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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## John 15.

(2013)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## John 15.

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### Topics.

- I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.
- Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
- As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.
- If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.
- Greater love has no one than they lay down their life for their friends.
- Whatever you ask the father in my name, he may give it to you.
- Whoever hates me hates my Father also.
- The helper from the Father, the Spirit of truth, will bear witness about me.

**The Previous Chapter:** in the previous chapter Jesus told the eleven apostles that he was going, but would come again, he encouraged them by saying that the Father would give them another Helper the Spirit of truth to bring to their minds the things he had taught them, then he told them the ruler of this world is coming referring to the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### Jesus is still eating the Last Supper with his Disciples.

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**NOTE:** it is thought-provoking to remember that through this entire conversation Jesus is fully aware that Judas is about to come with soldiers and take him to face an agonising, bloody and brutal death.

### I am the True Vine, and my Father is the Vinedresser.

John 15:1-4 ----- <sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you (the eleven apostles) are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

**Vine:** (ampelos) carries the idea of a vine coiling about a support. In this context Christ support is his heavenly Father and our support is Christ, thus the picture is one of Christ being intertwined around the Father for his support and eternal future and all those who belong to Christ being intertwined around Christ for their support and eternal future.

**Fruit** (karpos) (harpazo) literally refers to fruit as being plucked or pulled up, figuratively it can apply to attitudes, deeds, character or souls saved and carry the idea of being taken away or up (freely or by force) thus Jesus words, "Apart from me you can do nothing," (v5) means without the Lord Jesus Christ the eleven apostles and by extension anyone confessing to believe in God cannot save anyone nor do anything that would add to God's Kingdom.

Jesus is sitting at the table eating the Last Supper and talking to the eleven apostles (Judas has gone to betray him). He tells the eleven that he is the true vine meaning he is the one that accepts and supports those who come to him and confess to believe in him while the Father is the vine dresser meaning the one who will remove those who confess to believe in Christ but do not bear fruit which

means they are living for themselves and are totally indifferent to the things that God values. Christ then comforts the eleven by telling them that they are clean meaning they are counted as righteous because they are abiding in him and believe his word.

The words: -

- Abide in me.

Carries the idea of remaining in faith and bearing fruit and Jesus words: -

- I in you.

Means Jesus will love and keep for eternal life those who remain in faith and bear fruit while his statement: -

- The branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine.

Means those who confess to believe in Christ cannot save anyone to eternal life nor do anything to add to the Kingdom of God unless they remain in Christ and Jesus words: -

- Neither can you unless you abide in me.

Refer to the eleven apostles Jesus is talking to.

#### **NOTE.**

Bearing fruit is not just about saving souls, fruit also refers to the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., kindness, mercy, compassion and the ability to forgive those who offend us etc.), and embraces things like hospitality, teaching, encouragement, helping the poor and needy when able all of these thing done in the name of Christ add to God's Kingdom and bring a good testimony to Christ's name.

#### **I am the Vine you are the Branches.**

John 15:5-6 ----- <sup>5</sup>I am the vine you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

To emphasis the truth that no-one can add anything to God's Kingdom without making Christ the supreme focal point of their heart and mind Jesus repeats what he has already said. Jesus words, "Apart from me you can do nothing," (v5) is most likely contrasting the religious authorities of his generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) who believed they were protecting God's Kingdom by enticing the people to reject Christ and his teachings with those who were devoted to Christ.

This no-doubt is why Jesus is so emphatic on his emphasis to the eleven and by extension everyone who desires to be part of God's Kingdom that without Christ no matter what they do it counts for nothing, thus the reason Jesus says so repetitively, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (v5). Even more than this no matter what religious works a person may do if they do them apart from Christ, God (the vinedresser) (v1) will cast them out.

#### **Ask whatever you wish, and it Will be Done for You.**

John 15:7-11 ----- <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Jesus words, "Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you," (v7). Does not mean if you desire a new car, a new home or an updated computer system God will give it to you. The things asked for in this context are things that will glorify God the Father, "Whatever you wish" (v7) refers to spiritual things that add to God's Kingdom and give those who belong to Christ the ability to bear much fruit so that others will know they are Christ's disciples (v8) so "The things asked for" would be things that help in adding to God's Kingdom and building up the body of Christ.

These things would include spiritual gifts and activities of service Paul speaks of in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:1-12) and of course asking for whatever helps us to follow Christ in the more excellent way (1 Cor. 12:31) (i.e., asking for all things that pertain to love) such as humbleness, patience, kindness, unselfishness the ability to forgive others who have offended us and a great love for justice and what is true (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Our inspiration for asking for these things should be driven by a desire to see lost souls translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light and so that our life would be worthy of the Gospel of Christ and his heavenly Father would be glorified (v8).

