

February 28, 2021

Unit: Becoming More Like Jesus

Session 6: *Joining God's Work* ...John 15:1-8

The Point: Believers are to join God's work in both the church and the world.

EVERY FOLLOWER OF CHRIST IS CALLED TO MINISTER!!! We do not need to fear the work because we don't do it alone; it is actually God doing the work through us.

John 15:1-3

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

In these verses we see one of the seven “I Am” statements of Jesus made in the Gospel of John. Jesus was associating Himself with God in these constructions of “I Am”. He referred to Himself as “the true vine” which produces fruit. This was in sharp contrast to Israel, the metaphorical vine, that did not fulfill their purpose. God's covenant people largely failed to bear fruit. Jesus tells us that the branches that don't bear fruit are removed and the remaining branches are pruned to be more fruitful. Believers are the branches who work through Jesus to do the work of producing fruit according to His will. The Father is the gardener who cares for the vine and branches and prunes as necessary. If we are connected to the vine we WILL bear fruit...it is a natural outcome of being connected to the vine and cared for by the gardener. Non fruit bearing branches are severed and removed from the vine. The fruit bearing branches produce the fruit of evangelism, acts of service and personal growth. Life change happens and continues in genuine followers of Jesus as they lead others to Him, perform ministry in His name and live life Spirit filled.

John 15:4-5

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Jesus makes it clear here that the source of life is in the vine. The vine itself does not bear the fruit, but the branches that are *connected* to it...He chooses to work through us to produce His fruit! Praise God! We have a choice though whether to remain connected to Christ or be severed from Him. As we maintain a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus we are remaining or abiding in the vine and God will work through us to accomplish His purpose in the world. AMAZING!

John 15:6-8

“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

These verses illustrate a strong contrast again. We can either be worthless, separated from Christ, the vine, or bring glory to God as we remain in Christ. The dead branches are thrown aside, withered, and burned in the fire...whew! Those connected to Jesus bear fruit and God is glorified. It's our dependence on God that brings Him glory. God alone gives the ability and opportunity to bear fruit so the glory is all His, never ours. Praise God!!!

Summary

As we live *in* Christ and live *for* Christ, we will bear fruit...and God will be glorified! We must remain totally dependent on God to minister through us. We can only do the work He's called us to and produce fruit *if* we remain connected to Christ.

Live This Lesson Out By:

***Remaining in Christ...if we are living in Christ and in His power, He will give us ministry opportunities. Pray to have eyes to see them, willingness to surrender your plans and keep choosing to remain in Him.

***Mentoring...disciple someone in abiding in Christ and discovering their ministry

***Leading...as God calls you to ministry, accept His offer to join Him in His work

Have a blessed week as you remain in "the true vine", seeking and serving Jesus, bearing fruit and glorifying God!

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