

John - Lesson 15

John Chapter 15

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Memory verses for this week: *Psa 30:4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Psa 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

Introduction: In our last week's study, we saw Jesus explaining to the disciples how that when He left them, that the Holy Spirit would come and both comfort and guide them unto all truth. You and I are still blessed with this promise today. When we know Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit comes and abides within us. This week in Chapter 15, we take up the teaching about us being the branches with Christ being the true vine.

Overview of John 15: Once again, the time is the interval between the Last Supper and Gethsemane. The first half of John 15 deals particularly with the great allegory of Jesus being the vine and we the branches. The thrust is of spiritual fruit bearing. In the last portion of John 15, Jesus sets forth four thoughts: (1) the progression of the believer from servant to friend and ultimately to son; (2) the purpose of our election—to bring forth fruit; (3) how the world will hate His disciples even as it has hated Him; and (4) the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I. Our Relationship to Christ in Fruit Bearing

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 15:2 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.

As the disciples entered into the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus after the Last Supper, He taught them an eternal truth in the matter of the vine, branches, and fruit bearing. In focusing upon the end of the verse, Jesus makes it clear that the husbandman (or the vintner) was the owner of the vineyard. This likely is the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah 5:1-7.

Isa 5:1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

Isa 5:2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

Isa 5:3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

Isa 5:4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

Isa 5:5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

Isa 5:6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

In the vineyard of Israel, God has planted Jesus Christ as the “true vine” or as God described it in Isaiah 5, the “choicest vine”). In the world of vintners, the vine stock is crucial in producing the finest grapes. Some strains are better than others. Jesus here describes Himself as the “true vine,” the life source of the fruit.

In the New Testament, two basic types of spiritual fruit are described. In Galatians and Ephesians, Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. There, the fruit is clearly internal, reflecting spiritual growth. Here, the fruit spoken of is reproductive in character. In vine plants as well as all plant life, the fruit is the symbol of reproduction. Though the fruit of the vine was pleasant and desirable in its own right, its purpose was more vital than any secondary consumption of the grape.

Within the grape is the seed which has the potential to bring forth another vine plant. The fruit is the embodiment of the seed which brings forth new life. In Jesus’ parables of the sower and the seed and the tares and the wheat in Matthew 13, the seed described there was either the Word (Matthew 13:23) or the children of the kingdom (13:38). Both are related for it is the Word of God (which is the seed) which produces the children of the kingdom. Paul later wrote that he had planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (I Corinthians 3:6).

The context there clearly was of spiritual reproduction in preaching the gospel and winning souls to Christ. In short, it is what is called soul winning or preaching the gospel. For a Christian to bring forth fruit as discussed by our Lord here, very simply, is to reproduce self spiritually over and over again. In the course of nature, plants produce fruit which contains the seeds for further reproduction of itself. In addition to the vitality of such spiritual reproduction is the sweet and pleasant blessing of watching spiritual seed grow. (See Ill John 4).

3Jn 1:3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

3Jn 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Just as children are the physical fruit of human reproduction, winning others to Christ spiritually is the fruit of spiritual reproduction. Though the disciples may not have fully understood what Jesus taught them that fateful eve, their later writings make it clear that they came to understand that which Jesus spoke that night. To bear fruit spiritually is to reproduce oneself spiritually; which is to say, to win others to Christ. Notice that the source for the vitality to bear such fruit is as a branch that remains connected to its life-giving vine.

The purpose of a vineyard was to bear fruit. When branches upon a vine were fruitless, the vintner would cut them off so that another branch could grow which would bear fruit. Fruitless branches were indicative of problems. The branch might be infested by a life-draining insect. It might be diseased. It might be dead.

In any event, the vintner would routinely remove non bearing branches. Branches which do bear fruit are routinely pruned back. The result is that they usually will bear even more fruit. God at times may prune our lives of entanglements which restrict us from the potential of fruit bearing we otherwise would have.

If you and I want to be fruitful in God's vineyard, we must see ourselves for what we are, humble creatures in need of help if we wish to be fruitful. We see that God is the husbandman, the owner of the vineyard. Jesus is the true vine. In the Greek, the word for true is "alethinos." This speaks of being genuine. And when we will take our position as a branch out of the true vine, we can really become fruitful. When you look at verse 2, we see that if we do not bear fruit, the Father takes us away.

