***Lesson 6: John 15***

***“The True Vine”***

**Review:**

1. How did Jesus comfort his disciples’ troubled hearts?
	* + *He told them to believe (trust) in God the Father and in himself. Jesus assured them that he was going to prepare a place for them in his Father’s house, and one day he would come for them and they would be with him forever.*

2. What I AM statement did Jesus make in this passage (v. 6), and what

 did he mean?

* + - *Jesus said, “I am* ***the*** *way, and* ***the*** *truth, and* ***the*** *life.” Jesus’s blood shed for us is the only way a person can be reconciled to God—or have peace with God and a renewed relationship with him. Jesus is the truth because he is the perfect revelation of God the Father, and he reveals God’s truth to us by fulfilling God’s Word. Jesus is the life, because apart from Christ, a person is spiritually dead. Jesus is the source of eternal life for those who believe and follow him.*

3. How did Jesus “show us the Father” (v. 8)?

* + - *Jesus showed us the Father by his words and his actions. His words had the authority of God the Father, and in addition to this, the works (signs or miracles) Jesus did, pointed to his divinity and fulfilled the OT Scriptures concerning the Messiah.*

4. What is a sign of true love for Jesus? What did Jesus promise

 to send those who love him? How will this help them?

* + - *Willing obedience is a sign of love for Jesus. That is, obedience that comes from a heart of love, not duty. Jesus is our example here.*
		- *Jesus promised to send the Helper, or Spirit of truth to be with them forever. The disciples would not be abandoned as orphans.*
		- *The Helper, the Holy Spirit, will teach the disciples everything and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said to them.*

**Introduction: p. 33 optional.**

**Read John 15:1-8.**

1a. Explain the word picture Jesus uses in these verses. Who does the

 vine represent? Who is the gardener?

* + - *Jesus used the metaphor of a vine and vineyard in these verses to describe his relationship to his people.*
		- *Jesus is the* ***true*** *vine (as opposed to Israel’s failure as a fruitful vine), and the vinedresser is God the Father. The “Fruit Grower” knows that the vines need constant pruning to produce well.*
		- *Note that the vine was the symbol of Israel. See Psalm 80:8-9, 14-15; Isaiah 5:1-7; Ezekiel 19:10-14; Matthew 21:33-41.*

Why does Jesus call himself the “true vine?” Who are the

 branches? Who is the “branch” in v. 2 that was taken away?

* + - *It was in comparison to Israel’s failure that Jesus called himself the “true vine.” Israel became false and wild through idolatry and wickedness. See Isaiah 53:2.*
		- *Note that verse 1 is Jesus’ final I AM statement.*
		- *The branches are the disciples. The branch in Jesus that did not bear fruit and is taken away refers to Judas Iscariot and all persons who are not true believers, who do not have true and saving faith.*

 What does Jesus mean when he says the disciples are already clean?

 What does this tell us about “the word?”

* + - *Cleaning is the work of the vinedresser. The Greek word for ‘prunes’ also means ‘cleans.’ These disciples have listened to Jesus’ word and have responded in loving obedience to his teaching.*
		- *The Word brings changes and challenges that can prune, shape, and clean up a person’s life for bearing fruit for God. See John 1:1, 14—where Jesus calls himself “the Word.”*

What is the fruit Jesus is talking about?

* + - *The best of Christians are imperfect and flawed in many ways, but all true Christians will show evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives in the form of obedience to God’s commands, faithfulness to Christ before the world, and the fruit of the Spirit—see Galatians 5:22-23. [p.285, R. D. Phillips, John]*

1b. What does it mean to remain (“abide”) in Jesus? Why do we need

 to stay connected with Jesus? How can we stay connected with

 Jesus? What happens to those who choose not to remain in Jesus?

* + - *To remain in Jesus means to maintain an ongoing connection with him, characterized by trust, prayer, obedience, and joy.*
		- *V. 5—Whoever abides in Jesus will automatically develop and grow, bearing good fruit. If there is no connectedness, no fruitfulness will result.*
		- *A person can stay connected with Jesus through Bible Study, prayer, responding to the Holy Spirit’s counsel.*
		- *A disconnected vine will not be able to bear fruit, and people who refuse to come to Jesus, the light, remain in the darkness (3:19-20)—unfruitful, dead in their sins, fuel for the fire.*

1c. What promise does Jesus make in verse 7, and what is the condition

 for the promise? What is the result? Who is glorified and why?

* + - *Jesus promises his disciples that if they abide in him, and his words abide in them, they can ask whatever they wish, and it will be done for them.*
		- *The condition is to abide in him.*
		- *The result is the Father’s glory. Just as Jesus glorified his Father, so Jesus’ disciples will be able to glorify the Father by bearing much fruit and so proving that they are his disciples.*
		- *The life of a disciple is not a call to self-improvement, but rather a call to abide in Christ, following the teaching of his Word, praying to him, worshiping him and serving him joyfully. Jesus promises much fruit to those who abide in him, and also the Father’s pruning knife!*

**John 15:9-17.**

2a. How has Jesus loved us? What does this mean? How should this

 affect our view of ourselves?