### **As the Father has Loved Me, so have I Loved you.**

Jesus is saying, "In the same way God loved him he loves us," and then tells us to live in his love, meaning be absolutely confident that Christ's love is always toward us. There is a danger in the Christian faith to judge Christ's love by circumstances meaning if life is good Christ loves us, but if life becomes troubling or full of grief and suffering he does not.

But if we measure God's love toward us according to our circumstance in life (good or bad) then when we look upon the suffering of Christ we would be forced to conclude that God did not have much love for His Son, and we all know this is a ridiculous statement, whenever we doubt God's love or Christ's love toward us all we have to do is look at the bloodstained cross, and remember whose Son is nailed to it and why he is nailed to it.

### **If you keep My Commandments, you will abide in My Love.**

If we say we love Christ, but continue to live a life that is indifferent to what he values and that brings a bad report to his name we are deceiving ourselves. Abiding in Christ has the following two aspects: -

1. Having faith that he is the Son of God and being confident that in him we have eternal salvation.
2. Living a life and behaving in a manner that brings a good testimony to his name.

When we do these two things Jesus has enormous joy in us and we will experience joy within ourselves (v11).

### **Abiding in Christ.**

Abiding in Christ carries the idea that we have the same mind as Christ meaning we have the same in purpose, desire and goals and are motivated by the same love. It means our goals in life are in perfect unity with the Spirit of Christ and his words we are identical in mind there is no division or tension between our focus in life and Jesus goals for his Fathers Kingdom.

Abiding in Christ means Jesus desire to glorify the Father is our desire it means we are in perfect love, unity and purpose with everything Jesus desires and loves. There is no division, conflict or tension between his desires and what we desire our will is in harmony with his will, his desires are our desires we are one in love, unity and purpose. Obviously we are not as perfect as Jesus, but the deep desire of our heart should be to honour Christ and our heavenly Father in everything we say and do.

**NOTE:** God's love is best manifested through the unity of those who believe in Him.

## **Jesus Commandment is to Love One Another.**

John 15:12-17 ----- 12" This is my commandment, that you (the eleven apostles) love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you so that you will love one another.

**NOTICE:** Jesus is still directing his conversation to the apostles, but by extension what he is saying applies to all who do his commandments which is to love one another and being willing to lay down our life for our brothers and sisters in Christ if called to do so, when we have this attitude Jesus calls us his friends.

### **Greater Love has no one than they Lay Down their Life for their Friends.**

If anyone ever doubts Jesus loves them all they have to do is look at the bloodstained cross. There is no greater deed that Christ can do than what he has already done to show how much he loves those who belong to him. Jesus calls everyone who believes his word and does them his friends.

Jesus in this conversation contrasts the word friend to the word servant, the word friend embraces the idea that there are no secrets, friends tell each other everything which is what Jesus is saying he has done for the eleven. He has told them everything that his Father revealed to him and made known to them all things pertaining to eternal salvation and the Kingdom of God contrasted to a servant who is kept in the dark and is not told what their master is doing. All Jesus friends today have access to everything Jesus told the apostles through the written word of God.

### **Whatever you ask the Father in my Name, He may give it to You.**

Jesus chose the apostles (v16) so that they would bear fruit that would remain. The fruit the apostles were to bear refers to proclaiming the word of God, delivering people from the bondage of the law to the Good News of the Gospel and translating them from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light which means that Jesus words: -

- Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Applies to whatever is needed for proclaiming and sharing the word of God, delivering people from the bondage of the law into the Good News of the Gospel and translating people from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light and all things pertaining to the fruits of the Spirit and loving one another in Christ.

### **If you were of the World the World would Love You.**

John 15:18-21 ----- 18" If the world hates you know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you. 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

**World:** the world in this context refers not only to the secular world, but also the Jewish religious world that denied Christ.

Jesus knowing after his death that the Romans and the religious rulers of his generation (the chief priests Pharisees and scribes) would aggressively pursue and persecute those who confessed the name of Christ prepares the eleven apostles beforehand by warning them that they will be hated in the same way that he has been hated meaning the Jewish religious leaders will send spies to seek them out and have them killed.

Prior to Christ calling the eleven apostles to follow him most were normal business men who were most likely respected in their communities both on a secular level and a religious level but now Jesus is telling them that the secular (Roman) world and the Jewish religious world will not only hate them, but actually aggressively set about to kill and destroy not only them, but whoever follows them because of their faith in Christ, but it's not all bad news for the eleven because Jesus tells them that all who kept his word will keep the apostles word (v20) which means they would also follow support and encourage them.

Later in the book of Acts and history we see how true Jesus words were, after his death and resurrection the Romans and the Jewish religious authorities pursued the church and violently persecuted anyone who confessed to be a follower of Jesus, they cast some into prison and killed others.

**Whoever Hates me Hates my Father Also. (v23).**

John 15:22-25 ----- <sup>22</sup>If I had not come and spoken to them they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse (cloke in KJV) for their sin. <sup>23</sup>Whoever hates me hates my Father also. <sup>24</sup>If I had not done among them, the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they, have seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup>But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They, hated me without a cause.'

