

Partakers of His Body and the Sweetness of the Vine

We are going to dig deeper into our relationship and active fellowship in Christ.

We need to carefully consider what this means and if our fellowship with Christ is personally effective. When we partake of the two elements of the Lord's Table we testify of a life that is actively involved with Christ.

Let's focus on both of these individually.

First, look at the bread.

1 Corinthians 11:24 (NKJV) ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

We are familiar with this verse and the concepts involved in receiving communion.

- We do this to remember the ultimate price that Christ paid for our salvation. We celebrate and glory in the cross and the victory that Christ has gained for us.

Now look at the same thing in relation to the vine and the branches.

John 15:1-8 (NKJV) ¹"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Follow these two analogies of Christ.

First, the body of Christ that is broken for you.

Second, the vine that holds, sustains, and gives life to the branches.

- Physically the branch is what it is because of the vine.
- Without the vine, the branch is nonexistent.
- It is impossible for the branch to sustain and support life on its own.
- Jesus said: "Without me you can do nothing."
- Without Jesus, we do not have life.
- Without Jesus, we cannot bear fruit.

We are familiar with the Christ Jesus' selfless life, death, and sacrifice.

We celebrate in the victory of His death and ultimate victory.

- We remember how He suffered so that we could be forgiven and made right with God. His suffering was intentional.

God had a plan.

Jesus did not die in vain.

Jesus went to the cross in order to bring many into new life.

- You know that you are saved, cleansed and forgiven by Christ's death on the cross and victory.

We understand the value of the body of Christ.

- In His body, He bore stripes for our healing.
- In His body, He took the penalty for our sins.
- In His body, He suffered for our transgressions.
- His body was the price of our atonement.
- His body was laid in the grave.
- His body arose victorious over death and the grave.

Now, Look at the correlation between the vine and the branch.

The branch is lifeless without the life giving of the vine.

If the branch is not a partaker and participant of the life and history of the vine, it is useless and lifeless.

- The Vine gives the life.
- The Vine gives freely of all that is within it.
- The Vine holds nothing back from the branch.
- The purpose of the Vine's life is to support, sustain, and strengthen the branch.

Without Christ in your life, you become useless, wasted, barren, and empty.

- Jesus Christ gives you a future and a hope.
- Jesus Christ gives you health and healing.
- Jesus Christ conquers the destroyer.
- Jesus Christ in you gives you life.

Now, look at the fruit.

When we receive communion we always drink of the fruit of the vine.

- Grape juice represents to us the blood of Christ that was freely spilled. His blood has great value to those who believe.

1 Corinthians 11:25 (NKJV) ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Every time we receive communion our attention is drawn to the blood of Christ.

- We are caused to remember that His blood cleanses from sin. We are called to remember how He freely offered everything that was in Himself for us. He yielded up His life and His life's blood for us.

When we receive the cup and drink, it is sweet.

- The juice is a testimony of the character of the life and work of Christ.

Let's examine the testimony of Christ's life and ministry.

- He came to a troubled world.
- He came into this world as a babe in a manger.
- He lived in obscurity.
- He came to a hopeless generation.
- He came to a defeated nation.
- He came to hopeless people.
- He was raised in a carpenter's home.

He is called Wonderful.

- He said, "I am come that they might have life."
- He is called wonderful because He healed the broken hearted.
- He preached deliverance to the captives and set them FREE.

- He wonderfully gave new life to people who had lost all sense of living.
- He is wonderful in all of the miracles that He did.
 - He recovered the sight of the blind.
 - He cleansed the horribly sick.
 - He caused the lame to walk.
 - He opened deaf ears.
 - He is wonderful in everything that He did.

He is called COUNSELOR.

- There is no problem He cannot solve.
- When they could not come to Him with their problems, Jesus came to them.
- He was never presented with a problem that He could not solve.
- We can cast on Him every care.

He is the MIGHTY GOD.

- His power is mighty.
- There is no limit to His mighty power.
- There is nothing that He cannot do.

He is the EVERLASTING FATHER.

- His Kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world.
- His Kingdom and reign shall never end.
- His dominion is from everlasting to everlasting.

He is the Prince of Peace.

- The most troubled soul can come to Him and find peace.
- The most perplexed and troubled soul found relief in Christ.
- He spoke to demons and they fled.
- He spoke to troubled water and it calmed.
- He gave peace to people who faced life's greatest loss.

The juice of the grape is a testimony of the life of the vine.

- Every vine produces its own fruit.

Grapes are in many varieties.

There are red, blue, purple, yellow, brown, white, and green.

There are over 5,000 varieties of grapes.

- The Alexander is a black grape.
- The Argaman is from Israel.
- The Avana is a red grape from Italy.
- The Baga is a high acidity red grape from Portugal.
- The Bondola is a red grape from Switzerland.
- The Concord, is a dark blue grape in the United States.
- Canadice, is a sweet red grape.
- Mission grapes come from Spain and are red and white.
- Himrod, is a white grape with a sweet yellow flesh.
- Glenora, has a good texture and is hardy.
- Einset seedless grape ripens early.
- Vanessa is a red seedless grape.
- Champanel, is an American grape which is large and black.

Every vine produces it's own variety of fruit.

The Bible tells us there is good and bitter fruit.

Isaiah 5:4 (NIV) What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?

The fruit is a testimony of the vine.

The life of the vine is demonstrated through the branches that produce the fruit.

John 15:4-8 (NIV) Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

The quality and character of the fruit comes from abiding in the vine.

If you abide in Christ, you will demonstrate the character of Christ.

This is why Jesus says: John 15:7 (NKJV) If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

The life of the branch is in the vine.

- There is victory here for you.
- There is healing here for you.
- There is abundant life here for you.
- There is resistance to evil here for you.
- There is new life for you.
- There is renewed life for you.
- This is new every morning life for you.

If you abide in me... you will bear fruit.

If you abide in me... you will bear more fruit.

If you abide in me... you will bear much fruit.

Examine the potential that is in the vine.

- ***When you study grapes, you find that some thrive in different climates.***
- ***Some thrive in different soil.***
- ***Some thrive in perfect conditions.***
- ***Some are difficult to grow.***

If you want to see the potential of the Church look at Jesus Christ.

John 14:12 (NKJV) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.