

God's Vineyard

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I. Introduction. Text: John 15:1-11.

II. Jesus is the true vine.

- A. He is the genuine vine as opposed to that which is a copy.
- B. The purpose of a vine is to bring about truths.
- C. The fruit represents the life and outflow of Jesus—moral character or the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5)

III. Jesus prunes the branches from the vine.

- A. There is a cleansing process in the Christian experience.
- B. Christians have that which produces the fruit of the Spirit within them, but the Father is at work to rid those things in us which are opposite of the fruit of the Spirit—resentment, anger, bitterness, selfishness, egocentricity, love of praise, etc.
- C. The instrument God uses to clean believers is the Word.
- D. The intent of pruning is that we might be more like Jesus wherever we are.

IV. We are to abide in Jesus as a responsibility to Him.

- A. An activity to be done—abide.
 - 1. This has to do with choices and decisions.
 - 2. These are decisions to expose ourselves to God's Word, relate to Him in prayer, relate to others in body life, etc.
 - 3. These are means by which we know God.
- B. Something we allow Him to do—let Him abide.
 - 1. This has to do with power and enablement.
 - 2. We are not responsible for the power to carry out God's choices—here we must abide in Him.
 - 3. If we do not abide in Him, we will not produce results.
 - 4. If we do abide in Him, we will produce much.

V. Those not bearing fruit will be cast out.

- A. Judas is the great example of this—he followed Jesus but did not abide in Christ.
- B. As a result of this, he was cast out and eternally lost.
- C. This is a picture of church members who never have any manifestation of fruit in their lives.

VI. Results of fruit bearing

- A. Answered prayer conditioned by love for God.
- B. A demonstration of discipleship.
- C. The deeper experience of Christ's love.
 - 1. Love demands a response if it is to grow.
 - 2. We often do not experience love because we do not love back.
- D. The fullness of joy.

Application questions:

1. How is the Christian life both a responsibility and something received?

2. What does the abiding life look like?

3. How have you experienced this abiding life? What can you do to experience it more consistently?
