

The Price of FORWARD

John 15:1-17

FOR OUR CONSIDERATION

The Source of Life (Verse 1)

- In a serious moment of instruction (through teaching), Jesus provides His disciples (as well as those of us who make up “the Church”), very important knowledge
 - In the great landscape of GOD’s Creation, Jesus Christ is the TRUE VINE AND,
 - GOD, is the Master Gardener
- Why is this relevant TODAY?
 - “Vines” are often used symbolize “LIFE”
 - If Jesus identifies Himself as the TRUE VINE, then He is asserting Himself as the TRUE LIFE
 - OR, the TRUE (connect) to LIFE
 - AND, if GOD is the Gardener, then one can conclude that GOD become the CARETAKER of LIFE
- We must keep before us that as Christians, we simply cannot be what we profess if we do not have CHRIST.

Fruit or No Fruit (Verse 2)

- The Lord Jesus continues sharing that those who “bear” no fruit (fruitless followers), are cut off -that is, separated; removed from He, the true vine.
 - Cold, Hard Fact: *Many follow Jesus. Few are led by Jesus.*
- If your prayer life is non-existent, if you don’t spend any of the 24 hours, we’re given with Him, if you don’t “return His calls”, if His Word doesn’t inform our decision making, why do we deserve the connection?
 - We don’t. We’re not a reflection of a faithful GOD.
 - A Faithful GOD inspires (and empowers) a Fruitful Person/People
 - The opposite of fruitless followers are fruitful disciples.
 - These are those who trust, listen and obey.
 - They’re not perfect but they learn to trust GOD’s perfection and GOD’s ability to “perfect”
 - Those who “bear fruit” are PRUNED -to bear more...
 - *Pruning is PAINFUL!*

Acknowledging the Source (Verse 5)

- Jesus reiterates that He is the Vine and that His disciples are the branches
 - Branches are an extension of the tree and/or a vine
 - Strong branches symbolize the HEALTHY outgrowth of something that is FIRMLY ROOTED
 - Who we are and what we do, should always (strive) to reflect more of Jesus.
- He declares that in Him, we'll bear much fruit (refer to last week's lesson)
 - Apart from Him -we can do NOTHING
 - (Reference Philippians 4:13)

The Danger of Disconnect (Verse 6)

- The warning here from Jesus could be interpreted in more than one way.
 - Literal interpretation: Those who don't remain in Jesus Christ as like branches that have severed from the Vine/Source and eventually wither away. Such branches (people) are eventually destroyed.
 - Additional interpretation: Those who do not remain in Jesus Christ have not done so by choice and are thus subject to the offenses of the world and the enemy and, upon being assaulted, you are "picked up" and carried away of your devising to destruction.
 - In either case, both interpretations address the consequence of a **choice**.

The Blessing of Attachment (Verse 7)

- If we remain in Jesus and Jesus remains (or abides) in us, He shares: we can ask whatever we wish and it will be done for you.
 - How amazing is our GOD! That of all the things we do and don't do, by simply being intentional and committed to remaining in Him, to abiding in Him, He promises to honor our requests.
 - Why is this? (Psalm 84:11)

The Reasons Why (Verse 8)

- Above all, Jesus tells His disciples that all this occurs for one MAIN reason and a couple others:
 - #1 That His Father would be GLORIFIED
 - GOD deserves and will receive every ounce of it.
 - #2 That His followers would be FRUITFUL
 - A faithful GOD produces and preserves faithful fruit-bearers
 - #3 That His followers would demonstrate DISCIPLESHIP
 - He said: "showing yourself to be mine..."

“Stay in Love with GOD” (Verse 9)

- Jesus shares that remaining in His love is essential. If we do not remain in His love, we are automatically disconnected from the love of GOD.
 - To be disconnected from the love of GOD is to at best, exist.
 - There is no (true) life without GOD’s Love.
- “*Stay in love with GOD*” is the 3rd (and for me), the most important of the now famous Wesley’s General Rules.

Obedience and the Benefit(s) (Verses 10-11)

- Jesus gives emphasis to remaining in His love because in doing so, they will reflect His example of remaining in the love of GOD. Let us not ignore this:
 - “*Faithful Obedience*” is a constant principle or discipline Jesus encourages throughout His ministry. What is more impressive than the consistency of this teaching and message is the nature of his own WALK and WITNESS!
 - Jesus put ACTIONS to every WORD He spoke.
 - *Faithfulness, not Popularity is the GOAL.*
- He stresses this so that they might have JOY and that His joy might be full (or fulfilled), in their obedience to the One who sent them.
 - We are *pleasing to GOD* when we follow that which the Son of GOD laid out for us. *We honor the Son of GOD* through a lifestyle that glorifies the Father.

The Great Command (Verse 12)

- While the gospel according to John comes some a couple decades after the Mark and Matthew’s accounts, we notice in more than one of the gospels, ***the great COMMAND (LOVE...) proceeds the great COMMISSION (GO...)***
- *One cannot GO anywhere without LOVE to anchor and inform their journey.*

No Greater Love (Verses 13-15)

- Jesus moves to a greater depth of insight and transparency by foreshadowing His precious demise in the 13th verse.
 - (*See Romans 5:6-9 for an expounding of this statement*).
- Jesus continues by saying that the disciples are His friends though their obedience to His desires; His will.
 - No longer are they servants, because He has revealed to them the “Divine agenda” for all creation.
 - That He has come to reconcile humanity to their Creator
 - Through His death upon the cross and be raised -in victory on the “3rd day”
- He says to them in so many words: *“I’ve taught you everything I was given while here with you. Now, we’re friends because all I have, I have shared with you.”*

Point of Clarity (Verse 16)

- The Call of GOD comes through the Son of GOD.
 - Those called of GOD have been “appointed” for the following reasons:
 - Production of Fruit
 - a longevity of fruit or, fruitfulness
 - Access to the favor of GOD through answered prayer.
 - Do you see a correlation? If not, here it is:
 - *Fruitfulness is a result of Faithfulness*
 - *Faithfulness provokes Favor*

The Great Command II (Verse 17)

- For emphasis, Jesus declares the great command once more:
 - LOVE. ONE. ANOTHER.