

CHAPTER

15

Read the entire chapter. It contains some very important teachings of our Lord delivered to the disciples, probably on the day before He was seized and taken before the Sanhedrin. In the first portion, He gave the parable of the true vine and the husbandman, next the necessity of His followers showing love for one another, and then the prediction that His followers must expect persecution.

Verses 1 and 2. Three characters are involved in this parable: Jesus Christ, the true vine; believers, the branches; and God, the vinedresser. Jesus chose a very familiar occupation, that of a gardener or vine-dresser, to illustrate the point that He wished to make. In the Old Testament (O.T.), Isaiah 5:1-7, is found the parable of the unproductive vineyard which produced sour grapes rather than good grapes. This vineyard was the House of Israel and as punishment it was to be laid waste. A different lesson is taught here, as we shall see, as the story progresses. An important part of the vinedresser's work was to prune the vine, by cutting off the diseased branches. All the strength of the vine must go to the branches which bear fruit. A diseased branch not only does not bear fruit, but it is a threat to the entire vine. It must be cut off, not only because it bears no fruit, but also because it threatens the life of the vine.

317. Every _____, which is diseased and does not bear _____, must be cut off.

Verse 3. Jesus assured His disciples that He was not referring to them in the parable, for they were **clean** because they had been obedient to the word He had given them.

318. The disciples were _____ because they had been _____ to the word which Jesus had given.

Verses 4 and 5. **To abide**, means more than to stay in some certain place. It carries the connotation of living contentedly in that place. One does not abide in a prison cell, he abides in a home where there is security and love. Now read these verses again with this in mind. To live contentedly in Christ and to have Him live contentedly in us is joy unspeakable and full of glory, Heaven on earth. If we would take the promises of Christ seriously, what joy we could share! What a large crop of fruit we would bear! A branch separated from the vine cannot bear fruit. "Apart from Me you can do nothing." Bearing fruit is witnessing to the life of Christ within, through our words and through our actions.

319. To have Christ _____ contentedly in us and we in Him, means _____ unspeakable, and we will bear much _____.

Verses 6 and 7. In verse 6, Jesus pronounced judgment upon the man who will not **abide** in Him. He will be cut off, dry up, and be burned. Following this, He announced an added blessing which comes to those who **abide** in Him and keep His commandments: "You may ask what you will and it will be done for you." This seems to be a very sweeping statement, but it does not mean that a Christian can ask for anything that he desires and surely will receive it. It does mean that if the Christian has that close personal relationship described as abiding, he will know the Father's will and then the promise. "If we ask anything according to His will, we know that He hears us, and if we know that He hears us, we know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him," 1 John 5:14,15.

320. The man who does not _____ in Christ is cut off, dries up, and is burned. The man who _____ can ask what he will and it will be done for him.

Verse 8. The branch that bears a good crop of fruit pleases the vinedresser and the believer who bears good fruit glorifies the Father. These are true disciples.

321. The true test of discipleship is _____, a good crop, which glorifies the Father.

Verses 9 and 10. "I have shown you the same kind of love with which the Father loved me. By keeping My commandments, you will demonstrate that you are abiding in that same love, just as I keep My Father's commandments and abide in His love." What more happy and blessed state can be imagined than one in which we share "agape," that divine love which originates in God.

322. When we keep Jesus' _____, we _____ in the same love the Father and Son have for each other.

Verse 11. In this verse Jesus said that He gave them this teaching that they might share in the same joy He has in seeing God's love bearing fruit through them. In Galatians, Chapter 5, Paul said, "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, . . . and many other blessings". Love, the source of all that is good, comes first.

323. The teaching here is that the believer has the privilege of sharing Jesus' _____ which comes from obeying the Father's will.

Verses 12 and 13. Still on that subject of love, Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment; that they should love one another as He had loved them. This means that their love should be great enough that they would give their life to save another. Jesus knew that the time was near when He would give His life to save them and also all who thereafter would become His followers.

