

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**  
**3RD-5TH GRADE**  
**TEACHER'S PACKET**

**SUNDAY MORNING**

Study 20

*I am the Vine*



# The Vine

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** To show the importance of abiding in Christ through not just trusting in Him for salvation, but also obeying His commandments to us and bearing fruit.

## Key Verses

John 15:1-17–Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 7:15-20

Matthew 12:33-37

**Memory Verse** - John 14:15

"If you love Me, keep My commandments."

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Acts 4:12.

Ask the class, "How can you know if someone is a Christian? Can you tell by looking at someone? What does a Christian look like? How do they act?"

Next ask, "Can you tell if someone is not a Christian? Can you tell by looking at someone? How do they act?" (Remembering of course that the Lord is the only one that looks at the heart).

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

# BOOK

In John 15, we come to the last of Jesus' "I am" statements. Our final promise in this selection of statements is found in 15:5, "I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit." The discussion of fruit really needs to take place in the context of Matthew 7:15-20. In these verses, Jesus speaks about false prophets who will come like wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus says that we will know them by their fruit. He goes on to say that good trees bring forth good fruit, and bad trees bring forth bad fruit. Fruit in Scripture is often an analogy for our actions. Just as fruit is an indication of what kind of tree you're looking at, our actions demonstrate the internal spiritual reality of our lives.

Christ promises us that if we abide in Him we *WILL* bear *MUCH* fruit. He then goes on to describe what some of those fruits, or actions, are: love one another (John 15:12), lay down your lives for others (verse 13), obey My commandments (verse 14), and live not as slaves to God but as friends (verse 15), not obeying out of fear of punishment, but out of mutual love and trust.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

# LOOK

Have you ever forgotten to plug an electronic device into the outlet, and when you turned it on you couldn't figure out why it didn't work? Take a vacuum cleaner for example. A vacuum cleaner can do absolutely nothing if it is not plugged into the wall. You can push it around all day, but if it isn't connected to the source of energy, it will never do what it was designed to do. In the same way, you and I are supposed to be "plugged in" to something that will give us life: Jesus.

In the passage that we read, Jesus didn't use the analogy of a vacuum cleaner, but rather of a grape vine. He states that He is the vine, the source of energy, the part of the plant that draws water and food up through the roots and gives it to all of the other parts. We are one of those other parts, the branches, and our job is to grow grapes. Jesus is making a very straightforward statement: if you aren't connected to Him, you can't do what you are supposed to do. If you aren't connected to Jesus, then just like a branch that has fallen to the ground, you cannot grow grapes. Jesus makes us a promise in this passage, "He who abides in (is connected to) me, and I in Him, will bear much fruit." So what is the deal with this whole fruit thing?

Fruit is Jesus' analogy for our actions, or the things that we do. Jesus wants us to be connected to Him and, through His strength and power, do

# LOOK (Continued)

certain things. If we look further down the passage, we see that Jesus wants us to show love to one another, live sacrificially, and obey His commandments. These are all examples of good fruit, or good actions.

In Matthew 7, Jesus gives us an example of some bad fruit, or bad behavior. He says that false (lying) prophets will come and pretend to be something that they are not, in this case sheep when really they are wolves. Jesus says you will know that they are wolves because, eventually, they will start acting like wolves and try to eat sheep. Jesus goes on to say that good trees grow good fruit and bad trees grow bad fruit.

I love that in John 15 Jesus says that He is the vine, or trunk, and we are the branches. He is saying that because He is the tree, and He is the best tree, if we are attached to Him, we will grow the best fruit ("Jesus fruit"). However, if we attach ourselves to other things, bad trees, we will grow bad fruit. If we don't attach ourselves to anything, we will be like a fallen branch lying on the ground, dried up and useless.

