

Leader Notes – John 15:1-11

Review: On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus comforts his disciples with the knowledge that though they feel troubled at his leaving, in a little while their sorrow will turn to joy when they understand God greater plan. He has just introduced the future ministry of the Holy Spirit (chp. 14) and now Jesus begins to explain the union they will have with him through the metaphor of a grapevine.

“I AM the true vine...” (v.1-3)

- The goal of all agriculture is to bear fruit. Jesus maintains that unless his disciples remain connected to him as the true vine they cannot bear fruit.

Abiding in the vine... (v.4-5)

- Simple Definition of Abide: to remain
- Fuller definition in this context: “Abiding” describes a Spirit enabled, love-based union with Jesus producing eternal life. It is volitional (ie. We must choose to do it continually).
- How is abiding in Jesus (relational status) different from justification (positional status)?
- What is the result of abiding in Jesus vs. not abiding according to v.5?

The Three “IF’s” (v.6-11)

1. IF anyone does not abide in Jesus he dries up, withers and is burned... (v.6)
 - This cannot describe a genuine believer who loses their salvation (See John 6:40; 10:28-29)
 - It can however describe the natural consequence of a believer choosing not to remain connected in this intimate union with Jesus. Do you ever feel “dry” or “withered” in your faith? What kinds of things can we choose to do in order to remain connected and bear much fruit?
 - This can also describe divine discipline. Can you think of examples in scripture where God disciplined his children due to becoming disconnected to Him? The writer of Hebrews tells us this loving discipline is a sign we are legitimate children (Heb 12:7).
2. IF Jesus’ words abide in us, we can ask whatever we want and it will be done (v.7)
 - If we allow the teaching and character of Jesus to abide in us resulting in our will aligning with God’s, our prayers will always succeed.
 - How does one determine the will of God?
 - How can we allow the will of God to determine the course of our prayers?
3. IF you obey my commands, you will abide in my love... (v.9-10)
 - Why is it important that our obedience is motivated by love?
 - How did Jesus lead by example in his love-based obedience to the Father?
 - What other motives for obedience do we experience? (e.g. obligation, fear, self-satisfaction, approval, recognition, etc.) If we allow these motives to replace love-based obedience, what will happen to our joy?