

John, Part 39 – The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Possessed by Christ

John 15:1-11 helps enrich our understanding of the relationship believers have with the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the Gospel of John, believers are encouraged to develop a true love for the Lord. It seems necessary at this juncture for Jesus to show believers the need for continued fellowship and reliance on Him. Through this parable of the vine and branch, Jesus describes a vital relationship with Him that makes believers partakers of His bounty. Out of the multitude of His goodness we receive every blessing. It is apparent that the Lord wanted to provide for continued relationship with His disciples. Although these words were spoken to them, they are necessary for all believers.

John 15:1-3 NKJV I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

From the beginning of this parable, it is obvious that the Lord expected them to know about this relationship. He is the true vine and the heavenly Father is the vinedresser. This image focuses on the reality of our connection with Christ. This connection is not just left to our devices.

Jesus made several things clear.

1. He is the true source of eternal life.
2. The heavenly Father is directly involved in our care.
3. God requires fruitfulness and prunes what is necessary so that we bear more fruit.
4. The word of God is critical to our being clean and acceptable before the Father.

Throughout this parable, Jesus revealed the benefits of remaining in Him.

The reason for this lesson is shown in John 15:11.

John 15:11 NKJV These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

Jesus wants believers to continually possess His joy and He wants our joy to be full. There are certain things that can rob believers of this joy. For us to continue in His joy and for our joy to be full, we must experience the pruning process. Pruning is the process of removing the things that are non-productive and sap our vitality. Pruning is Godly discipline.

Hebrews 12:11 NET Now all discipline seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness for those trained by it.

The Lord truly wants to develop in all believers a strong continued relationship and dependence on Him. Jesus is telling us this so that we may have real joy.

John 15:11 NKJV These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

Are you lacking joy in your life? Are you feeling heavy hearted, depressed and tired? Jesus said, "I have spoken these things to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." This is God's goal for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we should examine what Jesus said so that His joy may remain in us and we can have fullness of joy.

John 15:4 NKJV 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.

This fundamental truth is basic for fruitfulness, contentment, and joy. We cannot achieve this fruitfulness without abiding in Christ. Without Christ, we may have a joy that is

temporary. Certain things in life bring that kind of joy, but Jesus gives a joy that has permanence and gives us strength.

John 15:5 NKJV 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.

Without Christ we can do nothing of permanent spiritual value. From a positive perspective, Jesus said, "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit." Fruit-bearing is a good and natural result of this connection. Confession of faith in Christ is necessary, but the true proof of our faith and connection with Christ is fruit-bearing. There are many Christian disciplines that may be practiced without a true connection with Christ. Doing those things may feel like a relationship with Christ. We know that our relationship and connection is present by the fruit. Each of us should examine and know if we have a true heart of love for the Lord. It is not enough for us to know that God loves us, we must know that we love Him.

John 15:6 NKJV 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.

This verse is a stark warning for casual, half-hearted service and commitment to Christ. Remember, Jesus wants believers to remain in His joy and He wants their joy to be full. We cannot expect to have that without a continued constant abiding relationship with Him. Not abiding in Christ has several consequences.

Jesus mentions three of those here.

1. They are cast out as a branch.
2. They are withered and lose vitality.
3. They lose their reward.

Failure to abide in Christ produces spiritual disaster.

On the positive side, abiding in Christ has tremendous benefits.

John 15:7-8 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. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

The Father is watching over us to see if Christ is an indispensable Companion of our daily life. When Jesus was speaking to the Laodicean church, He said, "Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth."

Here in John, Jesus shows us how to maintain the correct relationship with Him. He says, "Abide in Me," and "My words abide in you." Look at both of these.

First is a continual relationship with Jesus, "Abide in Me."

This really involves several things. We need to know that we have been born again and have His life abiding in us. This relationship must be maintained by prayer, praise, worship and service. This involves a constant reliance and trust in Christ.