What does it look like to abide in Christ? It means being with Him all the time, never letting anything get in between our relationship with Him, and always relying on Him for strength and help. Abiding in Christ is speaking with Him, reading about Him, talking about Him, and praising Him. It is also directing all of our energy to things that He asks us to do. The Christian life is more than accepting Christ as Savior; it is living in obedience to Him, and trusting Him with every aspect of our lives.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize John 14:15.

**Pray:** Thank the Lord that He desires us to live a life completely connected to Him. Praise Him that in Him we can live our lives in a way that honors and blesses God. Ask Him to abide in us, that we might abide in Him every moment of every day.

**Parent Question:** As a family, read Galatians 5:22-23. What kind of fruit should I bear for Christ?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on John 15 by David Guzik

### *John 15 - The Departing Jesus Teaches His Disciples about Life In Him*

A. When Jesus is gone, they must still abide in Him and bear fruit.

1. (1-3) Jesus: the **true vine**.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."

a. **I am the true vine**: Jesus may have said this in view of or as they passed by the great golden vine that set as a decoration on the front of the temple. This vine symbolized the nation Israel, because the vine is a familiar Old Testament symbol for Israel (Psalm 80:8-9). Yet it is often used in a negative sense (as in Isaiah 5:1-2, 7 and Jeremiah 2:21).

i. In contrast, Jesus is **the true vine**. We must be rooted in Him (not in Israel) if we will bear fruit for God. In the New Covenant community, our first identification is in *Jesus Christ Himself*, not in Israel or even in the church as such.

ii. "He had often said it to Himself, but this was the first time He had ventured to announce it to His disciples. And what made Him speak so plainly that night was because He had just had the wine-cup in His hand, and had distributed it to His disciples; that wine-cup into which, as He looked down into it, He saw crushed all the grape-clusters of His whole life, as well as His heart's-blood in Gethsemane that night and on Calvary next morning." (Whyte, *The Walk, Conversation and Character of Jesus Christ our Lord*)

b. **And My Father is the vinedresser**: In the Old Testament use of the vine as a picture of Israel, God the Father was also presented as the one who cultivated and managed the vine. This role is also applicable to the believer under the New Covenant.

i. The New Covenant participant has relationship with both the **Father** and the Son; with both the **vine** itself and the **vinedresser**.

c. **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away**: The branches that are taken away were never properly abiding in the vine, demonstrated by the fact that they did **not bear fruit**.

i. There is an alternative understanding of this passage that bears consideration. James Montgomery Boice (among others) believes that the ancient Greek verb *airo*, translated here as "**takes away**" is more accurately translated "lifts up." The idea is that the Father lifts up unproductive vines off of the ground (as was common in the ancient practices of vineyard care). They lifted them up off the ground that they might get more sun

and bear fruit better.

d. **Every branch that bears fruit He prunes:** This word for **prunes** is the same word translated *cleanse* in other places. They used the same word could apply to either "pruning" or "cleansing" in ancient Greek.

e. **You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you:** The word of God is a cleansing agent. It condemns sin, it inspires holiness, it promotes growth, it reveals power for victory.

2. (4-8) The vital relationship between the branch and the vine.

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

a. **Abide in Me, and I in You . . . the branch cannot bear fruit of itself . . . He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit:** Fruit bearing is impossible without abiding; but it is inevitable with abiding. The quality and quantity of the fruit may differ, but the presence of fruit will be inevitable.

i. It is a simple fact: **the branch cannot bear fruit of itself.** Apart from the life of the vine\*\*\*

i. The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit. People don't raise grape vines to look at the pretty leaves. They take the trouble to cultivate, plant, water and tend the vines so that fruit can be enjoyed. In this sense, we can say that fruit represents Christian character (such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5).

ii. Fruit also implies inherent reproduction. Virtually every piece of fruit has seeds within it, seeds that are meant to reproduce more fruit.

iii. The concept of abiding is not restricted to our abiding in Jesus; it also includes His abiding in us (**and I in him**). It is a mutual dynamic that expects us to live spiritually and practically in vital connection with Jesus, *and* that expects Him to indwell us in an active, real way. In no way is the responsibility for abiding only upon the believer.

