

Sermon: Life on the Vine

Text: John 15:1-17

Discussion Questions:

Jesus is going to great lengths here in John chapters 14-16 to teach the disciples (and US!!!) what it means for God to not only be **WITH** us—but that He is **IN** us.

Talk about what you think it means that God is with us.

Talk about what you think it means that God is in us.

Are they the same thing?

Now take it a step further—

How do you personally experience the reality that God is with you? What does it “feel” like for God to be with you? Is this something you experience every day...or does the sense of God’s presence come and go depending on the situation? Are there verses that come to your mind in the course of your daily life, reminding you that God is with you? As you discuss this question as a group, are you finding that there are shared experiences? Are you hearing that others experience God’s abiding presence in the same way that you do? Are there things we can learn from each other in this regard?

Is anyone willing to talk about your personal walk with God, describing how your life with Christ goes beyond God’s abiding presence—and is better described as God’s **INDWELLING** presence in your life? How did you experience the presence of God **IN** (or within) you? What did it feel like? What came as a result of it? How would you describe to an unbeliever what it means to be filled with the presence of God—why would they want what you have?

Examination:

- Go back to some verses we studied last week, and re-read **John 14:5-14**.
 - As we have seen throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus returns again and again to a very familiar theme: “I am in the Father; the Father is in me; if you see me, you see the Father; I and the Father are one; I do nothing on my own, it is the Father working in me; the words I speak are the words of the Father; etc....” Why do you think Jesus keeps coming back to this truth?
 - Jesus isn’t saying that God the Father is **WITH** Him—He is saying that God the Father is **IN** Him (v. 10). Why do you think He stresses that distinction?
 - What is the evidence that reveals that the Father is in Jesus (vv. 11-12)?
 - Is Jesus teaching that He and the Father are the same person (hint: **NO!!!**)? To the contrary, how is Jesus making it clear that He and the Father are two distinct persons?
 - A **KEY** truth that Jesus is stressing is that it is the Father, living in Him, that is doing His work (v. 10). What do you think it means that the Father “lives in” Jesus?

- Read **John 14:15-17; 25-27**.
 - Jesus is going back to the essential difference between God being WITH us—and God being IN us. How do you see that in verses 15-17?
 - Jesus has been making it clear that everything He has been doing (the signs, miracles, teaching, etc.) has actually been the Father doing the work IN Him. Is Jesus now saying that everything we do, is actually the Holy Spirit working in us?
 - Based on verses 25-27, what are the results of the Holy Spirit being in us?
 - What do you think it means that the Holy Spirit is our “Advocate” (v. 26)?
 - In **John 14:20**, Jesus says that “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.” What day is He talking about?

- Now read **John 15:1-17**
 - Jesus states in verse 4 that we are to “Remain in Him, as He also remains in us.” How does this teaching connect with everything Jesus has been saying in chapter 14 about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives (and the work of the Father in His life)? Is it possible for Jesus to “remain in us” outside of the work and presence of the Holy Spirit within us?
 - Jesus bases His teaching in these 17 verses on the metaphor of a grapevine. Some scholars have speculated that the pathway between the upper room (where Jesus just left) and the Garden of Gethsemane (where Jesus is going) meandered through a grape vineyard. Can you think of other times when Jesus used common things around Him as a basis for teaching deep spiritual truths?
 - Why do you think Jesus stresses that He is the “true” vine (v. 1)? Are there false or counterfeit vines? If so, what?
 - Building on this metaphor of a vineyard, Jesus describes the role that the Father plays in our lives (verses 1-2). What is that role, and why is it so important?
 - What do you think Jesus meant when He said in verse 3, “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you”?
 - The three key aspects of this metaphor are the vine, the branch, and the grapes themselves. Discuss in further detail what each of these represent, and how they work together.
 - What happens to a branch that doesn’t bear any fruit (v. 6)? What do you think Jesus is talking about here?
 - What is the evidence of discipleship (v. 8)?
 - How many times does the word “remain” appear in these verses? Why is this such an important truth? Discuss what you think it means to “remain” in Jesus? On a personal level—how do you remain in Jesus in your daily life?
 - How important is obedience in all of this (v. 10)? Why?
 - What is the end result of abiding in the vine (v. 11)? What do you think it means to have “complete joy”? Isn’t this what every person is looking for in life? What are some “false vines” that people “cling” to, in hopes of finding joy?
 - Do we, as branches, choose to attach to the vine—or vice-versa (v. 16)?

Application:

Fruitfulness is an important theme in these verses. Love is the ultimate fruit (v. 17). Keep this in mind every day this coming week: The fruit of abiding is love! Look for ways to SHOW LOVE to those around you that you consciously attribute to the reality of abiding in Christ & the Spirit IN YOU!