* + - *Jesus loves his disciples as the Father has loved him.*
		- *The love of the Father is personal, deep, enduring—See Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 17:23-24.*
		- *The love of Jesus for his disciples is a very precious thing. The world cannot take it away; it is not dependent on what a person brings to Jesus, but a love that is wholly by grace (vs. 15-16).*

2b. Why should we love each other? See also 13:35; 15:10, 14; 1 John

 4:19. What is complete joy (v.11)? What’s the difference between

 servants and friends (v. 15)? See James 2:22-23.

* + - *We should love each other, because that is the way the world will know that we are Jesus’ disciples—love for one another, therefore, points others to Jesus’ love for them.*
		- *We should love each other, because that is the way we will abide in Jesus love—a divine love that is evidence of his Spirit living within us.*
		- *We should love each other, because we want to be Jesus’ friends, and friends of Jesus obey from the heart what he commands.*
		- *Complete joy is the result of obeying the Father even in the midst of conflicts—especially in the midst of conflict or opposition, because we know that we have pleased the LORD!*
		- *Jesus said that servants do not know what their master is doing, but friends of Jesus know who Jesus is and what he is doing—the purpose of his mission. Abraham was called a friend of God because he believed God and showed that he trusted God by obeying him. See James 2:22-23.*

2c. What has Jesus chosen us to do (v. 16)? What is fruit that abides?

 See Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 2:7, 10. What is the purpose of

 fruitfulness that Jesus wants accomplished?

* + - *Jesus has chosen us to go and bear fruit and that our fruit should abide (last).*
		- *Fruit that abides are the good works that result from obeying Christ’s command to love one another. It is produced by the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s heart, as the believer remains closely connected with Jesus.*
		- *Ultimately the purpose of fruitfulness is to display “the riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus…good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:7, 10. Jesus has in mind that his faithful friends will be asking the Father for the things that will be in line with the purposes of Jesus himself.*

Reflect on and share some examples of this kind of love from your

 own experience.

**Read John 15:18-25.**

3a. What should we remember when the world rejects us? Why does

 the world reject believers? What does Jesus mean when he says,

 “A servant is not greater than his master. (v.20)?

* + - *Jesus points out that because the world hated him, so also we should expect the same treatment when we bring his message to the world. The world does not know the Father who sent Jesus (21).*
		- *The world rejects believers because they are not of the world; Jesus has chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hates them. See Ephesians 6:12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*
		- *When Jesus said that a servant is not greater than his master, he meant that, whatever the master has to face, the servant must also face. If the master had to face persecution, the servant should expect to be persecuted as well. If a person keeps Jesus’ word, they will also keep the words of Jesus’ disciples.*

3b. Why is the persecution of Jesus and his disciples inexcusable?

* + - *The persecution of Jesus and his disciples is inexcusable because Jesus came into the world to bring the people the truth about the Father and himself—and the Jewish leaders rejected him. This made them guilt of sin. Jesus is not saying that apart from his teaching they would not have sinned, but rather to point out that their sin is compounded by their hateful reaction to his teaching.*

3c. What does Jesus mean when he says, “He who hates me hates my

 Father as well” (v. 23)?

* + - *The Jews claimed God as their Father (8:41), and at the same time claimed that Jesus was demon-possessed (8:48). They claimed to love the Father and hate the Son. But that is impossible in view of the fact that the Father and Son are one in essence (10:30). To think otherwise is to be deceived. To reject a Savior who hung on a cross is to reject the amazing love and grace of God for poor sinners like us.*

 How does this statement relate to Jesus’ claim to be “the way, and

 the truth, and the life (14:6)?

* + - *The worship of any god who is not the Father of Jesus is the worship of a false god. God allows no room for other beliefs or the worship of other gods. (Exodus 20:1-6).*

3d. How does the world’s hatred of Jesus fulfill the law? See Psalm

 35:19 and 69:4.

* + - *The Jews hatred of Jesus is what God used to bring about our redemption from sin. Their hatred led to the cross for Jesus.*
		- *Note that the “Law” here refers not only to the Ten Commandments but to all the Hebrew Scriptures.*
		- *The Psalms here speak of hatred that is irrational. As we have observed, the religious leaders hated Jesus although he showed clearly through his teaching and miracles that he was their Messiah.*

**Read John 15:26-27.**

4a. What do we learn about the Counselor (Helper) in this passage?

* + - *Jesus will send the Helper (Pentecost). The name “the Helper” comes from the Greek ‘paraklete’ who functions as a legal advocate—declaring and testifying to the Gospel through the testimony of the disciples.*
		- *The Helper comes from the Father. He is also called “the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father…” He is one in essence with the Father and the Son.*
		- *He will bear witness about Jesus. This would be a great comfort to the disciples, since they would have a mighty provision for the success of the gospel in the world.*

4b. Why must the disciples testify?

* + - *The disciples must testify about Jesus because they have seen and experienced the truth from him personally. Jesus is giving his disciples the responsibility of laying the foundation (foundational teachings) of his church.*

 What should Jesus’ followers say?

* + - *All believers are called to testify that Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life, sharing the good news of salvation everywhere (Acts 1:8). The testimony of Jesus’ followers is an example of “fruit that will last. (v. 16). In all we think, and say, and do, we should be mindful of sharing the message and love of God, as Jesus did.*

***Questions for Reflection***

What kinds of things need to be present in your life to help you remain in Christ?

With whom can you share the message and love of Christ today?