b. **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered:** What was Jesus saying here? There are basically three views regarding what this passage says about the believer's position in Jesus.

i. The first view believes **cast out** branches are ones who, though once true believers, end up in Hell for a lack of fruit. They were once saved, but are now **cast out**.

ii. The second view is that the **cast out** branches are pseudo Christians who never really abided in Jesus, and therefore go to Hell (like Judas).

iii. The third view sees the branches **cast out** as fruitless Christians who live wasted - burnt up - lives (like Lot).

c. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit:** There is an easy way to avoid being one of the **cast out** branches. They are the ones who do **not abide in Me**, said Jesus. If we abide in Jesus, we have full confidence and assurance.

i. Real fruitfulness is only determined over an extended period of time. "Genuine conversion is not measured

by the hasty decision but by long-range fruitfulness." (Erdman) This principle is displayed in the Parable of the Soils (Matthew 13).

d. **You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you:** Answered prayer is a privilege of close abiding; we find our prayers in tune with Jesus' will.

e. **By this My Father is glorified:** The purpose of fruit-bearing is to bring glory to God, not man. If people look at our lives and praise *us* for the glorious fruit, something is wrong. The whole purpose is to glorify God.

B. When Jesus is gone, they must love one another all the more.

1. (9-11) The link between love and obedience.

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that your joy may be full.*"

a. **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love:** We know that we abide in God's love by obedience, not by our mystical experiences.

b. **These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full:** When we fail to abide in Jesus' love, and thereby fail to keep His commandments, then we do not have the fullness of joy He promises to those who do abide in His love and obedience.

i. "No one is more miserable than the Christian who for a time hedges in his obedience. He does not love sin enough to enjoy its pleasures, and does not love Christ enough to relish holiness. He perceives that his rebellion is iniquitous, but obedience seems distasteful. He does not feel at home any longer in the world, but his memory of his past associations and the tantalizing lyrics of his old music prevent him from singing with the saints. He is a man most to be pitied; and he cannot forever remain ambivalent." (Carson)

ii. It begins with abiding in the love of Jesus; much of our low level of Christian living comes from not being persuaded of the love of God for us. This is, in part, what kept Israel out of the Promised Land at Kadesh Barnea (Deuteronomy 1:27)

c. **If you keep My commandments:** The foremost commandment to obey is *love one another* (John 13:34), and while Christians are ready to describe the delights of love in the new heaven and new earth, we often still hoard our resentments, animosities and bitterness down here. An old poem puts it well:

To live above with those you love: Undiluted glory.

To live below with those you know: Quite another story.

d. **That My joy may remain in you:** When we think about the joy of Jesus, we understand that it isn't the same as what we often think of as "happiness" or "excitement." The joy of Jesus is not the pleasure of a life of ease; it is the exhilaration of being right with God, and consciously walking in His love and care. We can have that **joy**, and have it as an abiding presence.

e. **That your joy may be full:** This is the result of abiding in Jesus' love, and obedience flowing from that abiding relationship.

2. (12-17) Jesus speaks of the extent of His love that they are to imitate.

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this,

than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another."

a. **That you love one another as I have loved you:** They are commanded to love in a particular way, according to the way Jesus loved (**as I have loved you**). What was the love of Jesus like?

b. **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends:** It is a love that will **lay down** its life for others; it is a love that treats **servants** as **friends**.

i. "The friend is a confidant who shares the knowledge of his superior's purpose and voluntarily adopts it as his own." (Tenney)

ii. The difference between a servant and a friend is not between diligent obedience and disobedience (or even casual obedience). The difference is between understanding and not understanding. Because friends have a close relationship, they understand while servants do not.

c. **You did not choose Me, but I chose you:** It is love based on Divine election; love that takes the initiative. Jesus introduced this thought right at the point where the disciples might feel proud that they are the friends of Jesus, bearing great fruit for God.