

True Peace
John 14:27-31

Hello and welcome to Hope for Today. We are privileged to be here with you, and we are so glad you have joined us. The program you're listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope. We're an international Gospel media ministry. Each week our Bible teaching broadcasts circle the globe in English and 23 other major languages, and each week many people like you tune in for spiritual encouragement and blessing.

Today we will be learning from John 15. It is a well-known passage about Jesus as the Vine and his people the branches. Jesus' teaching on the vine and the branches is simple yet very profound. Before we get into today's lesson let's think about a few aspects of a vine and the branches.

The first thing we should notice is how this illustration connected with His audience. The Jewish culture was very familiar with vineyards and growing grapes. There are many passages in scripture which refer to wine, vineyards, or the winepress. As we grow in our understanding of their culture, we will see things that may not be obvious the first time we read the Bible. When He used the vine as an illustration, they connected and understood what he was saying. Imagine walking with Jesus and the disciples through a vineyard and Jesus holding the branches and pointing to the vine as he talks about them. Our culture may not be as familiar with grapes and vineyards but there are still many things we can learn from this passage.

For example, in verse 2 Jesus tells us he takes away the branches that bear no fruit and prunes the others so they can bring forth more fruit. There are just 2 options here, getting cut off or get trimmed. At first glance neither of these is very appealing. We sure don't want to be cut off because we are not bearing fruit, but neither does the process of being pruned sound very appealing. Thankfully we can trust the gardener, the husbandman knows what is best and He knows how to take care of His vineyard. His goal is that we would bring forth more fruit. There may be something He is pruning in us, and it may be very hard and difficult, but take comfort in the fact that He knows what He is doing, and His goal is for us to be more fruitful. He knows how to do the pruning, so our growth will be maximized. We may not enjoy the pruning, but we trust Him, and know that His ways are best.

Then in verse 4 he tells us to abide in Him. A branch cannot bear fruit on its own, it must be connected to the vine. Neither can we unless we are abiding in Christ. Think about that word abiding. Another translation uses the word "remain." This is more than a loose connection or a casual relationship; it has the idea of staying and remaining. This is not something we do if it's convenient or

just when it is popular. We are there and we abide in Christ, even when it's difficult and even if its unpopular. Abiding is not only when it's convenient for us, we remain or stay with Christ as much as we possibly can.

To abide or remain is continuing action. It is not going to church and now you are finished for the week. Neither is it spending personal time with Him than being done for the day. Instead, we go to church, and we have our devotions then we go through out are day with Him. Thinking about Him and living our lives to please Him. We abide with Him and live in such a way that brings glory to Him.

This brings us to the title for today's lesson. The title is *How to Live Right*. You see right living is not just knowing what is right. Some people seem to think knowing about Jesus is the same as knowing Jesus. This is far from truth. Living Right begins with knowing about Jesus and salvation through Him. But just knowing about the story is not enough. Just knowing the Bible and its stories does not mean you are good. We must believe and know Jesus personally.

Right living comes out of knowing Jesus and remaining in Him. You must do life with Him. The times of pruning will come and may be hard, but we know Jesus and trust Him. We have a great privilege to remain in Christ and be connected to the source of true life. Now let's give our attention to J Mark for the rest of today's teaching from John 15

Everybody has the same problem. The thrust of this message is of universal interest. It is absolutely true: we know there is a right way and there is a wrong way. But the problem is how to find out which is the right way, and which is the wrong way, HOW TO LIVE RIGHT.

All of us want to do better. We try, but we often fail. New Year's remind us of the need to amend our ways. Whether in your calendar it is a new year or not, it is good to think about what we have done in the past year and how we can improve in the year to come.

Jesus knew we would have the problem of finding the right way, so He taught us in John 15:1-8.

- 1 *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*
- 2 *Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*
- 3 *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*
- 4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

- 5 *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*
- 6 *If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*
- 7 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*
- 8 *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so, shall ye be my disciples.*

From these words of Jesus we can learn how to live right. In this text He presented several HELPS that will lead us to a life that is right.

Here, let me share with you help number one: **Allow the Father's Pruning.**

Jesus framed the setting, "I am the vine, my Father is the husbandman." In other words, God, the Father, is the caretaker. He looks over the vine and the branches. He prunes back this one and helps that one. He inspects and cultivates as the caretaker. "Everyone in me," Jesus explained, "that does not bear fruit he takes away: and everyone that does bear fruit, he prunes it so that it will bring forth much fruit and more fruit."

Pruning is a simple act that God does, for Jesus further explained that we are made clean by the word which He has spoken unto us. Be reminded that the Bible says of itself in Hebrews 4:12 that "The word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing the thoughts and intents of a man's heart." No wonder Jesus could say, "You are clean through the word that I have spoken to you."

So, one help in living right is to allow the Father's pruning through the Word. He knows very well how that should be done.

As you yield to the Father's caretaking you find you must **Admit Your Inability.**

Jesus expressed an evident truth when He told His disciples a branch cannot bear fruit unless it is attached or abides in the vine. Anybody who has observed the growth of vines or trees knows that to be true. It is impossible for a branch that is broken off to bear any kind of fruit because the nourishment comes from the vine, not from the branch.

Jesus made the analogy: like the branch must abide in the vine, so you and I must abide in Him if we are going to bear fruit. There is no fruit without Him. He said, "Without me you can do nothing." So, my friend, there's no room really for self-effort. Admit your own inability. That's a help to live right because it makes you alert and aware of the help He supplies.

Then there's a third help suggested here: **Aspire to Glorify God.**

Jesus stated, "In this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." He spoke of bearing fruit, then more fruit and finally much fruit, all the result of abiding.

But He also said that if one does not abide in Him, he is taken away like a branch that doesn't bear fruit and that branch is gathered and thrown into the fire. You see, Jesus is talking here, I'm only telling you what He said and He said, "If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. And men gather them and cast them into the fire." Fruitlessness means the fire.

Abiding in Jesus and doing His commandments means the glory of God; it means receiving. He said, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." That way the Father is glorified.

Much fruit is to God's glory. So, aspire to glorify God. Fix your mind on God. Abide in Him. Admit your own inability and aspire to glorify God. My friend, it will make a difference, a big difference.

I challenge you to accept these three helps which Jesus offered His disciples. They are all important for you if you are going to live right: allow the Father's pruning; admit your own inability; then aspire to glorify God. I urge you to use these helps offered by Jesus. They will enable you to live right.

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Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Pastor J. Mark continues our study from John's Gospel. You won't want to miss it. And until then, keep looking to Jesus. He'll give you hope for every day!