

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

JESUS WANTS TO SPEND THIS TIME WITH YOU

JOHN 15:1-11

FEBRUARY 23, 2020



### **SERMON OUTLINE**

**Jesus eagerly wanted to share that meal with His disciples because:**

1. Jesus wanted His apostles to understand how precious their Presence was for Him
2. Jesus wanted them to keep in Their Minds what happened that evening, at that supper
3. He knew that Friday and Sunday would Explain that supper

### **So What?**

Accept God's call to Spend Time with Him.

So what? So Eat and Drink !

What will I do on Monday with what I have learned on Sunday?

### **MAIN POINT**

Jesus values spending time with His followers and calls us to remain in His presence.

### **THINKING THINGS THROUGH**

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

1. **Outside of your immediate family, what is the longest standing relationship you have with another person? What has that relationship been like?**

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**2. Are there times when the relationship has been difficult? How has the reward of maintaining the relationship been worth the difficulty you encountered?**

**Leader:** Longevity in relationships is often marked by both hardship and joy. Our deepest relationships are those that have brought us good times and weathered through bad times. We stick with our friends through hard times because the joy we experience overshadows the sorrow. Jesus used the word “remain” or “abide” 9 separate times in the John 15:1-11. Another way to put it is: “stick with me.” Jesus invited His disciples to continually pursue and obey Him. To our modern ears this might seem like a duty or chore, but Jesus assured them and assures us, if we remain in Him we will find our greatest joy by being connected to Him. **Pursuing and obeying Jesus is not a duty, but a delight.**

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:1-6.](#)

**3. Jesus began this passage by describing the pruning of God with His people. What is the goal of pruning a tree? What was Jesus referring to when He talked about pruning and trimming the branches? What are some ways God cultivates His disciples by pruning and trimming?**

**4. Describe a time in your life when God pruned you so you would grow closer to Him. What was this process like? What was the result of the pruning?**

**5. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our pruning and fruit-bearing process?**

**Leader:** The process of pruning involves cutting away dead branches that are hindering the growth of a tree or vine. Therefore, this metaphor referred to the numerous means God uses in our lives to cut away what is dead or sinful in us so that we might grow spiritually. As disciples of Christ, pruning might include suffering (Rom. 5:1-4), discipline (Heb. 12:7-11), accountability (James 5:16), or correction from God’s Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In each instance of pruning, it is Jesus, working through the Holy Spirit, who causes us to bear fruit as we remain in Him.

**6. Describe what it looks like to daily abide in Jesus. What are ways you try to do things without Jesus? How has that worked out in your life?**

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**Leader:** Imagine the disciples' feelings when Jesus told them they could do nothing outside of Him. It would be pretty arrogant if you told one of your friends they could do nothing apart from you. Yet, when Jesus said the same thing to His disciples, it was freeing. Obeying Jesus and pursuing Him is difficult, and if the disciples had to do this on their own, they would never succeed or bear fruit. Fruit is the evidence of faith and repentance in the life of a Christ follower that cannot be produced apart from Christ. As a branch detached from a vine will wither and fail to produce fruit, so will a disciple who is disconnected from the true vine.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:7-11.

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**7. According to verse 7, what did Jesus promise all who abide in Him? What confidence and hope does this give you in pursuing Jesus?**

**8. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. How does remaining in Jesus glorify God? What would it look like to do everything to the glory of God in your life?**

**Leader:** When the chief priority of our lives is to glorify God—turning the spotlight off of ourselves and reflecting everything back to Him—remaining in Jesus will be our ultimate experience of joy and delight. As we remain in Him, His wants become our wants, and His heart our heart. As a result, when we approach God in prayer He will give us whatever we wish, because our will is aligned with His. Once we are connected to the vine in unhindered fellowship, our lives will bear much fruit because fruit is the evidence we are Jesus' disciples.