324. The new commandment that Jesus gave was that His followers should _____ one another, as He had loved them; a love great enough to cause one to be willing to give his _____ for another.

Verses 14 and 15. Previously when the disciples were selfishly seeking their own glory, Jesus had called them servants and admonished them, "A servant is not greater than his lord." Here He called them friends, but there was one condition, that they keep His commandments. Because they were friends, he held back nothing, but shared everything that He had received from the Father. If we could call the son of the highest official in our country a personal friend, that would be quite an honor would it not? How much more honorable it would be if the friend were the Son of God, ruler of the Universe.

325. There is no greater honor than to be called _____ by Jesus. The one condition is that we are faithfully _____ His commandments.

Verse 16. Jesus chose His disciples before they chose Him. He taught them and carefully prepared them in order that they might bring forth "good fruit," fruit that would remain. In addition, the promise was repeated that whatsoever they should ask in His name would be granted by the Father.

326. The purpose for which Jesus chose and then prepared His disciples, was that they should bear _____.

Verse 17 and 18. The command to love one another was repeated and the warning given, that they will be hated by the world. The world hated the Master first and His disciples can certainly expect only hate from the world. One reason for Jesus' strong exhortation concerning love for one another is their need for the unity that love will bring, making them strong enough to stand against the enmity of the world.

327. True disciples are known for their _____, the world is known for its _____.

Verse 19. "If the world recognized you as one of their own kind, they would love you. I have chosen you out of the world," said Jesus, "therefore the world hates you." The lives of godly people are a rebuke to the worldly and for that reason, the godly are hated by the world.

328. True or False? Godly people are hated because their lives are a rebuke to the worldly, but they can rejoice greatly because they have been chosen out of this evil world by Jesus and will make their home with Him throughout eternity.

Verse 20. The disciples had been warned previously (See Matthew 10:24, John 13:16) that they could expect the same kind of treatment by the world that their Master had received. But there is also a brighter side which Jesus brought to their attention. As they had received the words of the Master, there would be some who would hear and find salvation through their words.

329. "The servant is not _____ than his lord, and he can expect the same kind of treatment from the world as his Lord receives." He has the consolation that some will _____ the word he speaks and find salvation thereby.

Verse 21. "They have done these things to me, and they will do them to you, and the reason is that they do not know the One who sent Me." Jesus had previously stated that if the Jewish leaders had known God as they should have, they would have recognized who He was when He came.

330. "The basic problem," said Jesus, "is that people do not _____ God, the One who had sent Him into the world."

Verses 22 through 25. If these people had not had the opportunity to hear the teaching of Jesus, to see Him and the marvelous miracles which He performed, they could not be judged guilty of rejecting Him. But they had all the evidence needed to convince any open-minded person that He was the Son of God. These people had for so long sought the praise of men by glorifying themselves rather than giving the glory to God, that they had become hard of heart and were at enmity with the God they professed to love. Jesus said this as a fulfillment of that which was written in their law, "They hated Me without cause." See Psalm 35:19. Jesus again insisted on the unity of Himself with the Father, unity so strong that it can be said that anyone who hates the Son, hates the Father also.

331. Jesus said that these people were _____ because they had the opportunity of hearing Him and witnessing His miracles. They _____ Him and also His Father because they sought glory for themselves, rather than the glory of God.

Verse 26. This was the second time Jesus had mentioned the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, adding "He shall testify of Me."

332. When the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will _____ of Christ.

Verse 27. The apostles would testify of what they had seen and heard and the Holy Spirit would help them in bearing this witness.

333. Helped by the Holy Spirit, the disciples would _____ of Christ.

ANSWERS:

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| 317. Branch, fruit | 326. Good fruit |
| 318. Clean, obedient | 327. Love, hate |
| 319. Living, joy, fruit | 328. True |
| 320. Abide, abides | 329. Greater, hear |
| 321. Bearing fruit | 330. Know |
| 322. Commandments, share | 331. Guilty, hated |
| 323. Joy | 332. Testify |
| 324. Love, life | 333. Testify |
| 325. Friend, keeping | |