

Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

August 11, 2021

John 15: 1 - 7

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. **2** Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. **3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. **5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. **6** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. **7** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Pastor Tom explained these verses as one of the “Great I Am” verses in the Gospel of John. He also discussed 2 ways of looking at Scriptures:

1. Exegesis - defining or discovering what the Bible says by what the Bible says; taking the Word for literal fact.
2. Inagesis - reading into the Bible by some other source (for example, a newspaper). Applying what is known from scripture (exegesis) to a situation or the situation to scripture. This is also referred to as hermeneutics.

Another prefacing note: We never want to set dates for God’s plans: on a certain day such and such will occur. But we do know the event is a part of God’s plan whenever it does occur.

Verse 1

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

*If Jesus is saying He is the **true** vine. The word **true** is very important in this verse and is not used in verse 5. The Holy Spirit does not waste words. If Jesus is the true vine, then everything else must be false.

Pastor Jon added something to think about: Isaiah 5: 1-7 talks about Israel as the Lord’s vineyard.

*There are many vines that are not true vines: that is they are imposter vines. For example, humanism (depending on your own or someone else's strength) is a false vine. There can only be one true anything. Jesus called himself the Way, the Truth and the Life.

*Also in verse 1, the Father is referred to as the husbandman which means the gardener, caretaker or tender of the vine.

Verse 2

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

*In reference to the 'fruits' in this verse, this could be applied to the church today. The church has to be in Jesus. People in church who are not in Jesus (those who do not produce fruit) will be cast away by God. This seems harsh to us sometimes. Pastor Tom wishes everyone would just follow Jesus then we would not have this messiness and discord. However, there will always be people who won't follow Jesus.

*God is cleaning the church. Those who do bear fruit, God prunes (purges or cleanses) or cuts back. Trees need to be cut back in order to bear fruit. Pruning is inflicting a wound on a branch for the sake of the tree because it causes growth of better fruit.

[A sermon note written in my Bible explained pruning as cleaning mildew off of vines that were growing along the ground and then tying them up so they produce more fruit. These vines were considered too valuable to cut off]

*Thinking back to the song lyrics from last week, "Some through the water, some through the flood".... "But all through the blood" we see that it may be God pruning us for more fruit and we cannot rely on ourselves but only on the blood of Jesus. If we think hardships are unfair, we just remember that God is pruning us.

Verse 3

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

*So we can be cleaned (pruned, purged) through the Word which is Jesus (John 1:1).

Verse 4

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

*No fruit can be produced if we are disconnected from the source. This refers to apples or OUR connection (or not) to God/Jesus.

Verse 5

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

*We are the branches (followers, offshoots). When we ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit grafts us to vine. He lives in us and we live in Him.

Pastor Tom noted that if God had not been in the plan to purchase the house next door, we would never have paid it off so soon (in 2 ½ years). Same for our futures, abide in God and He will take care of us.

Verse 6

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

*If we do not abide in Jesus, he casts us off. This is a rough verse to read. First, cut off (not in fellowship anymore), then dried up (not growing), and finally, burned (destroyed).

*However, Pastor Tom told us about a branch he found that has been cut off but had begun to reroot itself back into the ground. A vine can be reconnected and grow again! Our God is a God of second chances!

*Recalling the Isaiah verses referenced earlier, The Old Testament talks about Israel while the New Testament talks about Jews and Gentiles and that also includes us.

Pastor Tom shared how difficult it is when doing a funeral for someone whose spiritual connection with the Lord is not certain and their fruits were not clearly evident. The family wants to hear the good and happy things that their loved one is in heaven, but it is extremely stressful as a pastor when you can't say what they want to hear. Only God knows the heart and we can only know the outward fruits.

Because we abide in the vine, we must desire that all our loved ones make that connection as well.

Verse 7

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

*Abiding in Jesus and the Word (which is Jesus and what we study in exegesis) allows us to ask whatever we will and it will be done. This can get a little sticky because of our desires and God's will. When someone with a serious illness is anointed but passes away people often think God didn't listen or they are told they didn't have enough faith. But there are 3 ways to heal:

1. Miraculous; instantly
2. Over time
3. Eternal healing; passing into heaven

*This is difficult for 'not-abiding' people to understand. Some preaching is foolishness to those who do not believe.

Pastor Tom shared again how the deaths and funerals of believers can be described with a sweetness and peace about them.

He admonished: Don't miss Jesus for the world!

Pastor Tom closed our time with prayer.
