

SERMON NOTES

- A. Introduction: John 15:1-3 (NAS) "I am the true vine, and My Father is the Vine-dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."
- B. Perspectives on the passage
1. From viewpoint of Israel
 - a. Israel as God's vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7) — they did not evidence R_____
 - b. Failing to come to repentance (Matthew 3:8, Matthew 21:43) they did not show the F_____ of repentance
 - c. Must avoid extreme view that God's salvation being extended to the Gentiles on the nation Israel's rejecting it was P_____ "_____"
 - d. There is not such "second best" with God because what He I_____ or P_____, He will carry out (Isaiah 14:24, 27; 46:9-11 are just a few references)
 2. From viewpoint of Christ's church
 - a. That these words correspond to the parable of the _____ as found in Matthew 13:24-30 and explained in 13:36-43
 - b. Christ's church was still in the future at this point but these disciples were to be its F_____ (Ephesians 2:20)
 - c. Subject of this passage is F_____, not salvation
 - d. the disciples to whom this was spoken
(A) did not include the many who had W_____ as found

in John 6:66-71

- (B) did not include the J_____ I_____ the one who was not clean as indicated in John 13:10-11
- (C) So these disciples are all declared to be C_____

- C. Thanks for the Connection to the Vine, Jesus Christ
1. because of the F_____ of the character of the Root (Vine)
 2. for having a V_____, S_____ connection to the Vine
- D. Thanks that the Father is the Vine-dresser
1. because He is a W_____ God (John 5:17)
 2. because He is engaged in our C_____ and K_____
 3. because even though it hurts, He disciplines us out of L_____ (Hebrews 12:6)
 4. because even though pruning our lives shocks, all that He does is for our own G_____ (Romans 8:28)
- E. Thanks for the Cleansing of the Word
1. because the opportunity to hear the word gives the opportunity to us to have F_____ (Romans 10:17)
 2. because through this we can have made God's S_____ our own
 3. through this word, the Holy Spirit is given
 - a. to A_____ us of salvation (2 Corinthians 1:22)
 - b. to T_____ us the truth of God's word (1 Corinthians 2:9-10)
 - c. to cleans or S_____ us for fitness to stand in God's presence (John 17:17, Ephesians 5:25-26, 1 Peter 1:22-23)
- F. Conclusion: Believers should therefore B_____ fruit (Colossians 1:10)

A. Introduction

1. this is the Thanksgiving weekend
 - a. traditionally, for farmers and those who gain their living by working the land, it is the time of the “harvest home”
 - b. a time to look upon the bounty of the earth
 - (A) recognizing it all comes from the hand of God
 - (B) stopping and giving thanks to Him
 - (C) this year Maureen didn’t plant as much as usual
 - (1) because we were out west in the spring
 - (2) but she did plant a number of things
 - (3) some cucumbers, beans, and ...
 - (4) some corn — for which the racoons were thankful
 - c. those who are involved in farming
 - (A) are aware of all the work that precedes the harvest
 - (1) of the ploughing of the land
 - (2) of the sowing of the seed
 - (3) of the adding of fertilizer
 - (4) of irrigation where that is needed
 - (5) of the spraying, the pruning and the other care that has to be taken of the orchards
 - (B) but this is a time to remember that the fruitful harvest comes not just from this work, but rather on account of the providence of God, and to give thanks
2. this section of John 15 is also concerned with fruitfulness
 - a. a harvest, too, that is at the hand of God
 - b. but this fruitfulness
 - (A) is not that of the land which we celebrate this holiday
 - (B) but that of the human heart
 - c. and our text for this morning is John 15: 1–3 (NAS): [1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine-](#)

dresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."