In my life, I can relate to how close I came to losing my physical life by rebellion and refusal to serve the Lord when I was twenty years old. I was hit with such a massive dose of gouty arthritis, that I doubt I would have lived much more than six months. But by God's grace, some members of a church came and visited my wife and I, and we were able to get back into church and I rededicated my life to God. My arthritis got better immediately. When this happened, I could not stand up more than 20 seconds at a time, and all my joints were swollen out of proportion. But in six months, the swelling was gone, and a year later, I was playing on the football team that we had out there.

Before getting into church, I was not being fruitful at all. I was a stumblingblock to those around me. But when I got my heart right and back into the service of the Lord God's grace, He started molding me into a vessel meet for the Master's use. Thirty eight years later, I praise God for allowing me to be used. I'm sure you share the desire for God to use you in His service. God has had His hand in my life, and I want him to continue to purge me that I might be a branch that brings forth much fruit. It is important that we all understand that these verses are directed to a saved person, one of the true children of God by the second birth.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:4 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.

John 15:5 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.

The basic truth is that God's Word has spiritually cleansing properties.

Psa 119:9 BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

A truth which is so obvious and yet so forgotten is presented by our Lord.. A branch, apart from the vine, will never bear any fruit. The word translated as abide (menw meno) has the sense 'to remain,' 'to dwell,' or 'to continue.' It is in the imperative mode. Jesus commanded us to abide in Him. Unless and until we remain in close union with the giver of life, we will never impart spiritual life to another. A major key to bearing fruit is to continually abide in the Vine. What is in plain view here is a closeness of fellowship which comes only through faithfulness to His Word, prayer, and the things of God.

Throughout John's gospel, Jesus has used repeated metaphors involving the phrase, "I am" (the door, the good shepherd, the light of the world, the bread of life). Here is repeated what he said in verse 1. "I am the vine." In relation to the branches, of which we are by application, it is the vine which gives life and fruitfulness to the branch.

Jesus continued, "he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." A major key to being fruitful to the point we bring forth "much fruit" is abiding in Him. As mentioned above, that is remaining in close fellowship with Him through His Word and prayer. Christians at times wish to bear fruit, but are not willing to spend the time with the Vine necessary to have that spiritual vitality.

The believers are the branches in the vine. Without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, we are not clean. And as verse 3 states, we are clean through the word. (Gospel). Jesus' desire is for us to abide in him, and when we do, he abides in us. If you look at a peach tree or an apple tree, you don't see the branch bearing fruit without being tied into the main trunk of the tree. It has to have deep roots to give water for the fruit to be produced. In the Christian life, we have to be tied into Jesus Christ, the true vine for us to produce and be fruitful. Our heart needs to be wholly dedicated to the work of the Lord, and desiring to do things God's way. When our lives please the Lord, and we do things God's way, he promises that we will bring forth much fruit. I am proud to be a member of our local church. We have members whose desires are to do things the way they are laid down in the Bible. We recognize that without Jesus, we can do nothing.

In John Phillip's Study on the Gospel of John, I loved his comments on this verse. "Without me ye can do nothing." Jesus added, re-enforcing the lesson. There is no such thing as a freelance Christian. To be a Christian in the biblical sense of the word involves an organic

spiritual relationship with Christ. In the Bible there is no such thing as a denominational church being ruled from some headquarters, or an independent church ignoring all other gatherings of believers. All are united to Christ and through him to one another, in a many branched whole. Christ is the head of the church. Christ is the vine.

Severed from him there is no life at all, individual or corporate, and what passes for life is a wretched imitation, lifeless and sowing death. Denominationalism, tradition, programs, or money might keep a dead church going through the motions for a time. But all it produces is worldliness, carnality, legalism, and death. The abiding life is to become the abounding life, a life that brings glory to the Father by being a reflection of the life of Christ. “ I want to add that all saved believers are not a part of the church, they are all in the family of God. Only scripturally baptized believers make up the church of Jesus Christ.

Jesus had other teachings about bearing fruit. Over in Matthew 21, the Lord taught that His disciples should bear fruit. It was not well received by the chief priests and Pharisees.

Mat 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Mat 21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Mat 21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

Mat 21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

John 15:6 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.

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Though some would try to extract this verse out of context to prove that a Christian can remove himself from the vine, losing his salvation, the key is the context. The context is of fruit bearing. Injustice is done to the text in prying a thought from its greater whole. (A text out of context becomes a pretext.) Jesus is simply and further teaching upon the consequences of a branch apart from the vine. In a vineyard, branches which do not bear fruit or which are cut off are simply burned. They are of no longer value to the husbandman. It would behoove us to not be a fruitless branch. Bearing fruit is the very purpose for which the branch exists.

