

**Date:** March 3rd, 2026

**John Section:** John 15:1-27

**Key Text:** John 15:4-5

**Main Idea:** Abide in Christ

**Genre:** Theological Narrative

**Author:** John

**Audience:** Primarily second-generation believers, Jews, and Gentiles, needing encouragement and clarity about Jesus' identity.

**Setting:** Likely written from Ephesus, AD 85-95, in a context of synagogue opposition and emerging false teachings.

**Quote of the Week:** "Union with Christ is not a metaphor tacked on to the Christian life; it is the way the New Testament explains the whole of the Christian life." -Sinclair Ferguson



## **John Preview:**

### **Highlight:**

The Gospel of John is a unique New Testament account of Jesus' life, written by the Apostle John, the beloved disciple. John's Gospel is not merely a biography but a theological portrait, revealing Jesus as the eternal Son of God who became flesh to bring life and light to the world. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John emphasizes signs and discourses that unveil Jesus' divine identity and mission. From the opening words—"In the beginning was the Word"—to the climactic resurrection appearances, John presents Jesus as the one in whom God's glory is revealed, calling all to believe in Him for eternal life. This Gospel is rich with imagery (light, life, bread, water, shepherd, vine) and repeatedly centers on the theme of belief.

### **Focus of John:**

- **Purpose of John:**
  - John tells us his purpose plainly: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31).
- **Themes in John:**
  - Jesus is the Word made flesh
  - Jesus reveals God's glory
  - Eternal life is found in Him alone
  - Belief is the way to life
  - Life flows only from union with Christ
- **Our Response to this Truth:**
  - Believe in Him – Abide in Him – Live by His Word – Trust in His promises – Love as He loved

### **Recap:**

### John 15:1-11 Jesus is the Vine - Ezra

- As we continue this intimate scene of Jesus and the disciples in the upper room in John 15, Jesus gives the disciples His seventh and final “I Am” statement, “I Am the true vine.” Jesus begins this teaching by stating that He is the true vine, the Father is the vinedresser, and we are the branches.
  - Before we analyze how this true vine relates to Jesus and the vinedresser relates to the Father, we should understand why these terms are being used.
    - A vinedresser plants, cultivates, and cares for the vine.
    - The vine is the life-giving source of the plant that nourishes the branches, so that the branches can bear fruit.
    - Branches bear fruit, but only when united with the vine. When the branch is not attached to the vine, it is dead and cannot bear fruit.
  - Of course, these branches represent us and our relationship with our Father. Therefore, we are not victims of the separation from the Father as referenced in verse 2, and we are not thrown into the fire and burned as referenced in verse 6.
  - Instead, through the finished work of Christ, we are able to bear fruit as the Spirit works through us. As mentioned in verse 2, we are pruned so that we may bear more fruit.
- **What does it mean that the Father prunes the fruit-bearing branches? What does this look like for the believer?**

- We now move to verse three and the verses to come, as Jesus shifts slightly from the idea of the vine to the idea of abiding.
  - “**3** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”
    - Jesus isn’t saying the disciples are flawless, but that they have been cleansed by His word and justified by His work.
    - The disciples are now set apart as branches that belong to the vine.
- Jesus calls for His followers to abide in Him. But what does it mean to abide in Jesus?
  - The word “abide” means to stay, remain, or continue in a particular state.
  - Abiding in Jesus is:
    - Remaining where the life is: in Christ.
    - Reliance and dependence on Him for our lives.
    - If you recall our study in John 8, Jesus used the word “abide” to the ones who had believed in Him.
      - **31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
    - Abiding in Jesus is union not only in His life, but also in His death and resurrection.

- Romans 6:5
  - **5** For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.
    - When a branch does not abide in the vine, no fruit can be borne; it will wither, and be thrown into the fire.
    - Abiding in Christ means that His words also abide in you, as seen in verse 7. His words nourish and sustain this union we have with Him.
    - The Father is glorified by the fruit of this union in Christ.
- Starting in verse 9, Jesus introduces love and how it holds the unity between us, Jesus, and the Father together.
  - “**9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10** 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. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”
- Jesus isn’t telling His disciples in verse 10 that they need to earn His love through keeping the commandments.
  - Jesus kept the Father's commandments perfectly, and the Father was pleased and found joy in Jesus’s perfect obedience.
  - Jesus is telling His disciples to follow the path that He walked, so that they can experience the fellowship He has with the Father.
  - Obviously, both we and the disciples cannot perfectly obey the Law as Jesus did, but through the process of sanctification, the Spirit gifted to us will guide us closer to the will of the Father.
- As we close in this section, Jesus tells the disciples why He told them these things: so that His joy may be in them. This joy is one of many fruits that flow from this union in Christ.
  - Things to notice about Jesus’s joy:
    - Rooted in the Father
    - Sustained through suffering
    - Is the fullness of our joy

