

Topic: Love Each Other as Jesus Has Loved Us

John 15: 9-27

Sermon for January 23, 2022

**Reference: The Bible Knowledge Commentary by Editors John F.
Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Victor Books, 1984**

Verse for Scripture Memorization:

- **John 15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.**

Outline

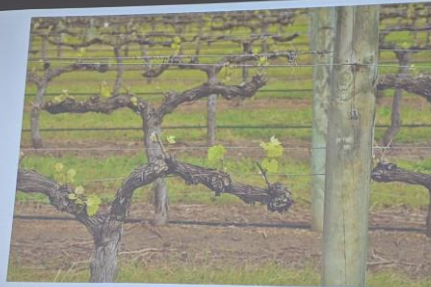
- Fruitfulness – The Vine and the Branches (vv. 1-17):
fruitful life; abundant life; have great joy – Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
- The World Hates the Disciples (vv. 18-25)
- The Work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 26-27)
- Concluding Remarks

Fruitfulness

(Obtained from: [The Maxwell Leadership Bible](#) by John C. Maxwell and Tim Elmore, Thomas Nelson, 2014) God created us to glorify Him by bearing much fruit.

The Vine and the Branches (vv. 1-17)

- We have great potential for fruitful leadership because of our ...
- **Source** (v. 1) – **Jesus is the true Vine**. If we stay connected to Him, we naturally bear fruit.
- **Core** (v. 1) – **Our heavenly Father is the Vinedresser** (a person who cultivates and prunes grapevines). He owns us and cares for us.
- **Pruning** (v. 3) – **God removes anything that hinders our usefulness.** He trims our weaknesses. *Trimmed vine bears much fruit!*



Partnership → Promise; Purpose; Obedience

- **Partnership** (v. 4) – Our job isn't to artificially push fruit out, but **to stay connected to the Vine**.
- **Promise** (v. 7) – If we let His Word abide in us, **He promises** He will do what we ask.
- **Purpose** (v. 8) – God created us **to glorify Him by bearing much fruit**.
- **Obedience** (v. 10) – Jesus gives only one condition to all this: We **must obey God**. We are to (1) remain in Him, (2) receive from Him, and (3) reproduce for Him.
- Jesus: true Vine; our heavenly Father: Vinedresser (He owns us and cares for us); believers: **(a)** branches → branches cut – no fruit;
- **(b)** branches stay connected to the Vine (Partnership: let His Word abide (to live and to stay) in us – (i) Promise: He will do what we ask; (ii) Purpose: He created us to glorify Him; (iii) Obedience: we must obey Him) → (1) bear fruit; (2) pruned – more fruit

- The **highest principle** for a Christian (the **highest virtue**): **love**
- **Inner life** – God dwells in us: let His Word abide (to live and to stay) in us **by studying and knowing His Word** → **Outward deeds** – trust and obey + witness and discipleship (bear more fruit)
- The Westminster Shorter Catechism(a series of questions and answers, especially on Christian faith教理問答)
- **No. 1 Q&A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.**

- 15:9-10 A believer is motivated by the wonder of **Jesus' love**, which is patterned after the **Father's love** in its quality and extent.
- Jesus makes “**remain in My love**” very concrete – **obedience to the Father's commands** is the same for a disciple as it was for the Son.
- **Active dependence** and **loving obedience** are the **proper paths** for all of God's children.
- Active → busy and enthusiastic; Loving → acting with strong feelings (not lukewarm)
- **Lukewarm**: only slightly warm → not enthusiastic or interested (冷淡的，不熱情的)

Jesus had great *joy* (by living a fruitful life); man has an *abundant life* (by obeying His commands, His disciples are having *joyfulness* (i.e., enjoy Him forever vs. joyless existence)

- 15:11 Jesus had great *joy* in pleasing His Father by living a *fruitful life* (cf. Heb. 12:2b For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.).
- The purpose of His teaching is to give a man an abundant life, not a *joyless existence* (John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that *they may have life, and have it to the full.*).
- The commands for His disciples to obey are for their *joy* (cf. 17:13 I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that *they may have the full measure of my joy within them.*).