Not only does abiding in the Vine produce fruitfulness, there is the added benefit of power in prayer. As a believer remains in close fellowship to the vine, Jesus promised, “ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” A major insight to answered prayer here is set forth. It is as we remain in close fellowship with the Master. Such spiritual proximity places

us on 'praying ground.' It should be noted, that as we are in such continual proximity to the Master, our will becomes conformed to His will, and our prayer life becomes conformed to His will.

1Jn 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

1Jn 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Immature Christians often want the wonderful promise without first fulfilling the clear precondition of abiding in Him.

Does verse six teach that if we don't do works, we will be lost and go to hell? At first glance, this might appear that way, but we have to put the verse in context.

J. Vernon McGee had this to say about verse six. "Oh-oh", somebody says, "that sounds as if you lose your salvation." No, remember this passage is not talking about salvation but about fruit-bearing. It is talking about that which is the result of being saved. First of all, what is the fruit? I believe soul-winning is a by-product but not the fruit itself. The fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..." Gal 5:22-23 This is fruit in the life of the believer. Abiding in Christ will produce effectual prayer, perpetual fruit, and celestial joy." I've never hear this about this verse, and I've always related the fruit being other souls saved. I do think this is an interesting teaching on the verse, and worthy of consideration.

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

This verse is clearly pointed in my opinion to saving souls. If we want to be known as followers of the Lord, we need to be known as men and women who put forth the Gospel, just as Jesus and his disciples did in his ministry. Here are some verses about growing in the Lord to do good works.

2 Pet 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

2 Pet 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

2 Pet 1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

Titus 3:14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

Col 1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Mark 1:16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Mark 1:17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

Mark 1:18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

Mark 1:19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

Mark 1:20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

A sequence of fruit-bearing is developed in this short passage in verse 8. Earlier, in verse 2, Jesus spoke of fruit. Then, He spoke of more fruit. Here, He speaks of much fruit. Two blessed things result from bearing much fruit.

(1) The Father is glorified.

(2) It becomes the basis of discipleship.

Though other criteria of discipleship are noted throughout the gospels, Jesus here presents it with the simple summation of bearing much fruit. Such makes one a disciple. And such glorifies our heavenly Father. The disciples did so at Pentecost and their extended ministries following. Bearing much fruit is the fulfillment of discipleship.

II. Our Relationship to Christians in Fruit-Bearing

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Though Jesus, for the moment, moves away from the thought of bearing fruit to discuss loving one another; He will again return and complete the matter of fruit bearing in verse 16. The greater encompassing thought is that love for Him is the motive of fruit bearing and the fulfilling of His commandment. What a wonderful truth. Jesus loves us in the same fashion and to the same degree which God the Father loves Him. Truly nothing can separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus.

The word continue (menw meno) is the same word which is translated as abide in the preceding verses. Jesus used it in the imperative mode. He commanded us to abide in His love: His love to us and our love to Him. Insight into abiding in Him is noted here as continuing in His love. As we allow His love to flow through us, it will in turn flow to others, resulting ultimately in bearing fruit through them.

A major motive for the matter of obedience to Christ is set forth in verse 10. It is love for God. In keeping His commandments, we in so doing abide in His love. Obedience to His will and His Word becomes a significant means to abiding in Him. To the same degree Jesus has obeyed His Father, we ought likewise to obey Him. The motivation for Jesus' obedience was His love for His Father. Likewise, it should be for us.

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

An essential to the joy of the Christian life is set forth by our Lord. The entire matter of bearing fruit becomes a basis for spiritual joy. As John later noted, there is great joy in spiritual offspring and their walking in the truth (Found in both II John 4 and III John 4).

Hidden manna in the Christian life is the joy of winning others to Christ and watching them grow in the Lord.

Php 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

1Th 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

1Th 2:20 For ye are our glory and joy.

Moreover, as we are obedient to the Master, it produces the joy of our salvation. David lost the joy of Gods salvation by his own sinful disobedience.

Psa 51:9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Psa 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psa 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Psa 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

There is no joy like that which comes in leading another to Christ in obedience to the command of Christ. It is the fullness of joy.

