



SESSION 59 | JOHN 15:1-12

JOHN 15:1-8 | THE UPPER ROOM: BEAR MUCH FRUIT

- Verse 1 –
 - While some have gone to lengths to show significance in the agricultural illustrations of Jesus (vines, olive trees, figs, etc.), the support for seeing much significance is dubious. I think it is better to simply take these agricultural allusions as “for illustration purposes only.”
 - Here, Jesus illustrates Himself as the **true vine** (verifiable) while the Father is the **husbandman** (caretaker / vinedresser).
- Verse 2 –
 - While the branches are not specified in identity like the vine and the husbandman of verse 1, the Lord’s disciples are presumed to be in view (as confirmed in verse 5). Jesus says clearly that branches be purged in order to **bring forth much fruit** (v. 2).
 - The word **purgeth** is καθαίρω [kathairo], from which we get *cathartic* and other *cleansing* words. The word **purgeth** cannot be taken in the sense of *totally removed* because a *totally removed* branch cannot bear fruit at all.
- Verse 3 –
 - Jesus tells His disciples that they are **clean**, using the noun form for the verb **purgeth** of verse 2.
 - Thus Jesus teaches that the preparation for fruit-bearing comes from **the word which I have spoken unto you**.
 - Jesus is clearly claiming His words to be of spiritual authority, on par with the words of the Hebrew Scriptures. This is a powerful claim.
- Verse 4 –
 - The Lord tells instructs His followers to **abide in me** and confirms that He does the same in them, reminding them through the agricultural illustration that the branch and the vine must work together.
 - Remember that this is *before* the Holy Ghost was given as the indwelling presence of God. The Greek word ἐν [en] is the basis of our English word *in*, however the Greek has a broader meaning of *in, with, or by*. Thus this verse can be interpreted without the idea of *indwelling*, which would come later, at Pentecost.
- Verse 5 –
 - It is simply impossible to hold to a doctrine of *once saved always saved* without dividing this verse out of this current dispensation.
 - The threadbare argument that those who were **cast forth** were never really saved simply falls apart when we recognized that *they were branches, growing off the vine which is Jesus*.
 - Rather than try to weave a theology that forces this passage to fit the *once saved always saved* model, it is better to dispensationally separate the words of John 15:6 from the doctrine of *once saved always saved*, which only fits within the **dispensation of the grace of God** (Eph. 3:2).
 - There is no need to speculate on whether Jesus was thinking of the Lake of Fire when He said **cast them into the fire** because He was using an illustration, not a *type*, in which every detail has significance.

- Verse 6 -
 - The previous passages of scripture are often used to “prove” that a person is not saved (they do not abide). However, it is not often mentioned that those who abide **shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you**.
 - The logic of the “standard evangelical answer” goes something like this:
 - If you abide you are saved.
 - If you save you bear fruit
 - If you do not bear fruit you are not saved
 - By the same logic:
 - If you are saved you get all your prayer requests answered.
 - If you don’t, then you are not saved.
 - As in [John 14:13-14](#), commentators fail to mention that this is an instruction given in plural, to the group not to the individual.
- Verse 8 –
 - Jesus said that His Father would be glorified through fruit bearing and disciple-making. While the terminology and application may change from one dispensation to the next, the principle remains true.
 - A general word on [John 15:1-8](#):
 - Since the Lord did not define *abiding* nor *fruit-bearing*, He must have thought it to be self-explanatory. Likely there is little value in parsing out questions like, “what does it mean to abide in Christ?” or “what kind of fruit did Jesus have in mind?” We should simply live our Christian lives “in Christ” as best we know to do, and the “fruit” will follow.
 - A good word from Bullinger: *“The interpretation of this passage is for Israel alone, though many blessed lessons may be drawn from it, by way of application. Through reading the “Church” into these verses, great confusion has resulted and grievous distress been caused to the people of God”* (The Companion Bible, note on John 15:1).

JOHN 15:9-17 | THE UPPER ROOM: DISPLAYING LOVE FOR JESUS

- Verses 9-12 –
 - The Father’s love is given as the ultimate standard. This love was displayed in Christ’s love for His disciples. The disciples were to **continue ye in my love** (v. 9). The word **continue** is μένω [meno], the same as **abide** in verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10, as well as **remain** in verse 11. The disciples were instructed to continue in Christ’s love by keeping His commandments.
 - Once again, one must continue to follow the logic:
 - If you don’t keep His commandments, you are not in His love.
 - If you are not in His love, you are not abiding.
 - If you are not abiding, you are not bearing fruit.
 - If you are not bearing fruit, you were never saved.
 - Thus, the “standard” interpretation of these verses is *very problematic*.
 - When rightly dividing, we put things in their proper dispensation and only make application within that dispensation.
 - For those *receiving the Kingdom*, keeping the commandments of the Father and His Son, the Messiah, was the key to entry (compare Lk. 25:25-38).
 - For those desiring the offer of salvation today, the requirement is very different (see [Acts 16:31](#)).