Primary Command for Believers: Have Mutual Love – caring for and nurturing each other

- 15:12 One primary command was given by Jesus to believers: they must have **mutual love** (love each other; this is repeated in v. 17).
- ★★Christians grow by *caring for and nurturing each other*.
- The *standard for that love* is ★★Christ's example of humble sacrificial service: “as I have loved you.”
- **Philippians 2:6-8** ⁶Who [Jesus], **being in very nature God**, did not consider equality with God — something to be used to His own advantage;
⁷ rather, **He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.**
⁸ And **being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient [following God's will] to death**—even death on a cross!

Jesus' Friends – Abraham: God's "Friend"; he *obeyed* God

- 15:13-14 **The most a person can do for his friend is to die for him**; such a death is a clear demonstration of love.
- Jesus **demonstrated His love (v. 12b** ¹²**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.) by dying for His friends, those who obey Him.**
- Abraham was called God's "friend" because **he *obeyed* God** (2 Chronicles 20:7 Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of **Abraham your friend?**).
- ★★ Like close friends, **Abraham and God communicated well with each other** (cf. Gen. 18:17 Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?).

A Servant vs. A Friend – ★Relationship; ★Understanding

- 15:15-17 A servant (literally, “slave”) does not have a close relationship with his master, as friends do.
- Normally a slave does what he is told without understanding his master’s mind or business.
- Since Jesus had opened Himself to His disciples, the title “slave” did not fit their relationship.
- ★★ Jesus called His disciples friends **because He had disclosed His Father’s revelation to them**; however, when ★★ Paul spoke of himself as “**a servant of God**” in Roman 1:1, he had a different idea in mind – he meant he willingly and humbly served and obeyed God.
- Obedience: As far as ★the **action** is concerned, a servant does what he is told.

- Jesus then reminded them that contrary to the common practice of disciples picking a teacher, **Jesus had chosen them** (cf. John 15:19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, ★★ **you do not belong to the world, but *I have chosen you out of the world.*** That is *why the world hates you.*).
- The **purpose** (God created us **to glorify Him by bearing much fruit.**) of His choosing was so that they would produce lasting fruit.
- **Jesus chose disciples for a mission**, and His Father would answer their requests in order to accomplish that mission (^{16b}**whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you**).

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ... and God granted his request.

- 1 Chronicles 4:10 ¹⁰ ★★ Jabez *cried out* [enthusiastically and with feelings] to the God of Israel, “Oh, that (1) You would bless me and (2) enlarge my territory! (3) Let Your hand be with me, and (4) keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” *And God granted his request.*
- 代上 4:10 雅比斯求告以色列的上帝說：「甚願你賜福與我，擴張我的境界，常與我同在，保佑我不遭患難，不受艱苦。」上帝就應允他所求的。
- ★★ *Friendship with Jesus* involves the obligation of brotherly love [*caring for and nurturing each other*]: “Love each other.” (¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.)
→ caring: spiritual/physical conditions; nurturing: witness/discipleship
- ★★ Recall: Active dependence and loving obedience are the proper paths for all of God’s children.
- Active → busy and enthusiastic; Loving → acting with strong feelings (not lukewarm)
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The Greatest Commandment

- Mark 12:28-31 ²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “**Of all the commandments, which is the most important?**”
- ²⁹ “★★**The most important one**,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ ***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.***’ ³¹ **The second** is this: ‘***Love your neighbor as yourself.***’ There is no commandment greater than these.”
- Recall: The **highest principle** for a Christian (the **highest virtue**): **love**

The World Hates the Disciples (vv. 18-25)

- 15:18 **Friendship with God** results in *enduring the world's hatred*.
- Conversely, ★★**being friends with the world is to be God's enemy** (James 4:4 ⁴ You adulterous [regarding irrelevant relationship] people, don't you know that **friendship with the world means enmity [a feeling of hate] against God**? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.).
- **Jesus alerted His disciples** to the fact of the world's hatred.
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Believers are tested (fiery ordeal has come on them to test them) for being Christians; however, Satan has no hold over Jesus.