**Cloke** (prophasis) means an outward showing; figuratively it carries the idea of pretence.

Had Jesus not spoken to the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes (and by extension the world) and had they not literally seen him, heard him and seen the stunning miracles he did they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse (cloke in KJV) for their sin because Jesus has clearly shown by his words and his life the way to forgiveness of sin, to righteousness and to the Father and eternal life. Added to this his amazing miracles should have left them with no-doubt that he was sent from God and approved by God therefore they are without excuse. Jesus statement, "they would not have been guilty of sin," (v24) does not mean the Pharisees would not be guilty of all sin the primary focus is their sin of denying Christ they should have recognised who Jesus was because of the miracles he had performed.

The main focus of this conversation is the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes gross sin of hating and denying the Lord Jesus Christ and murdering him without a cause. Jesus says they have no cloke or excuse for denying him any longer because there was no cause to hate him or have him killed since he had only done good and was without sin. They murdered an innocent man to protect their own religious empire and the power and control they had over the people.

**NOTE:** people like the religious rulers who say they believe in God, but deny the Son are not believing in the God of creation or of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, they may believe in a god but it is not the true God of Israel or the God of creation and of the Bible that they are believing in (See John 17:3).

**Jesus Miracles Authenticated he was sent by God.**

The miracles Jesus performed authenticated and testified that he was the prophet to come like Moses, the promised seed of Abraham and of David, Israel's Messiah the Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world. No man on earth could do the things Christ did without the full power of God flowing through him, thus his sign miracles evidenced that he was approved of God, sent by God, had God's favour and was God's beloved Son and the one Moses and all the prophet spoke of. We know Jesus miracles were to authenticated that he was sent by God the Father because when John the Baptist was in prison he sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one who is to come and Jesus answered them with the following majestic words: -

- Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me (Matt. 11:2-6) (Luke 7:18-23).

It is stated in the Old Testament that the Christ will open the eyes of the blind, heal the ears of the deaf, cause the crippled to walk and the mute to speak with joy (Isaiah 29:1-24) (Isaiah 35:1-10) (Isaiah 42:1-10) all the miracles that Jesus did and Jesus when speaking to the Jews said: -

- The works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me and the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard. (John 5:36-37).

### **The Word that is written in their Law must be Fulfilled.**

The words, "The word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They, hated me without a cause,'" (v25) refers to the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes and to the following two Psalms of David (the king and prophet) who was in a similar situation and though speaking of himself is at the same echoing the Lord Jesus Christ and his enemies: -

1. Let not those rejoice over me who are wrongfully my foes, and let not those wink the eye who hate me without cause (Psalm 35:19).
2. More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore? (Psalm 69:4).

### **The Helper from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, will bear Witness about Me.**

John 15:26-27 ----- <sup>26</sup>"But when the Helper (Comforter in KJV) comes, whom I will send to you (the eleven apostles) from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. <sup>27</sup>And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

**Helper:** (parakletos) (Comforter in KJV) carries the idea of an intercessor, consoler, supporter, ally, a defender, attorney and one who calms and sympathises and a friend.

The actual fulfilment of Jesus words, "When the Helper (Comforter in KJV) comes whom I will send to you" (v26) is recorded in Acts chapter one and two. Acts chapter one begins with Jesus appearing to the eleven after his death and resurrection and ordering them not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father.

The promise of the Father refers to their baptism with the Holy Spirit and the power to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. Jesus after telling them many things pertaining to the Kingdom of God was taken to heaven in a cloud (Acts 1:4-10).

They remained as Jesus had ordered in Jerusalem praying in an upper room together with many others and the woman who had ministered to Jesus. When the day of Pentecost arrived (Acts 2:1) there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind that filled the entire house where they were sitting and divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in various languages as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:2-5).

After this experience Peter boldly stood up and proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel and three thousand were baptised into the Kingdom of God. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. After this baptism in the Holy Spirit awe came upon the multitudes because the apostles were doing many wonders and signs amongst them (v42-43).

As the apostles boldly proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel people repented and received as a free gift from God righteousness which is imputed to them (and all others who repent and believe) because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore were set free from the bondage of attaining to righteousness by works and self-effort and translated into the glorious liberty and freedom of grace that comes through faith in Christ.

The title, the Holy Spirit embraces within it the titles Helper, Comforter and the Spirit of truth because God's word is truth and brings comfort to the soul that is struggling before God with sin. The Spirit of truth is personified as the Holy Spirit sent from God to the apostles to witness about God and His eternal plan of salvation in Christ. Today we receive the same Spirit of truth through the written word of God as recorded in the Bible.

The words: -

- From the beginning (v27).

Means, from the beginning of Jesus ministry.

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End