### John 15:12-27 Abiding Love in a Hostile World - Ben

- A few weeks ago in John 13, we saw Jesus stoop down and wash the disciples’ feet. This was an extraordinary display of His love. We looked at how His love is not conditional or performance-based, but is rooted in who He is.
  - We see this same idea show up halfway through this chapter, as Jesus again tells them to love one another as He has loved them.
  - John 13:34-35
    - “**34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- The start of John 15 calls us to abide in Christ. That section should provide rest and encouragement for us. As we move forward into this next chunk of Scripture, we will approach an important question: if we are truly abiding in Christ, what does that life actually look like?
  - Our actions on the horizontal matter quite significantly. They matter not as the root of our salvation, but as the fruit of abiding in Christ.
    - As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the branch connected to the true vine bears visible fruit.
    - We are reminded throughout Scripture that the greatest fruit is love:
      - 1 Corinthians 13:13
        - “**13** So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is **love.**”
      - Galatians 5:22-23
        - “**22** But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
    - Jesus defines this love in verse 13, saying that there is no greater love than what He is about to do: sacrifice Himself for His friends. Of course, His disciples do not understand what He means, but they will in a few short hours, when He is crucified for their sins.
  - **Can someone lack love and still be abiding in Christ? Why or why not?**
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- Jesus clarifies in verses 14-15 that we are no longer servants, but that we are friends. What is the reason for this distinction?
    - A servant will likely carry out the commands of his master without ever having a personal relationship with him. The motivation of a servant is often out of obligation, fear, or duty. But a friend is invited into a relationship marked by love and connection.
    - When Jesus says, “No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends,” He is explaining how He has drawn us close to Him. He chose us, He has brought Himself to us as a friend, and He even gave the Spirit to us as a helper.
      - We are able to have a personal, intimate relationship with Christ, something that should provide us rest and encouragement for as long as we live. This means that abiding in Christ, in this context, refers to remaining in the presence of a friend who has already welcomed us in, that friend being Christ.
      - In verse 16, He says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.” Even our friendship with Him begins with His action! He chose us and brought us near, which leads us to be fruit-bearing not out of fear or because we have a duty to do so, but because we are already in Christ.

- As we move into the last section of John 15, we have a significant shift in tone. Up to this point, Jesus has been speaking about love, bearing fruit, and calling us friends. But now, He explicitly tells His disciples that the world is going to hate them.
  - Not only will Jesus not be physically with them, but the world is also going to hate everyone who finds their identity in Christ.
  - We've all heard people say that the reason people put their faith in Christ is so that they can avoid the feeling of guilt, so that they can have a crutch to lean on, or so that they can live in denial about reality. In short, people say that life becomes so much easier when one turns to Christ.
    - In reality, though, it's just the opposite. Life on Earth becomes more challenging as we take our sin seriously, recognize our need for a Savior, and become united with Christ. We are no longer of this world, as Jesus has chosen us out of the world. That change in identity is the root of the tension.
    - If we are receiving approval from the world, that is a problem. Facing persecution or separation from the world is not enjoyable, but it is a sign that something has fundamentally changed in us.
  - That brings us right back to the vine. A branch cannot decide what kind of fruit to produce. Instead, it simply reflects the life of the vine it is connected to. If we are abiding in Christ, we will not only share in His love and His joy, but also, unfortunately, in His rejection.
- **What does it mean practically to be "not of the world" while still living in it every day at school or work?**

- We are reminded at the end of this chapter that we are not left to navigate the difficulties of living in a world that opposes Christ on our own.
  - The Spirit has been given to us and guides us in all that we do. The Spirit is constantly working in us, battling against our flesh to sanctify us and to bear fruit.
- Our union with Christ is demonstrated through the Spirit. We are called to abide in Him. The Spirit does not make the tension of living in this world go away, but He makes it possible for the branch to continue reflecting the life of the vine under any circumstance.

#### Upcoming Events:

- **March 22: March Madness Event @ WBC**
- **March 26: Main Lawn Event @ Carroll University Main Lawn**

#### Other Helpful Resources:

- He Must Increase Podcast by Connor Shady & Adam Tredeau (Official Podcast of 3:30!)
- Waukesha Bible Church John 15 Sermons on YouTube

### Other Reminders:

- NO STUDY NEXT WEEK (March 10)
  - **Connor and Adam are teaching: 9 AM Class on the Book of Romans at WBC prior to service.**
  - WBC service is at 10:00 AM every Sunday!
  - Check out our Website: [Threethirtyministry.com](http://Threethirtyministry.com)
- Join the 3:30 GroupMe chat to stay up to date on everything 3:30 Ministry.
- Also check us out on Instagram: @three.thirty.ministries and @three.thirty.mens.ministry

### The Gospel: *We Can't, God Can, Jesus Did!*

- **Sin.** None of us can escape it. Because of it, we are spiritually dead and in need of life. Our debt before God is insurmountable. It is the biggest problem any of us has, since there is nothing we can do ourselves to pay that debt. God's standard is perfection, so no amount of good works or religious activities is enough.
  - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.  
(Ephesians 2:1-3)
- **But God...** These two words are some of the most powerful words in the Bible. God is merciful and loving. He did what we could never do in and of ourselves. He saved us by grace alone and gave us new life in Christ.
  - 4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.  
(Ephesians 2:4-7)
- **Jesus saves.** He is God's gift to us. He paid our debt before the Father. And through his death and resurrection, we are raised to eternal life. There is nothing we can do to earn it. It is only through Christ that we live a life pleasing to God.
  - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)