

November 8, 2020

“Abiding Love”
Lesson 2 of Unit

John 15:4-17

Intro

We were made (“wired” is the word used in our text) for relationships. God made mankind to have a relationship with Him; we are our most complete selves when we have a close relationship to our Creator. We were made to have relationships here on Earth. Genesis 2:18 has God saying, “It is not good for man to be alone.” We are meant to be in relationship with one another as the body of Christ. Through multiple examples, we see that being in loving, caring relationships is an integral part of our humanity.

The lesson today speaks about this connectedness, specifically between Jesus and His followers. The question for us is how we can also be connected to Jesus. Jesus is going to develop how this works by initially comparing our relationship to Him to how a vineyard works, then speaking directly.

Read John 15:4-17

1. The word “Remain” in vs. 4 can also be translated as “stay”, “live in”, or “hold on to”. What different ways of being connected to Jesus might be suggested by these slightly different meanings? How will doing each of those things allow us to bear “fruit”?
2. What is the vine’s primary job for the branches (vs. 5)? What is Jesus saying by calling himself the vine and his disciples (and us) the branches? What is the difference between an option and a necessity? How/why is staying connected to Jesus a necessity?
3. How is the description of the branches in vs. 6 similar to the story of the sower and the seeds in Matthew 13? (Remember that some of the branches remain connected to the vine.)
4. What does it mean to “remain in” Christ? What does it mean for His words to “remain in you”? How do those answers explain why the person who does those two things can “ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”?

5. What are the three things in vs. 8 that result from a person who does what Jesus asks in vs. 7? How are these three things interconnected, and not just three separate results?

6. In vs. 9, Jesus says, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.” How has the Father loved Jesus? How has Jesus loved his disciples in the same way?

7. Verse 10 seems to suggest that keeping Jesus’ commands will allow us to be loved, which is not what is being taught here. What *is* Jesus saying about the relationship between command-keeping and being loved? What is the connection between Jesus’ obedience to the Father and their loving relationship, and our obedience to Jesus and our loving relationship with Him?

8. Jesus refers to his joy being in His disciples in vs. 11. What is Jesus’ joy, and how can it be in the disciples as well? What is necessary for the disciples’ joy to be “complete”?

9. In general, what is meant is something is called a “commandment”? What is Jesus saying in vs. 12 to his followers about loving others? How can a believer follow a commandment willingly rather than feeling forced to?

10. Verse 13 is obviously connected to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross to provide us forgiveness and redemption. But he is speaking to his disciples here about loving each other. In what ways can we “lay down” our lives for our friends (brothers and sisters, neighbors, etc)? How does this verse connect to what he said in John 13:35?

11. Verse 14 is echoing the same idea developed in verse 10, with a new concept added: Jesus calls His followers His friends. See the next question for more about this.
12. What difference does Jesus develop in vs. 15 between servants and friends? What other differences do you think of between servants and friends? Thought: can one be a servant of Jesus without being His friend? Can one be a friend of Jesus without being a servant?
13. What is the difference between being chosen and being appointed, if any? What is Jesus' purpose in choosing and appointing His disciples? In choosing and appointing us? What resources did they have (and do we have) to produce this fruit?
14. Jesus finishes this section with the same words of vs. 12: "Love one another." How is Christian love for the brethren supposed to be different from the non-Christian idea of love for others?

Application: Biblical love is shown by a lasting, faithful relationship and is expressed best by obedience to the will of God the Father. It is unselfish, it gives unconditionally, without expecting something in return.

This description of love is exactly how Jesus lived. He maintained a lasting, faithful relationship with the Father, was obedient to His will, and gave unconditionally and unselfishly of Himself. We who identify ourselves as His followers are called to have these same qualities, and show them by the same actions and attitudes demonstrated by Our Lord, which will result in our glorifying God by producing good fruit.

Prayer: Father God, we desire to show You that we love You by obeying Your commands more willingly and more completely each day. We ask for hearts and minds that allow You to guide us in growth so that we bear the fruit You want to see in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.