

Abiding in Jesus

John 15:1-8

Introduction

This passage in *John* is from what's known as the **UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE**. It covers **chapters 13** through **16** and has a primary focus—preparing the disciples for their post-Easter mission. Jesus came to bring salvation to the world. His disciples, and by extension us, are to continue with His work in His 'absence.' So, we want to keep this in mind as we examine **verses 1-8** this morning and **9-17** next week.

The Mission – Bearing Fruit

"I am the true vine" (v. 1) – the image of the vine is two-fold. The vine has long been the image of Israel (Read *Psalms 80:8-9*). And the vine is a utilitarian plant. It exists for one purpose—to bear fruit. Israel was to be God's vine, bearing the message of God's love and salvation to the rest of the world. Instead, she was led astray by the gods of the world around her and became like everyone else. And so, (Read *Psalms 80:13-16*). This is how Jesus is the True Vine. He is doing what Israel didn't, taking God's love and salvation to the world.

Removing

"My Father is the vinedresser" (v. 1) – salvation proceeds from the Father through the Son in the Spirit. The purpose of the vine is to bear fruit. The vine does this through its branches. Branches that don't produce fruit get *"taken away" (v. 2)*, while branches that do bear fruit get *"pruned, so they can produce more fruit" (v. 2)*. Since the purpose is to bear fruit, branches that do not bear fruit must be taken away because they use up valuable nutrients. While this may sound harsh, remember, if people do not produce fruit, they are not being who God meant them to be. That is sin and the wages of sin is death.

Pruning

Pruning points to **verse 3**, being cleansed by the Word of Christ. The Word cleans us and prunes us to make us more fruitful. It is the Word added to the water that makes the waters of Baptism a cleansing fountain. It is the Word added to the bread and wine that makes them host the body and blood of Christ, with their cleansing and healing properties. The spoken and written Word of God prunes us by 'teaching, reproof, correcting, and training us in righteousness' (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

Abiding

The word 'abide' appears seven times in these few verses. It seems to be the point Jesus wants to drive home here. To 'abide' means to 'stay', 'remain', or 'continue' in. A branch must be connected to the vine to live, let alone produce fruit. First, this means that Christ is sufficient for all our needs. As we have been learning in our study of *Colossians*, Christ is supreme over everything else. Because of that, He needs nothing from anyone, and He meets all our needs, including the need for salvation. All the fullness of the godhead dwells within Him and He is our all in all. It also means that fruit-bearing is not a human responsibility. It is God working through us.

Obedience

But **how** do we abide in Jesus? The abiding is mutual. *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (v. 7)*. When we abide in Jesus, His words, that is, His commands, instructions, and directions for life, abide in us. In short, abiding in Jesus is walking in His way, living for Him and not for ourselves. *I have stored up Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You (Psalm 119:11)*. Abiding in Jesus has nothing to do with a deep feeling of devotion. It is about obedience to the truth of the Word of God.

Means of Grace

God’s Word abides in us when we keep the **THIRD COMMANDMENT**: *Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy*. This means that *we should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it (Small Catechism)*. We do nothing but harm to ourselves when we avoid church, the Sacraments, or Bible Study. Abide in His Word. **ABIDE IN JESUS**.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
