

# ***Bible Study***

## ***Gods Word in Focus***



**Week Twenty Three**

**Gospel of John**

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

# The Relationship of Believers to Christ

John 15:1-8

Why does Jesus speak of himself as the *true vine*? The image of the vine was a rich one for the Jews since the land of Israel was covered with numerous vineyards. It had religious connotations to it as well.

Isaiah spoke of the house of Israel as “*the vineyard of the Lord*” (Isaiah 5:7).

Jeremiah said that God had planted Israel “*as his choice vine*” (Jeremiah 2:21). While the vine became a symbol of Israel as a nation, it also was used in the scriptures as a sign of degeneration.

Isaiah’s prophecy spoke of Israel as a vineyard which “*yielded wild grapes*” (see Isaiah 5:1-7).

Jeremiah said that Israel had become a “*degenerate and wild vine*” (Jeremiah 2:21).

When Jesus calls himself the *true vine* he makes clear that no one can claim their spiritual inheritance through association with a particular people or bloodline. Rather, it is only through Jesus Christ that one can become grafted into the true “vineyard of the Lord”.

# "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love"

John 15:9-11

Do you know the love that produces immeasurable joy? Jesus speaks of the love which the Father and he have for those who belong to him. We can never outgive God in love, because he has loved us without measure. Our love for him is a response to his exceeding mercy and kindness towards us.

Paul the Apostle tells us that we can abound in joy and hope because *God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us* (Romans 5:5). In God's love we find the fullness of grace, life, peace, and joy.

Jesus gives his disciples a new commandment -- a new way of love. We are to love others as Jesus has loved us. What is the essence of this new commandment? True love is sacrificial. It gives all to the beloved. And there is no greater proof in love than the sacrifice of one's life for the sake of another.

# The Relationship of Believers to Each Other

John 15:12-17

Do you know the friendship of God? One of the special marks of favor shown in the scriptures is to be called the friend of God. Abraham is called the *friend of God* (Isaiah 41:8). God speaks with Abraham as a man speaks with his friend (Exodus 33:11). Jesus, the Lord and Master, in turn, calls the disciples his friends rather than his servants. What does it mean to be a friend of God? Friendship with God certainly entails a loving relationship which goes beyond mere duty and obedience. Jesus' discourse on friendship and brotherly love echoes the words of Proverbs: *A friend loves at all times; and a brother is born for adversity* (Proverbs 17:17).

True love is costly. A true lover gives the best he can offer and is willing to sacrifice everything he has for the beloved. God willingly paid the price for our redemption — the sacrifice of his only begotten Son. That's the nature of true friendship and love — the willingness to give all for the beloved. True friends will lay down their lives for each other. Jesus tells us that he is our friend and he loves us whole-heartedly and unconditionally. He wants us to love one another just as he loves us, whole-heartedly and without reserve. His love fills our hearts and transforms our minds and frees us to give ourselves in loving service to others.

# The Relationship of Believers to the World

John 15:18-25

The "world" rejected Jesus and his disciples can expect the same treatment. Jesus leaves no middle ground for his followers. We are either for him or against him, for his kingdom of light or for the kingdom of darkness.

The prophet Isaiah warned that humans separated from God by sin and spiritual darkness would end up *calling evil good and good evil* (Isaiah 5:20).

A friend of God cannot expect to be a friend of the world. Jesus' demand is unequivocal and without compromise. *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him* (1 John 2:15).

We must make a choice either for or against God. Do you seek to please God in all your thoughts, actions, and relationships? Let the Holy Spirit inflame your heart with the love of God.

# The Promise of the Holy Spirit

John 15:26-27

When you need help or support who do you turn to? A friend who has earned your trust? Jesus offers his disciples the best and truest of friends. As Jesus approached the hour he was to be glorified -- through his death on the cross and his resurrection, he revealed more fully to his disciples the person and role of the Holy Spirit.

What does Jesus tell us about the Holy Spirit? First, the Holy Spirit is inseparably one with the Father and the Son. It is the Holy Spirit who gives life— the very life of God -- and who kindles faith in hearts receptive to God's word.

The Spirit makes it possible for us to know God personally. He gives us experiential knowledge of God as our Father. The Spirit witnesses to our spirit that the Father has indeed sent his Son into the world to redeem it and has raised his Son Jesus from the dead and has seated him at his right hand in glory and power.

Through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit we become witnesses to the great work of God in Christ Jesus.