

September 13, 2009

## "Abiding In Christ and Fruitful Christian Living"

### The Setting in John 15

#### Jn. 14:29-31

"Dodd notes that in normal Greek usage this phrase implied, 'Let us go to meet the advancing enemy.' A meaning exactly right for this setting. Jesus has just asserted that 'the prince of this world is coming'. They now go to engage him. It is a call to arms."

-**Bruce Milne**, *The Message of John*, BST Commentary, p. 219-220

- The "abide in Me" exhortation emerges in the context of spiritual opposition and the advancement of the gospel mission.

#### Jn. 15:18-20; 16:1; 17:11-18

### The Vine and the Vinedresser (vs.1)

- The quality of the Vine makes fruit-bearing inevitable for every abiding branch.
- The Vinedresser knows what to cut off and what to prune back. He knows how to care for the branches so that they achieve maximum fruitfulness.

▶ *Old Testament: The Father and His fruitless vine*

#### Is. 5:1-7; Ps. 80:14-18

## Two Kinds of Branches

### Fruitless branches (vss. 2a, 6)

**Jn. 13:7-11, 21-30**

**Jn. 6:58, 66**

*"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us." (1 Jn. 2:19)*

"There is a persistent strand of New Testament witness that depicts men and women with some degree of connection with Jesus, or with the Christian church, who nevertheless by failing to display the grace of perseverance finally testify that the transforming life of Christ has never pulsed within them."

—D.A. Carson, quoted in *Play On Words* (John 15:2-3), Bill Mounce, March 30, 2009

### Fruit-bearing branches (vss. 2b-5)

- John 15 and other NT passages describe two aspects of Christian 'cleansing'.

*"... But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11)*

"In themselves believers have no life, or strength, or spiritual power. They are what they are, and feel what they feel, and do what they do, because they draw out of Jesus a continual supply of grace, help, and ability. Joined to the Lord by faith, and united in mysterious union with Him by the Spirit, they stand, and walk, and continue, and run the Christian race. But every jot of good about them is drawn from their spiritual Head, Jesus Christ."

—J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John* v. 3, p. 105-106

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn 1:9)*

## The Father's Pruning Instruments

### Scripture

**Jn 17:17**

**Eph 5 :25-26**

- God's Word convicts us. It exposes the places where we need the cleansing and pruning work of God.

*"For the Lord disciplines the one he loves ... It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons... If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." (Heb. 12:6-8)*

- The Father's discipline is always protective. His pruning work is always for the purpose of maximizing our fruit-bearing potential, for His glory and our joy.

### Trials

"Trial, to speak plainly, is the instrument by which our Father in heaven makes Christians more holy. By trial He calls out their passive graces, and proves whether they can suffer His will as well as do it. By trial he weans them from the world, draws them to Christ, drives them to the Bible and prayer, shows them their own hearts, and makes them humble." **-J.C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts in John, v.3, p. 108-109**

**Js 1:2-4**

- God is careful to manage the trials we face so that instead of breaking off from the Vine, His children cling more closely and bear more fruit.

## Motivation to Abide

### God is glorified

- When we bear fruit and live godly lives, we glorify God. It makes a statement about how great God is, when His people love and obey Him.

### Experience greater assurance

"The meaning of this promise [vs 8] seems to be that fruitfulness in Christian practice will not only bring glory to God, but will supply the best evidence to our own hearts that we are real disciples of Christ."

–J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on John v. 3*, p. 117-118

- Fruitfulness and even God's pruning work becomes yet another evidence that God is at work within us.

### Joy to the full

*"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." (Jn. 15:11)*

### ***What becomes of the fruitful branch?***

**Jn 17:24**