

The Vine and the Branches

¹⁵ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also 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.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

The World Hates the Disciples

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’^[b] If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Whoever hates me hates my Father as well.

²⁴ If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’^[c]

The Work of the Holy Spirit

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character?

1. What does the analogy of the vine and branches reveal about our relationship with Jesus and the Father?
2. What does it mean to abide in Christ's love, and how can this be applied to your life?
3. How does Jesus' commandment to love one another challenge or affirm your current approach to love?
4. How can you prepare and respond to persecution for your faith, as described by Jesus in this chapter?
5. How does the promise of the Holy Spirit provide comfort and encouragement for your spiritual journey?
6. What does it mean to bear fruit in your personal and spiritual life?
7. How can the understanding of Jesus' and the Father's love influence your relationship with others?
8. What does it mean to lay down one's life for one's friends in the current societal context?
9. How does Jesus' reassurance about facing persecution fortify your faith?
10. How does this chapter inform your understanding of the interconnectedness between love, obedience, and abiding in Christ?
11. How do Jesus' words in this chapter challenge your understanding and experience of Christian love?
12. How can the promise of the Holy Spirit empower you to witness for Christ?
13. In what ways does the world's hatred for Jesus manifest today, and how can you respond to it?
14. How does the teaching of 'abiding in Jesus to bear fruit' shape your spiritual practices and priorities?
15. How do you interpret the world's hatred as described by Jesus in your personal experiences?
16. How can the promise of the Holy Spirit equip you to bear witness for Christ in your daily life?
17. What does it mean to be a friend of Jesus as described in this chapter?
18. How does this chapter deepen your understanding of the cost of discipleship?
19. How can Jesus' teachings in this chapter guide you in dealing with hostility or rejection due to your faith?
20. What does Jesus' statement that His disciples are not of the world mean to you, and how does it shape your worldview and behavior?