- d. our sermon title could have been "Cleansed by the Word" but keeping the imagery of the passage, it is "Pruned by Truth" ... but the idea, you will find, is the same

B. Perspectives on the Passage

1. View from the nation Israel

- a. we pointed out last week how the vineyard, and the vine were symbolic of the nation Israel
 - (A) upon whom God had given every care
 - (B) but when He went to harvest the fruit
 - (C) all He found were wild or worthless grapes
 - (D) "He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold a cry of distress" Isaiah 5:7b
- b. some, looking at Christ's words from this point of view
 - (A) interpret the cutting out of the branches that bore no fruit as the removal from Israel of those
 - (1) who would not truly repent
 - (2) who did not obey the words of John the Baptist, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:" (Matthew 3:8 AV)
 - (3) which described the religious rulers: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes or lawyers, and that, in Christ's words to them, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matthew 21:43 AV)
 - (B) so that to this cleansed Israel, the kingdom of God would come shortly, with Jesus in full Messianic glory
- c. now there are some extreme views on this subject
 - (A) that the coming of the kingdom of God to Israel
 - (B) was conditional upon their national repentance
 - (C) and that when they, as a nation, rejected the message of salvation in Peter's second sermon (Acts 3)
 - (D) that God decided to save just a remnant of Jews along with the Gentiles; that God fell back on "Plan

B”

d. but there is no “Plan B” with God

- (A) The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,” (Isaiah 14:24 NAS)
- (B) For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back? (Isaiah 14:27 NAS)
- (C) 9 “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.” (Isaiah 46:9-11 NAS)

2. View from the Christian Church

a. John 15:1-3 can be seen as being addressed to the church

- (A) that the branches that bear no fruit
 - (1) that are taken away
 - (2) correspond to the weeds (tares) that were sown among the wheat found in the parable told in Matthew 13:24–30 and explained in 13:36–43
- (B) now in applying these words to the church, we do need to remember that the church, that is the body of believers bought by Christ’s redemptive work on the cross of Calvary, was at this point still in the future
- (C) but that nevertheless the church has “... been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,” (Ephesians 2:20 NKJV)

b. but applying these words to the church we must recognize

- (A) that their subject is fruitfulness, not salvation
- (B) that the local church consists of possessors and of those who are merely professors
- (C) and that they were spoken primarily to the small band of disciples who had remained with Jesus to the end

c. so note the taking away already of unfruitful branches

- (A) John 6:66-71 (NAS): 66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. 67 Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" 71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.
 - (B) and then, only a few hours before, Jesus in washing the disciples' feet said "... and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." (John 13:10b-11 NAS)
 - (C) but Iscariot was sent out to do his deed, so now here in John 15:3, Jesus can say to the remaining disciples, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." (NAS) without qualification
- d. these words in John 15, then, are for those who would be true disciples, cleansed disciples, of the Lord Jesus Christ

3. now, from these words, some reasons for thanksgiving

C. Thanks for the Connection to the Vine, Jesus Christ

1. thanks for faithfulness of the character of the Root

- a. the Encyclopaedia Britannica tells us the root manufactures all of the nutrients needed by a specific plant.
 - (A) For example, tomatoes and tobacco plants are part of the same family. If you graft a tomato plant onto the root of a tobacco plant, then the tomato leaves will contain nicotine. If you graft a tobacco plant onto the root of a tomato, then the tobacco leaves will be void of nicotine ... the first doesn't sound all that great of an idea, but the second may have some point!
 - (B) or you may be aware that the natural root of many variety apples is not sufficiently hardy for the Canadian climate; but by grafting to a wild apple stock, it can survive our winters and yet the root will supply all the nutrients needed for good, tasty apples
- b. so that you can see that there is a difference between
 - (A) branches that are merely attached to the vine in an external, mechanical fashion for they do not receive the nutrients required to produce the fruit of the vine

(B) on the other hand, those who have a vital and spiritual connection to Christ, who have been implanted in the Root of the Vine which is Christ, the Son of God, are supplied with all the nutrients that are required to grow and flourish as fruitful children of God