- The world in John's Gospel is the system of organized society hostile to God, which is under Satan's power (John 14:30 ³⁰ I will not say much more to you, for *the prince of this world is coming*. He has no hold over Me,).
- Believers might be surprised by this hostility [unfriendly occasion showing do not like something] (1 Peter 4:12-13), but they should remember that Jesus was hated from His birth (when Herod the Great sought to kill Him) to His death on the cross.
- 1 Peter 4:12-13 – Suffering for Being a Christian
- ¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery [bright red, like fire] ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But ★★rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.
- Recall: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

Promise of authority: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

- **Matthew 28:18-20** ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “★★ **All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** ¹⁹ Therefore (1) go and make disciples of all nations, (2) baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and (3) teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

- 15:19 A **fundamental** reason for the world's hatred of a Christian lies in their **differences**
- 1 Peter 4:4 ⁴ They are surprised that ***you do not join them in their reckless*** [doing something dangerous and not worrying about the risks and the possible results], **wild living**, and they ***heap abuse*** [to use something for the wrong purpose in a way that is *harmful* or morally wrong] ***on you***.
- Romans 12:2 ² ★★ ***Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*** Then you will be able to ***test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.***
- Recall: **Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.**

A believer has a different joy, purpose, hope, and love; he *has certainty, truth, and a standard for life – Kingdom of God's Son.*

- ★★A believer, *having left the kingdom of darkness and having been transferred into the kingdom of God's Son* (Colossians 1:13 ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.), has a different joy, purpose, hope, and love. He now *has certainty, truth, and a standard for life.*
- *Christians have been chosen* (cf. John 15:16 ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.) *out of the world system by Christ and they now belong to Him.* Since they do not belong to the world... the world hates them.

- **15:20-21 Jesus reminded His disciples of a statement He had made earlier: “No servant is greater than his master” (cf. 13:16).**
- **Previously He was referring to their need to imitate His humble service, but the principle has other applications.**
- **Christians are to identify so closely with Jesus that they share in His sufferings (“they will persecute you also”).**
- **On the positive side, some people followed and obeyed Jesus’ teaching, so they also responded to the apostles’ message.**
- **★★The root cause of the world’s hatred against the disciples is their identification with Jesus. They hate Jesus because they are ignorant of God, “the One who sent Him”.**

- **15:22-23** Jesus came as the Revelation of God. If Jesus had not come, their sin would not be so great.
- The statement, they would not be guilty of sin (cf. v. 24), must not be taken absolutely as **16:9** (about sin, because people do not believe in me;) shows (cf. **3:19** This is the verdict [decision made after judging the facts]: ★★**Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light *because their deeds were evil;*** **9:41** Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.).

- Before Jesus' coming, people might have pleaded ignorance as an excuse for sin (cf. Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but **now ★★he commands all people everywhere to repent** [to be very sorry for something bad you have done]).
- But **now that the Light has come, those who willfully reject it have no excuse.**
- The revelation in Jesus and by Jesus is so tied to the Father that to hate Jesus is to hate God (cf. John 15:24b ²⁴If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.).

Two conflicting deeds: confession vs. rejection

- 15:24-25 These two verses amplify the thought in verses 22-23. Jesus' miracles were so distinctive that their import was unmistakable.
- *The Jewish nation should have honestly confessed [to admit that you have done something wrong], "No one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with Him" (3:2).*
- But ★★the nation as a whole rejected both Jesus and the Father because in their sins they loved darkness rather than light (3:19).
- The nation thought it was serving God in rejecting Jesus (16:2-3) but, in reality, it was serving Satan (8:44).
- Sin is basically irrational.
- Their hatred of Jesus was without any rational cause which also fits the pattern of hatred for righteous people, as seen in those who hated David (Psalms 35:19; 69:4; 109:3)

The Work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 26-27)

- 15: 26-27 In the face of the opposition and hatred of the world, a **believer** might be tempted to try **to escape from the world or to be silent in it**.
- Monasticism [the way monks live], extreme separation, and lack of witnessing have been too common in the church's history.
- Jesus encouraged His disciples by ★★***the promise of the Spirit's work in the world***. As the work of Jesus was to promote the Father and not Himself, so **the Spirit will witness to Jesus as the Messiah** [a leader who is believed to have the *power to solve the world's problems*] ("He will testify about Me"). And what He says is true for He is the Spirit of Truth (cf. 16:13 ¹³ But when he, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, (1) He will guide you into all the truth [understanding]. (2) He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears [*obedience*], and (3) He will tell you what is yet to come [revelation].).
- Recall: ***Promise*** (v. 7) – If we let His Word abide in us, **He promises** He will do what we ask.

