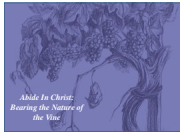


#1



Abide in Christ: Bearing the Nature of the Vine

We have been looking at the miracle of God’s grace to include us in the richness and blessing of Jesus Christ.

The Word has referred to several word pictures that have indicated the potential provided for us.

This has been described as us being built upon a sure foundation that has been laid.

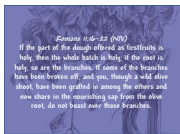
This blessing is revealed as a body, with many parts.

It is depicted as a vine and its branches.

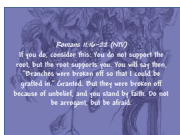
Listen to what Romans 11 says:

Romans 11:16-22 (NIV) If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches.

#2

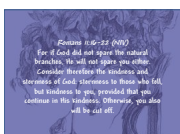


#3



If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.

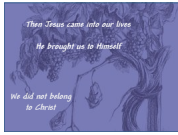
#4



For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

It is hard to believe what God has done for us.

Think about this.

#5***We did not belong to Christ.***

We were wild.

That was our nature.

Every aspect of our lives depicted our heritage.

We were destined for the fire.

We bore fruit that was not good.

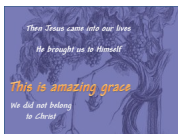
We didn't like what we did, but we did not know how to change it.

We wanted to do good, but evil was always present with us.

Then Jesus came into our lives.

He brought us to Himself.

He loved us, nurtured us, and grafted us into His body and life.

#6***This is amazing grace.***

By grace He has incorporated us into His life.

Have you ever been surprised by the things that God does in you?

You didn't expect it, but bless your heart God flooded you with life and His Spirit.

It is amazing what happens when these old dead sticks get Holy Spirit life in them.

We have been made to share and partake in the nourishing sap of the root.

There is life coming up into you.

There is power coming up into you.

We are bearing the nature of Christ in us.

What is His nature like?

This is such a contradiction to what we have been that it is difficult to take it in.

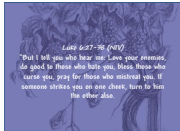
Can you see what the Lord is doing in you?

We are familiar with the old nature and ways.
We have been exposed to that attitude and personality every day of our lives.

What do we know of Christ's nature and character?

He is God's expression of love
He is God's mercy, grace, power, and love incarnate.
He is full of goodness, kindness, and patience.

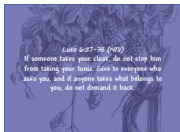
#7



Listen to Christ's words :

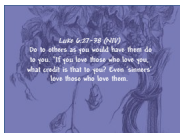
Luke 6:27-38 (NIV) “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also.

#8



If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

#9



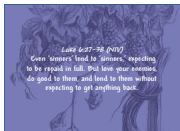
Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them.

#10



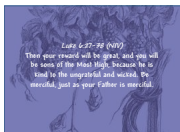
And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?

#11



Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

#12



Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

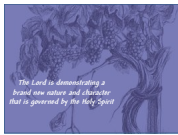
#13



#14



#15



“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

These verses demonstrate the nature and character that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to see in us.

This kind of attitude and characteristic is *unworldly*.

While governed by our old attitudes, we want to get even and more.

Jesus is introducing a brand new nature and character that is governed by the Holy Spirit from within you.

The concepts of behavior described in these passages are contrary to human nature.

For this to be our natural behavior a dramatic change must happen in us.

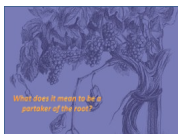
It is natural for wicked men to do wickedly.

It is unnatural for wicked men to behave with mercy, grace, and love.

God has brought us into the fellowship of life.

He has grafted us into the Olive tree and made us partake of the root.

#16



What does that mean?

What does it mean to be a partaker of the root?

To be a partaker of the root means to receive what is in the root.

When we partake of the root, we are taking in the richness of the nature, character, and spirit of Christ.

The Quality of life that is in Christ is flowing into our lives.

What does that mean?

What we were is not what we are becoming.

We have left that behind and have been brought into a new life.

The nature and character of Christ is working in me.

We are going to demonstrate the identical goodness, grace, mercy, and love that are in Christ.

#17



Luke 6:36-38 (Amplified New Testament) So be merciful (sympathetic, tender, responsive, and compassionate) ***even as your Father is*** [all these].

#18



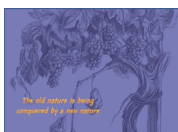
Judge not [neither pronouncing judgment nor subjecting to censure], and you will not be judged; do not condemn *and* pronounce guilty, and you will not be condemned *and* pronounced guilty; acquit *and* forgive *and* release (give up resentment, let it drop), and you will be acquitted *and* forgiven *and* released.

#19



Give, and [gifts] will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will they pour into [the pouch formed by] the bosom [of your robe and used as a bag]. For with the measure you deal out [with the measure you use when you confer benefits on others], it will be measured back to you.

#20



The old nature is being conquered by a new nature.

The Old Sinful nature has been changed.

Something new is working in us.

It is no longer:

Get even

Hurt before you're hurt

Don't allow anyone to wrong you more than once

Take care of number one first

Don't forgive

Don't let anyone get by with anything

Christ's nature is so contrary to the old nature.

He is giving us His nature.

His nature is Mercy and Grace

Love and Joy

Kindness and Goodness

Patience and Longsuffering

Forgiveness and Acceptance

His nature reaches out and helps others.

His nature is self-sacrificing.

Something new is working in us.

Something new has picked us up and is carrying us along.

We are taking on the nature of the One who has taken us in.