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The True Vine and the Branches
John 15:1-6

INTRO: Before we enter into our study, there are several observations that need to be made. These important observations will clear up, for the serious student, the misconceptions often associated with this passage:

1. Judas Iscariot has left the upper room. All of those left in the upper room with Christ are believers. This passage is written to believer.
 2. The “branches,” in this passage, are symbolic of believers.
 3. The message of this passage is not salvation; the message is fruit bearing. The word “fruit” is found eight times in this chapter. Eight is the number of resurrection, the number of new life, new creation.
 - a. Lost folks have no spiritual life and can bear no spiritual fruit.
 - b. Believers have new life, resurrection life. They are new creatures (II Cor 5:17).
 4. For a vine to bear fruit, it must be alive. Christ, the true vine, is alive; and the branches have life in Him.
 5. The branch must be connected to the vine to have life.
 6. Abiding in Christ is referred to nine times in this passage. Abiding always refers to fellowship, and only the saved have any fellowship with Christ.
 7. The only reason anyone can have fellowship is because of a relationship with Christ. The lost have no relationship with Christ.

1) VSS 1-3, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

- a) Vs 1, Jesus says: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandmen.”
 - i) “I am the true vine.”
 - (1) Israel had in the Old Testament been referred to as God’s vineyard, but Israel failed (Isa 5:1,2,7). Jesus declares that He is the true vine, the vine that will not fail.
 - (2) Those who believe on Him, the true vine, are the branches (vs 5).
 - (3) To be a branch, you must be in Christ for it is from Him that the branch gets its life.
 - (a) Rom 8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus....” There is no condemnation because they are alive in Jesus.
 - (b) Rom 3:24, we are: ‘justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.’ If you are in Christ Jesus, you are redeemed; you are alive.
 - (c) Eph 2:10: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus....” (Note vss 8-9).
 - (d) II Cor 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ....”

- ii) "My Father is the husbandman." This means that the Father is the one who cares for the vine and the branches. He is the One who cultivates the vineyard.
 - (1) First, we see the Father's care for the vine, His Son Jesus.
 - (a) Jesus is referred to as a tender plant. In Isa 53:2 it says: He "grew up as tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground."
 - (b) God the Father watched over the tender plant, Jesus, the true vine by sending the Wise Men home another way thus not telling Herod where Jesus was.
 - (c) He watched over the tender plant by sending Joseph, Mary, and Jesus into Egypt until Herod died (Mt 2:13). There are proofs that God the husbandman took care of the vine.
 - (2) Secondly, we note the Father cares for the branches.
 - (a) He watches over us+"If His eye is on the sparrow"..."I know He watches me."
 - (b) He cares for us. He daily knows the condition of each branch that is in the vine. What the branch needs He provides+ digging, pruning, training (discipline), watering, cleansing (I Pet 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.") The branches need much care, and He provides it. Part of the care is the Father's sending the Holy Spirit to help us (John 14:16-17).
- b) Vs 2, Note closely the words in this verse, especially the first part of the verse. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away..."
 - i) Keep in mind that Jesus is here teaching the eleven. He is not teaching lost folks. This is His private ministry to His own (John 12:36). As Pink puts it: "Christ was not here, addressing a mixed audience, in which were true believers and those who were merely professors" (397).
 - (1) Once a branch, always a branch. Sheep never become goats, and branches always belong to the Lord (John 3:18a, 3:36a, 4:14; 10:28; 18:9).
 - (2) Note carefully that Jesus says: "every branch in me that beareth not fruit...." Those in Christ "are saved"-- believers (II Cor 5:17).
 - (3) A Christian can be barren; he can be unfruitful as is pointed out in II Pet 1:5-8 with emphasis on verse eight. Titus 3:14 also speaks of unfruitful Christians.
 - (4) God's desire for the believer is for the believer to bear fruit. If the believer does not bear fruit, He has to deal with that branch.
 - (a) The Greek word for "taketh away" is *airo* meaning "take up, take away, lift up, raise up." The believer that does not bear fruit is lifted up by the Father. Opportunity is given to become a fruit bearer.
 - (b) If a branch continues to be unfruitful, it is taken away. This can mean that a believer can be put on the shelf, not used, taken out of service (I Cor 9:27). If a believer persists, God may take him home to heaven (I John 5:16).
 - ii) The fruit bearing branch is purged, so it can bear more fruit.
 - (1) God prunes the fruitful believer. There is daily renewal; there is a daily cutting off of dead leaves.
 - (2) "When it becomes necessary to prune the branches, this is done. Let it be remembered, however, that loving wisdom is the hand that holds the knife" (Powell 317).

- c) Vs 3, We are clean through the Word. This speaks of the believers state, his standing before God.
 - i) Our souls are purified by belief of the truth (I Pet 1:22).
 - ii) We are washed, but we need to wash our feet every day (Rom 13:10).

- 2) VSS 4-6, THE PURPOSE OF THE BRANCHES+ FRUIT BEARING
 - a) Vs 4, You must first be “in Christ” before you can “abide” in Him.
 - i) Being “in Christ” is relationship. “Abiding” is fellowship.
 - (1) The believer must continuously feed on Christ to stay in fellowship (John 6:35). We need constant communication and constant communion with Christ.
 - (2) To abide, you must pray, read your Bible, worship, serve, give, etc. Yesterday’s Bible reading and prayer will not do. You must daily feed on Christ.
 - ii) You cannot bear fruit if you do not abide with Christ.
 - (1) The Greek word for “abide” is *meno* meaning: “to dwell, to remain, to continue.”
 - (2) You are not going to be fruitful if you do not stay at Jesus feet, feeding on His words. If you feed on the world, you will be unfruitful.
 - b) Vs 5, The first part of verse one is repeated and verses two through four are implied.
 - i) This verse brings to mind the Gospel song, “Without Him.”
 - Without Him, I could do nothing,
 - Without Him, I’d surely fail;
 - Without Him, I would be drifting,
 - Like a ship without a sail.”
 - ii) Note our insufficiency, our lack of ability.
 - (1) We must depend on Christ if we are going to bear fruit.
 - (2) “The branch bears clusters, but it does not produce them. It bears what the vine produces; and so the result is expressed by the Apostle, ‘to me to live is Christ’” (Pink 405).
 - c) Vs 6, This verse says: “If a man,” not “if a branch.” The man who is not a branch cannot have fruit for he does not have life. He cannot abide for he has never been connected.
 - i) “He is cast forth as a branch.” Hendriksen says “as a (mere) branch.”
 - ii) He is condemned already (3:18, 36). The believer cannot be cast forth (6:37).
 - iii) “Withered”-- no life.
 - iv) “Gathered” as the tares (Mt 13:30).
 - v) Cast...into the fire” (Mt 25:46).
 - vi) “They are burned” (Mk 9:43- unquenchable fire).

CONCLUSION: Believers are to abide in Christ and bear fruit.