has said, I will then you shall. And what is his word?

I John 3: 23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24: And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

When the Spirit of God abides in us the believer's will becomes God's will.

John 15: 7: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Romans 8:26: Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Spirit of God himself makes intercession for us asking for: whatever is for the glory of God, and for our own spiritual profit and edification, whatever is agreeable to the words and doctrines of Christ, which abide in us and every thing of this kind is asking in faith, in submission to the divine will. And we may expect--**it shall be done unto you.**

Application: So then is our Lord instructing us to look to our fruit bearing for hope? No. We are terrible fruit inspectors. Our Lord is promising us that God the Father is our Husbandman and God the Son is the

True Vine in whom we have every spiritual blessing. As branches, you are the most passive of all. You merely abide--wait, stay put--in the Vine without whom you can do nothing. Our hope is Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 6: 19: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

What comfort! **John 15: 1: I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman...ye are the branches.**