

Abiding in Christ

Check the Connection

John 15:1-2

MAIN IDEAS

Jesus continues His farewell to the disciples using the symbolism of growth in a vineyard.

- Jesus identifies Himself as the “true” vine
- He distinguishes His Father as having the role of “vinedresser”
- The Father begins by casting away branches that do not bear fruit
- He then turns to fruitful branches and prunes them to optimize their fruit-bearing

Do a study of winemaking in the Bible. How important was the vineyard to Israel’s economy?

Locate other places in the scripture, like Psalm 80:8-15 and Isaiah 5:1-7, where the symbolism of the vineyard is used. How do they help you to understand why Jesus chose this way of teaching the disciples?

Why do you think Jesus calls Himself the “true” vine? Why the word, “true,” and how can this be applied to the life of any Christian disciple in the world?

Some form of the word, “fruit” is used three times in verse two. What do you think Jesus meant by the word, “fruit?” Find examples in the Book of Acts where the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) was demonstrated.

The warning in verse 2 to the branch that does not bear fruit is, “He takes [it] away.” What do you think this means?

The promise in verse 2 to the branch that does bear fruit is, “He prunes [it] that it may bear more fruit.” What might this pruning consist of?

PERSONAL RESPONSE

How can looking to Jesus as the source of fruit-bearing change the way you live your life?

Since Jesus is the “true vine,” what are some of the false vines that exist in your heart and life?

Reflect on Philippians 1:6. How should the big picture of what God is doing in your life help you day to day?

One of the goals of this series is to, “Encourage patterns of abiding in Christ.” What might this look like in your life?

What are the various ways that God’s Holy Spirit prunes you?

GROUP RESPONSE

Jesus’ picture of the vineyard consists of a vine and many branches, growing and bearing fruit. Likewise a church is made up of many members abiding in Christ. How can we do that better in...

1. Our worship?
2. Our prayer times?
3. Meeting the needs of the hurting?
4. Our small groups (men, women, mixed...)?
5. Our outreach efforts?

Choose one of the above or another, and make a plan for abiding in Christ: what does it look like for DEC? What actions would be needed and how should they be measured?

Verse 2 seems to suggest that there are two kinds of disciples in the church, fruitless and fruit-bearing. What is our responsibility toward each?

Reflect on groups at DEC. What are we doing well? Share your ideas with the church leadership. You could:

- Have a member of your group chat with an elder one-on-one
- Invite an elder to visit your group.
- Call or email the church: <https://www.durhame.org/contact>

REPRODUCE

Share your experience of abiding in Christ when faced with trials with a family member or friend.

Challenge a Christian friend who is struggling to join you in a pattern of abiding. Meet together to decide what that might involve.

KEY VERSES

From the sermon:

- John 15:1-2
- Matthew 3:8
- Romans 1:13; 6:22
- 1 John 3:17
- Hebrews 12:6, 10-11
- Colossians 1:6
- Galatians 5:22-23
- Matthew 7:17-20

Additional verses from the study:

- Psalm 80:8-15
- Isaiah 5:1-7
- Philippians 1:6
- Genesis 9:20
- Deuteronomy 6:10-11
- Nehemiah 9:25
- Ezekiel 28:26
- Matthew 20,21...