

Illustrating True Christianity

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Series: Living the Good Life (Gospel of John)

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[John 15:1-17](#)

-Jesus uses an agricultural illustration to delineate between true believers and those who are not true believers.

-This passage serves at least a two-fold purpose: 1) To help evaluate where one stands in status before their Creator, 2) To give some encouraging evidences of a life that is rightly related to God through Christ.

-3 sets of thought-provoking truths about true relationship with God illustrated with an agricultural concept:

1. An Evaluation of Status ([John 15:1-6](#))

A. Recognition of Roles (1, 5)

-1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

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.

-Jesus is the vine / trunk of a plant.

-God, the Father, is the "Vinedresser" / Farmer

-People are the branches / part of the plant that stems from the trunk that bears the fruit.

B. Reality of Rejection (2a, 6)

-2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

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.

-There are 2 categories of people—those who have accepted Christ and those who have not.

-To depend upon self for right standing with God is NOT belief in Jesus as the only Savior from sin.

-To trust in ANYTHING but Jesus Christ is to not trust in the Gospel of Jesus and thus puts that person in the position to be cut off of the vine and cast into a rubbish fire to be burned.

-(Christ-Centered Exposition) The Jewish religious leaders would likely have told a person that they had to become an Israelite and do the right religious stuff to be right with God. *Jesus essentially says instead, "Becoming an Israelite is unnecessary and ineffective. You need to follow Me." Union with Jesus—connection to the True Vine—is the only way to please the Gardener.*

-The reality: many reject true dependence upon Jesus and are thus condemned to an eternity without God and in a place of torment.

C. Rest in Receiving (2b-4)

-2b 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.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

-To accept Christ as Savior is to be a “branch that bears fruit.”

-There will be some pruning along the way, but fruitfulness is the result of being connected to the True Vine.

-Life may not always be easy, but trusting God’s pruning is an invitation in itself to rest—why? knowing that you are truly connected to the Source of life is quite relieving!

-If you have accepted Christ, you can rest in that assurance of eternal life—God may do some pruning in your life to cut away things holding you back from Christlikeness—but there is rest in receiving Jesus!

2. A Set of Evidences ([John 15:7-13](#))

- 4 evidences of true Christianity (CCEC):

A. Fruitful Prayer Life (7-8)

-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.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

-As we interact with the words of Jesus, we respond in prayer with Him about those words.

B. Obedient Posture (9-10)

-9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.

-Jesus showed love to the Father by obeying His plan for Him and He points out that we show that same kind of love toward Christ when we obey His directives.

-A follower of Christ will want to obey Him.

-Some directives Jesus has left for us to follow:

- Love each other as He has loved you ([Jn. 13](#), washing feet)
- Believe Me that I am in the Father ([Jn. 14](#))
- Go make disciples of all nations ([Mt. 28](#))
- Love your enemies / do good to those who hate you (Mt. 5)
- Don’t store up treasures on earth (Mt. 6)
- Seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6)
- Don’t worry (Mt. 6) ... many more!

C. Joyful Result (11)

-11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

-(J. MacArthur) *Just as Jesus maintained that His obedience to the Father was the basis of His joy, so also the believers who are obedient to His commandments will experience the same joy.*

-Joy in life is the by-product of obedience to God’s Word.

-True believers delight in obeying God and find joy to be the result of doing so!

D. Sacrificial Interaction (12-13)

-12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

-Evidence of true Christianity is loving each other to the extent that Jesus loved us—and He loved us to the extent that He gave His life for us.

-A follower of Jesus loves sacrificially by Jesus loving through him/her.

3. A Summary Statement. ([John 15:14-17](#))

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

-3 parts to His summary statement:

A. Following Brings Privilege (14-15)

B. Salvation and Sanctification are Supernatural (16)

C. Loving is Priority (17)

-So what do we do with this passage?

1. Evaluate!

-Are you a believer—do you see fruit of true Christianity growing?

2. Rejoice!

-If you are a believer, rejoice that God is working in and on you for His glory!