D. Thanks that the Father is the Vine-dresser

1. thanks that He is the "George"

a. that's the word in the Greek ... literally, an earth worker

(A) Our Creator-God is a power, working God

(B) Jesus told us this, when He said in John 5:17b (NAS): "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

(C) and just think,

b. God the father not only the Proprietor of the Vineyard

(A) as its Owner-Creator

(B) as the Sovereign Lord of His spiritual kingdom

c. but He is also the One who works at its care and keeping

(A) with the added assurance to us that

(1) He brings His plans to fruition

(2) He will make us fruitful

d. so what a comfort it is to know that He is the one who is looking after our place in the vine; because of this we can

2. give thanks for unpleasant things!

a. chastisement hurts

(A) as the child can testify whose father said to him, "Don't kid yourself son; this is going to hurt you far more than it hurts me!"

(B) if nothing else, discipline hurts our feelings

(C) but, chastening has a purpose, and only one who really cares will take the time and expend the effort that is required to discipline — to teach and correct

(D) so, that is why we read, in Hebrews 12:6 (RSV): *For the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.*

b. and, pruning shocks

(A) I remember Kevin Mengers saying that he couldn't cut too many of the small branches off the tree in front of the Pratt's because it would be too much of a shock

(B) and, last fall, after a number of years of neglect, I had to prune our crab-apple; it had gone so far that last year there were no blooms at all, that it needed drastic measures. Because the suckers on it were so thick, it had become prey to infection by scab & to infestation by tent caterpillars. Well, it survived, this year even having fruit, but there was no question it was a shock

c. so, are we to be thankful for what hurts? ... for what shocks? ... yes, because we give

3. thanks this is for our ultimate good, Romans 8:28 (NAS): [And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.](#)

E. Thanks for the Cleansing of the Word

1. thanks for the opportunity to hear the word

a. for we recognize that ["faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God"](#) (Romans 10:17)

b. and, praise God, we still have the freedom in Canada

c. for the teaching and preaching of God's word

2. thanks for the occasion we (effectually) heard the word

a. but for those who are children of God, believers in Christ

b. there is a more personal thanksgiving

c. for the day when God's word ceased to speak

(A) of Christ dying for the sins of the world, and

(B) of God so loving the world

(C) when we realized and could say personally that

(1) God so loved me

(2) God died for my sin

d. when the gospel, the good news of salvation became the good news of my salvation

3. thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit

- a. to assure us of salvation: [who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.](#) (2 Corinthians 1:22 NAS)
 - b. to teach us the truth of His word: [but just as it is written, "things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him." For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.](#) (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NAS)
 - c. and the Holy Spirit applies that Word in cleansing us so that we will be fit to stand in the presence of God,
 - (A) Jesus Himself prayed this for us ["Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."](#) (John 17:17 NAS) and,
 - (B) ["... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,"](#) (Ephesians 5:25b–26 NAS)
 - (C) with 1 Peter 1:22-23 (NAS): [Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.](#)
 - d. so, indeed, we are "Pruned by the Truth, by God's Word"
4. Indeed then, we can thank God for His inspired word together with the Holy Spirit, its Author, that daily cleanses us to the glory of God

F. Conclusion

1. there are many going through life today
 - a. without root, without foundation, without faith
 - b. Oh, you may be connected mechanically to the vine
 - (A) attending church, doing good deeds
 - (B) but there is no real vital connection to Jesus, the Vine
 - (C) and even the words of the Bible are to you just that, mere words, without any meaning or emotion
 - c. if you would desire to know the peace that comes from being one with your Creator, then come repenting of the sin that separates you from Him, and in simple faith accept the gift of eternal life that Jesus

purchased on the cross

2. to my brothers and sisters today,
 - a. more than the thankfulness for these material blessings
 - b. give thanks for the love of God
 - (A) who even now is labouring in caring for the vine
 - (B) in bringing you to fruitfulness in the gifts of the Spirit
 - (C) “so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10 NAS)
3. let us sing, in closing, “Cleanse Me” (Search Me O God)

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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