All of God's commandments are for our own good. Never once has God commanded us to do something that would be to our disadvantage. Now Satan will come along and accuse our Heavenly Father of limiting what we can do, trying to get us prideful to do things our way. That was his way from the beginning with Eve. "Hath God said..." Just a little doubt and we will turn to our own way. But the verses here say that if we love the Father, we should continue in His love, and obey the commandments. God is much more pleased with our obedience than our sacrifices for our sins.

Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Heb 10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Heb 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Heb 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

We see that the Lord's desire is for us to love one another as He loved us. It is sad to see churches where the members have negative things to say about one another. Instead of lifting up one another in prayer, they gossip and tear down those that they should love. Let that never be said of you and I. I believe that if we are true disciples of the Lord, we will be exhorting and encouraging one another, never being destructive to another's character. If a brother or sister is making a mistake, let us correct them in a spirit of love and reconciliation.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Gal 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Gal 6:4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

III. Our Relationship to Christians in Fruit-Bearing

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

When we talk about love, there is no love like the Love of God. What Jesus did for you and I, while we were yet sinners and enemies of God, shall never be exceeded. I might die for my family, or for one of you that I love so dearly. But would I die for one that hates me and despises me? I doubt it. But that is exactly what Jesus did when he died for our sins. Anyone who knows Christ as Savior understands this love, and know that it was God who made the first move to us. He draws us by the Spirit of God. Our tendency is to turn away from God. But while we were yet sinners, God commendeth his love to us.

Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Rom 5:11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

In the Old Testament, Israel was referred to as God's servant.

Isa 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

Isa 41:9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

Jesus now refers to His disciples as friends (filov philos). There is an even greater degree. In coming to Christ, we have become sons and heirs, joint heirs with Christ.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

In New Testament times, a servant (doulos) was by law a slave. He had no liberty or rights. To be called a friend is a major transition. It bespeaks being on the same plane socially as the lord. However, to become a son through adoption was the choice of the lord to bring the former slave into the family. To be a joint-heir conveyed that the adopted son now shared all rights and conveyance of the begotten son. It was a transformation from the lowest to the highest degree.

The fact remains however, though we are sons in Christ, we also are still servants. And, He also is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother. In adopting us as sons, God has chosen us. Ancient adoption was unlike modern adoption proceedings.

Today, the adopting parents generally have to settle for whatever child is available through the adoption agency. In ancient times, the adopting parent could make choice of whom he wished to adopt. The principle of election is in view. Our election by God was by His choice. The word translated as chosen in both cases here (eklegomai eklegomai) is one of the base words related to the concept of election and from whence the same English word derives.

Not only has God chosen us but also ordained us. Notice the purpose and end to which we have been chosen and appointed. It is “that (ina hina—‘in order that’) ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Jesus refers back to what He developed more fully moments before. As branches emanating from Him as the Vine, our purpose is to reproduce in bearing fruit. He has chosen us and ordained us in order that we should go, “bring forth fruit,” and that our “fruit should remain.”

There clearly is a fore view of the Great Commission in going with the gospel, winning people to Christ, and discipling them that they might as fruit remain. God has called us to not only win others to Christ, but to disciple them and help them to grow. It is the very reason He has chosen us—to bear fruit. There is a linkage here between bearing fruit and the potential for answered prayer. At first glance, this might seem strange. However, as described in I John 3:22, keeping His commandments is a clear precondition for power in prayer. The whole matter of bearing fruit, (reproducing ourselves by winning others to Christ) is in fact a matter of spiritual obedience.

As Jesus forcefully set forth in the Great Commission, telling others of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is a commandment. It is reiterated as an imperative throughout the book of Acts (Acts 1:8, 5:20, 22:15, 26:16-19). As we so fulfill this all-encompassing command of Christ, it places us upon praying ground.

Act 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

Act 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Act 26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

Act 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Act 26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

We see that we have the proof of God's love to us in verse 14. In verses 15 and 16, we see the result of that love. When we know Christ as Savior, we are walking in the perfect will of the Lord, we will be fruitful and bring others to the Lord. Did you take that opportunity this week to tell a lost man or woman about Jesus? If we will pray and ask God to send us to sinners, I know from personal experience that God will give us an opportunity to witness. But we must be willing to be used of the Lord. Note the promise at the end of verse 16, "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Are we asking the right things of the Father? If we are asking for an opportunity to witness about Jesus, we are asking the right question.

Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Eph 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Eph 4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1 John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

IV. Our Relationship to the World in Fruit-bearing

John 15:17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

For the third time that evening (see 13:34, 15:12), Jesus repeated the command for His disciples to “love one another.” In departing from this world before sundown the next day, He knew how easy it would be for His disciples to argue and split apart. Three times in His last evening, Jesus commanded them to love each other. We might do well, even today, to pay heed to His thrice repeated command of His last night.

In his commentary, John Gill said this about verse 17.

John 15:17

These things I command you,.... The doctrines which Christ spake, as one having authority, concerning the vine and branches; his love to his disciples, in laying down his life for them, and in accounting and using them as friends, and not servants; in choosing, ordaining, and sending them forth, for the ends above mentioned; these were delivered by him with this view, to promote brotherly love among them: that ye love one another; this lay much upon his heart, he often mentions it; this is the third time it is expressed by him, in these his last discourses; and indeed, since he had declared such strong love and affection for them, it was but right and proper they should love one another; nor does anything more tend to increase mutual love among the saints, than the consideration of their common interest in the unchangeable love of their Lord.

In verse 18, Jesus now shifts to a new topic. The world has always hated Him. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that it will hate His disciples. It should come as no surprise. Satan is the prince and god of this world and he hates Jesus Christ.

The society under his direction (the world, i.e., the cosmos) will hate those who belong to Christ. To this day, the world hates those who are truly of Christ. They are members of two separate camps which are mortal enemies. Don't be surprised that the world hates fundamental Bible-believing Christians. If there is a friendship by the world toward a professing Christian, it is a signal something is out of sync. In all likelihood, the professing Christian either is not a Christian or, if so, is a backslidden one. The world accepts its own. If we were of the world, the world would accept us.

The world is friendly to its own. But because we are not of this world and have been chosen by Christ out of this world, the world despises us.

Is it a good idea for us to love one another? Not only is it a good idea, it is a commandment directly from Christ. By our love, the world is to know we are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Should we expect love back? They hated our Savior without a cause, and you can look at the leaders of our nation today, and few look fondly upon Christians today. America is a nation founded on God, yet few in our country speak well of Christians, particularly those that believe strongly in God's Word and walk a separated life.

Verse 19 says that if the world loves us, we are not taking much of a stand for the Lord. Take a strong stand, make your life exemplify Jesus Christ, and there will be attacks on you. Be sure, they are coming. But if we live like the devil, we can blend in well with the world, and they will accept us. I don't know about you, but if I can only please One, that One will be God. Please God, and He will take care of all of the battles.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 15:21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

While teaching a spiritual principle which is timeless, Jesus was also preparing His disciples for what lay ahead after His departure. He commands them to "remember the word that I said unto you." He is not referring to something He said earlier. Rather, He is admonishing them to remember what He is about to tell them. The time was soon coming when they would face persecution. A servant is not greater than his lord.

The world had already persecuted Jesus and the full climax of that persecution was only hours away. Jesus spoke what was not only prophetic but logical. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." A grim irony is used by our Lord in the final phrase here. "If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." The context holds the key. Has the world kept the word of Jesus? The answer is only too obvious. The disciples could expect the same. The world has ignored what Jesus said. Disciples to this day can expect the same.

The ultimate problem rests in that the world does not know Him who sent Jesus. Not only does the world not know Jesus, it knows not the Father. Their god is the prince of this world. He, as the archenemy of God has saturated his realm, the world, with the attitude of hatred.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

John 15:23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

The world will persecute us when we stand for God. Why does the world despise Christ like it does? Part of the reason is our pride. When God sent Jesus into this world, Christ made our

sins known and apparent. The fleshly man does not want to hear that he is a sinner separated from God. But that is why Jesus came... to make us see our true position, and then to live the perfect life and die that we might have a pardon for our sins. Not many want to suffer for Jesus, but we all desire to be part of the glory. But if I know my heart, I want to love for the Lord and understand even the fellowship of Christ's sufferings like the Apostle Paul.

Phil 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Phil 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Here, Jesus likened Himself to that divine light which revealed the sinfulness of men. . In Romans 7, Paul used the analogy that the Law (i.e., God's Word) did the same.

In a dark damp basement there will be cobwebs and insects of the darkness. However, when the light is turned on, the bugs and dirt are revealed. They were already there but the turning on of the light revealed them. Jesus in coming and teaching had revealed the wickedness of the human heart individually and of the world collectively. It always had been there. But now they had no "cloak for their sin." The light of Jesus Christ pierces the darkness of the human heart. There is no place to hide. There is no excuse. Therefore, they hate Him and those who shine His light.

