



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

The Gospel of John Sermon Series
Supports Session 5: Remain in Me
Sermon Title: "I Am the Vine" (John 15:1-17)

Connection to Session 5

In the same way that a vine is connected to its branches, Christ is connected to each believer.

Introduction/Opening

Networking according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* is “the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions.”¹ All humans bear the image of God. One aspect of that image is our social or relational nature. People enjoy being connected—networked—with other people. When Jesus describes Himself as the Vine and His followers as the branches, He is affirming this relational concept in spiritual matters. All believers are networked, or connected, to the Vine. This relationship gives His people life, joy, and love.

Outline

1. There is Life in the Vine (vv. 1-8)
 - a. Jesus is the Vine and the Father is the Gardener (vv. 1-3). In nature, a branch must remain connected to the vine to grow and bear fruit. For believers, we must remain connected to Jesus to grow spiritually and bear spiritual fruit. There are those who claim to be Christians but whose lives show no spiritual fruit. In this passage, Jesus teaches that those branches that do not bear fruit are removed. However, the Gardener prunes the fruit-bearing branches, causing them to bear more fruit. We shouldn’t understand “he removes” (v. 2) to mean that a believer can lose his or her salvation.
 - b. The Word of God prunes the fruit-bearing branches (v. 3). The cleansing mentioned in verse 3 came from Jesus’s instruction during His earthly ministry. This cleansing prepared them to bear fruit.
 - c. Abiding in the Vine produces fruit—purposeful prayer and glory to God (vv. 4-8). What does it mean to remain in the Vine? Basically, the idea is to treasure and maintain fellowship with the Vine. Branches cannot survive without this connection. “Fruit bearing for the disciple is totally dependent on a direct connection to Jesus.”²

1. *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “networking,” accessed July 27, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/networking>.

2. Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 25B, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 142.

What is the result of remaining in the Vine? Purposeful prayer and bringing glory to God. Prayer moves from selfish, self-centered asking to seeking the will of God. The final purpose of remaining in the Vine is found in verse 8, “My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.” This first phrase indicates the certainty of the action. As believers abide in Jesus and obediently bear fruit, they bring glory to the Father.

2. There is Joy in the Vine (vv. 9-11)

- a. Jesus’s love for His people produces joy (v. 9). Jesus affirms His love for His people by comparing it to the love of the Father to the Son within the relationships in the Godhead. His children are in possession of His love for them. He calls on His followers to abide, remain, and rest in His love.
- b. Obedience to Jesus’s commands produces joy (v. 10). Keeping His commandments moves His people to love Him. Previously Jesus noted (14:15) that loving Him would produce obedience. In this context, obedience produces love. These ideas are inseparable, and therefore it is impossible to have one without the other. The foundation for the disciple regarding obedience and love is patterned after the relationship of the Son and the Father.
- c. The Word produces joy (v. 11). This verse is a climactic statement. Note that it is Jesus’s joy that makes the joy of believers complete.

3. There is Love in the Vine (vv. 12-17)

- a. There is a command to love (vv. 12-13, 17). Jesus calls on His followers to keep on loving one another as He has loved them. He is the model and the standard for loving one another. He repeats the command in verse 17. He illustrates the command in verse 13: “No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.”
- b. There is a calling to recognize (vv. 14-15). Jesus called the disciples (and by implication all believers) His friends if they follow His commands. All believers are called to obedience. All believers are aware of the mind and purpose of the Master because of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the illumination from the Word of God.
- c. There is a commitment to fulfill (v. 16). All believers have been chosen and appointed to produce fruit with abiding results. We then have a purpose and power in prayer. Believers are called to keep on bearing fruit. “Bearing fruit in the Christian life is not about doing works or attempting righteousness in our own strength. Rather, it is about intentionally growing in our walk with Christ, inviting the Holy Spirit’s work of transformation in us, and actively obeying God in all He calls us to do.”³

Conclusion

Our connections, or who we network with, are important. Our most important connection is to the Vine. Without a connection to the Vine there is no life. Without a connection to the Vine there is no experience of love. Without a connection to the Vine there will be no abiding joy. One can network and move up the corporate ladder. One can network and gain insights into the world of electronics. One can network and be elected to a political office. None of that networking will produce what really matters—a new quality of life now and the hope of eternal

3. “What Is Meant by Bearing Fruit? How Can a Christian Bear Fruit?” CompellingTruth.org, 2022, <https://www.compellingtruth.org/bearing-fruit.html>.

life with the Lord Jesus forever. To what network are we connected? That is the question we all need to answer.

Dr. Neil Gant is a native of Memphis and now lives in East Tennessee where he has served as Pastor of the Oakwood Baptist Church in Knoxville since March of 2019. He has served in pastoral ministry for more than forty-one years. He has been married to the former Lea Gillespie for more than forty-one years, and they have one adult daughter, Anna. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Blue Mountain College and both his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

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