Second, God's word must abide in us.

It is necessary for us to study His words. Studying and reading His word produces great benefits.

Psalms 1:2-3 NKJV But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

You need to familiarize yourself with His word.

If we abide in Him and His word abides in us, we can expect much fruit.

John 15:7-8 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. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

It is apparent that fruit is directly connected with abiding in Christ and His word abiding in us. Jesus is laying before us the potential for access to the life and power that is in Him.

Listen to these words from the Lord.

John 15:16 NKJV You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

The Amplified Bible says: "I have planted you, that you might go and bear fruit and keep on bearing..."

"He shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit..." You go to the nursery and pick a tree to plant. Once you chose it, you put it in good soil so that it will bear fruit. You don't plant it so that it will bear fruit one year. You want that plant to bear fruit every season.

You were chosen and appointed to continually bear fruit. Jesus accepted you and then He made it possible for you to draw from His goodness and power. Everything that is within Him is now available to you. He has chosen you to bear fruit and has determined that your fruit remain.

That means that when you are saved, you have been made a partaker of His Spirit, power, and anointing. You have been brought into the fellowship of His Spirit, power and position. This results in His power working in your life. We must not limit His access to our lives. We must not limit His ability to work in us.

When we release Christ to freely work in us, we will enjoy the fruitfulness and power He desires out of us.

Our connection with Christ is liberating and life-giving. It is no wonder why this changes the effectiveness of our prayer and the production of fruit in our lives.

When Jesus is alive on the inside, everything changes. We are no longer bound or limited by the elements of this world and the flesh. We have been made partakers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the magnitude of God's grace and mercy that chose and appointed us to be connected with the Lord Jesus Christ. We were outcasts and sinners. We were on the outside, but God has chosen to bring us on the inside with Him. We were not royal born and did not have royal blood.

God has claimed and cleansed us.

Colossians 1:13-14 NKJV He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

By taking this action, God has brought us into a position of fruitfulness. Although we did not have this potential, now in Christ we have been made partakers of the root and richness of Christ. He said that we would do great things. He said that we would be overcomers through Christ.

1 John 3:1-2 NKJV Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not

know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

This puts everything that we do toward God on a new level. We are not pleading and crying as beggars on the street. We are His sons and daughters. We have been given new position, responsibilities, and power. We have access to the throne of God. Right now, the heavenly Father is ready to receive us. The Holy Spirit is ready to usher us into His power, glory, and grace. We can ask what we will and it shall be done. This new life in Christ has made it possible to bear much fruit.

Do you remember the story of Ruth and Boaz? Ruth and Naomi came back to their homeland broken and in destitution. When Boaz took Ruth in, she did not give up her poverty — she received his wealth. She did not give up her loneliness — she received his fellowship. She did not give up her weakness, anxiety, or fear — she received His plenty, his protection, and his care.

God has offered Jesus Christ to you. When we receive Him, we receive everything that He is. He has become our Savior, Provider and Protector. He is able to take us in, help us, and make us fruitful. When we receive Christ, every spiritual blessing that is in the heavenly places becomes available. We are made partakers of His riches, fullness and eternal life.

John 15:9 NKJV As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

The measure of God the Father's love for His Son is the measure of the Son's love for believers. It is the same quality and degree of love. It is impossible for us to comprehend the depth, width, length and height of His love. Jesus said it is possible for us to "abide in His love." You need to know that nothing is able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus said, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love." Listen to this. If you will walk in obedience to His commandments, you will reap all of these benefits. You will abide in His love and your joy will be full.

John 15:11 NKJV These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

This kind of joy-filled life is a result of knowing that you are in right relationship with God. You can live without condemnation if you remain in Christ. I want to reemphasize one thing before closing. We cannot come to God on the basis of our own goodness. We cannot bear fruit on our own. Without Christ we can do nothing. In Him is the victory, the life, the fruitfulness and the joy.