In verse 23, we find the hatred is consistent. The world hates not only Jesus Christ and His disciples, it hates God the Father as well.

John 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

John 15:25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

When we speak evil of God, we directly speak evil of Christ. In the same way, when we speak against Jesus, it is an offense to God. We need to realize how much God loves Christ, and honor Him in all that we do. And we know as verse 25 declares, Jesus was hated without a cause. No other ever loved His own like Jesus. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, cast out demons, even raised the dead. But in all this, the world still hated Him. Don't be surprised when you are evil spoken of for doing a good work in the name of Jesus.

Continuing His thought, Jesus declared that not only what He said convicted the world, but His miracles did so also. Seeing that which Jesus did was a clear manifestation of who He was. Both what He said and what He did cast a light from heaven upon the wickedness of the human heart and the world. Jesus said, "if I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." In other words, even the miracles which He did were a manifestation of His divine light which revealed their sin. Only God could do what He did. If He had not come and in so doing revealed their sin, they would have continued in their pretense of self-righteousness. In revealing their sin, which in the light of His glory and grace had become obvious, they hated both Him and the Father.

In verse 25, Jesus alluded to either Psalm 35:19 or 69:4, perhaps both.

Psa 35:19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

Psa 69:4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.

Though there is understanding of the hatred of the world, there is no justification of it.

Their hatred, without cause, only further indicts them.

Matthew Henry commented on the hatred and how it is not of God.

Here Christ discourses concerning *hatred*, which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ. Observe here,

I. Who they are in whom this hatred is found - the world, the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; those who are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to; all those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who would not come into the church of Christ, which he audibly called, and visibly separates from this evil world. The calling of these *the world* intimates, 1. Their number; there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity. Lord, how were they increased that troubled the Son of David! I fear, if we should put it to the vote between Christ and Satan, Satan would out-poll us quite.

2. Their confederacy and combination; these numerous hosts are embodied, and are as one, Psa 83:5. Jews and Gentiles, that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's minister. 3. Their spirit and disposition; they are *men of the world* (Psa 17:13, Psa 17:14), wholly devoted to this world and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. The people of God, though they are taught to hate the sins of sinners, yet not their persons, but to love and do good to all men. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit, is not the spirit of Christ, but of the world.

V. The Comforter Promised

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

The final thought of this part of the Lord's discourse is at hand. Referring back to what He had taught earlier in the evening, noted in John 14:16-17,26; Jesus mentioned again that "when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Though the world will hate them (and us), Jesus reminded them that He would soon send the Comforter (paraklhtov parakletos). Implied in this term is not only the sense of an advocate,

but also of an encourager. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is personal. He is there to help and encourage God's people. He is not only of the Father, but has proceeded from the Father. He is God's presence dwelling within us.

For a born again Christian, God is only as far away as the Holy Spirit dwelling within our bosom. There is a loftier ministry of the Spirit. He is the Spirit of truth. Truth is personified in Him. He is so referred to on four occasions (John 14:17, 16:13, I John 4:7, as well as here). Part of His ministry is to testify of Christ. This, no doubt, is a reference to His work of conviction. The Spirit testifies of Jesus in the human heart.

We are chosen to be a witness. This is accomplished primarily by testifying which is telling others about Jesus Christ. As God's Word is presented to the human heart, whether by personal testimony or by public preaching, the Holy Spirit then, in conjunction with our witness, does His task of convicting by silently testifying to the heart of the sinner. In fashion similar to Acts 1:8, Jesus foretold that His disciples would bear witness.

Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

They had been with Him since the beginning of His ministry. Their testimony would be by spoken word in personal witness and preaching. It also would be by the written word as some of them later wrote portions of the New Testament as inspired by the Holy Spirit. The phrase "shall bear" witness is translated from the word (marturew) martureo and is actually in the present tense and active voice. They, as no others, could testify of Jesus, having been with Him throughout His earthly ministry. They had witnessed all He did and said. Our purpose is the same, to be a witness.

Being a good witness is simply living a life that pleases our Lord and being willing to tell others about the great gift that God has bestowed upon you.

Php 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Php 2:16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

The Spirit of Comfort and Truth shall testify of Christ. Each of us who know Jesus as Savior have that confidence in our hearts that we are the sons of God. And our lives will count and testify of Christ because we are His disciples.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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