- As the Counselor (cf. 14:26 ²⁶ But *the Advocate, the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, will *teach you all things* [understand God's truth (the Word)] and will remind you of *everything I have said to you*; 16:7 ⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but ★★*if I go, I will send Him to you.*), *He presents God's truth to the world*. The Spirit is sent from the Father (cf. 14:26), just as the Son was sent from the Father.

The promised advocate, or counselor, is the Holy Spirit – “comforter,” “intercessor [a prayer that asks God to help or cure other people],” “strengthenener,” and “standby.”

- **Jesus assures his disciples that He will not abandon them but will provide them a counselor, or “advocate.”**
- Paraklete, the Greek word Jesus used here, referred to a person who came alongside during a time of legal difficulty.
- It has been variously translated as ★★**“counselor,” “advocate,” “comforter,” “intercessor,” “strengthenener,” and “standby.”** This promised advocate, or counselor, is the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit holds immense comfort. His followers are not alone.
- Though He is not physically present, ★★Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to (1) comfort and (2) counsel his followers. Jesus also sends the Holy Spirit to (3) lead them into truth.
- So, when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He was not on His own but was sent by the Father and the Son to live in Christ's followers, helping them to serve the risen Lord Jesus.
- Jesus has also given the Holy Spirit with an important caveat: "**If you love me, keep my commands.**" →obedience

- ★★ **Are you *obeying* the words and commands of Jesus?**
- ★ if not, (1) repent and (2) turn to him.
- if so, (1) lean on the power of the Counselor in your life today, (2) rest in him, and (3) be guided by him in your walk with Jesus.
- <https://todaydevotional.com/devotions/the-holy-spirit-as-counselor>
- Acts 2:37-38 ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, **what shall we do?**”
- ³⁸ Peter replied, “★(1) **Repent** and (2) **be baptized**, every one of you, **in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins**. And (3) you will **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**.”
- Recall: **Partnership → Promise; Purpose; Obedience**

- Yet this mysterious work of the Spirit is not done in isolation from the church. **The apostles were to know: “*You also must testify.*”**
- ★★ **As (1) the apostles witnessed, (2) the Holy Spirit persuaded, and (3) people were saved. → Believers bear fruit, despise the fact that the world hates them!**
- The same combination of (a) human obedience to the divine command (Acts 1:8 ⁸ But (1) **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**; and (2) **you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**”) coupled with the (b) witness of the Spirit is needed in every generation.
- Recall: **Inner life** – God dwells in us: let His Word abide (to live and to stay) in us **by studying and knowing His Word → Outward deeds** – trust and obey + witness and discipleship (bear more fruit)

In reflection: *Partnership* → Promise; Purpose; Obedience

- *Partnership* – stay connected to Jesus, the Vine.
 - *Promise* – let His Word abide in us; He promises He will do what we ask.
 - *Purpose* – God created us to glorify Him by bearing much fruit.
 - *Obedience* – obey God; we are to (1) remain in Him, (2) receive from Him, and (3) reproduce for Him. → bear more fruit (witness + discipleship)
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- Jesus: true Vine;
 - our heavenly Father: Vinedresser (He owns us and cares for us);
 - believers:
 - (a) branches → branches cut – no fruit;
 - (b) branches stay connected to the Vine → (1) bear fruit; (2) pruned – more fruit

Concluding Remarks

- Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
- The **highest principle** for a Christian (the **highest virtue**): **love**
- **Inner life** – God dwells in us: let His Word abide (to live and to stay) in us **by studying and knowing His Word** → **Outward deeds** – trust and obey + witness and discipleship (bear more fruit)
- ★★ **Primary Command for Believers: Have Mutual Love** – **caring for and nurturing each other** → **caring: spiritual/physical conditions; nurturing: witness/discipleship**
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- Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to (1) comfort and (2) counsel his followers and (3) lead them into truth.
- ★★ **As (1) the apostles witnessed, (2) the Holy Spirit persuaded, and (3) people were saved.** → **Believers bear fruit, despise the fact that the world hates them!**