**9. Jesus said that as the Father had loved Him, so He had loved the disciples. What does this indicate about the kind of love Jesus had for His disciples? What does this indicate about the kind of love Jesus has for you?**

**10. How does remaining in Jesus make our joy complete (v.11)? What is the path to experiencing His joy in our lives?**

**Leader:** Jesus has an unfailing love for His people, a love that drove Him to endure the cross "for the joy set before Him" (Heb. 12:2). Jesus was able to see the joy behind the cross as He accomplished all that the Father asked Him to do. It is through this sacrifice that we are able to abide in Jesus at all. We enter into relationship with Jesus by grace, through faith in what He did on the cross. The extent to which we enjoy our relationship with God is dependent on how diligently we remain connected to Jesus. Continuing to pursue Him and obey Him, no matter the cost, is the path to true fulfillment and joy.

## **DOING LIFE TOGETHER**

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**11. How can you daily remain in Jesus? What steps can you take towards this end? How would making the choice to follow Jesus every day affect your joy?**

**12. How might we as a group pursue joy in Jesus together through spiritual disciplines? How are these means of abiding in Him?**

**Leader:** As needed, help guide group members toward various practices by which we learn to abide in Jesus. Daily self-examination, church attendance, Bible reading, prayer, journaling, fasting, silence and solitude, and a consistent awareness of the presence of Jesus help us remain in Christ.

## **PRAYER**

Pray and thank God for connecting you to His true vine. Pray that He would help you to see that lasting joy is found in knowing and abiding in Christ. Ask that you would experience His love in real and tangible ways this week and daily make the decision to abide in Jesus.

## **MEMORIZE**

<sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. – John 5:9

## **SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE**

### JOHN 5:1-11

15:1. “I am the true vine” is the last of Jesus’ seven “I am” sayings in John’s Gospel. “True” contrasts Jesus with OT Israel. Joseph was called a “fruitful vine” in Gen 49:22. The reference to the Father as the vineyard keeper harks back to Isaiah’s first vineyard song, where God is depicted as tending His vineyard, only to be rewarded with sour grapes (Isa 5:1-7; cp. Ps 80:8-9).

15:2. Three types of believers are named or inferred in this first part of the chapter: those who bear no fruit, those who bear some fruit and, later in verse 5, those who bear much fruit. The fruit-bearing branches, it would appear from the text of this verse, represent true believers. But to whom does the text refer when it says, he cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit? This passage is capable of dangerous interpretation, especially when the idea of fruit-bearing

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centers in evangelism. Some people teach that those who do not win others to Christ will themselves be snatched out of the vine. Such an idea is alien to the teaching of the New Testament. Perhaps Galatians 5:22-23 helps us here: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

15:3. The disciples, however, needed neither cutting off nor trimming clean because they had already been cleansed by the Lord's word. One thing is clear at the outset of the chapter: this is not a passage on salvation, a topic John covered in earlier chapters. Here he dealt with requirements for a fruitful life on the part of believers.

15:4-6. Another key here is the word remain (abide) which appears no fewer than eleven times in the passage. It seems to suggest an effortless resting in the Lord, confident in the promised union between the vine and the true branches.

Furthermore, John used the word remain forty times in his Gospel and twenty-seven more times in his epistles. In the context of this passage, it seems to emphasize an ongoing faith and loving obedience to the Father and the Son that results in fruit. The fruit in this passage seems to focus on spirit-generated behavior of Christians, though again this is not the only interpretation. Many sermons have been preached on emphasizing fruit as other people who have been influenced by the gospel.

15:7. Jesus added a specific dimension to the mutual abiding of the Christian life (v. 7). He set forth the condition that His words abide in believers. On the basis of this condition, He made the promise of fruitful praying. An abiding life is an obedient life. My words abide in you points to a willing acceptance of Jesus' authority as expressed through His teachings and commands. Words that remain ultimately become words that are obeyed. Whatever you wish defines the possible agenda of a believer's praying. The agenda is unlimited. Any concern is a proper subject for prayer. We can pray for anything that Jesus desires and for which He would ask the Father.

15:8. When followers of Jesus bear much fruit, God receives glory. Since believers cannot bear fruit of themselves but only by means of Christ's indwelling life, their fruitfulness is a manifestation of divine life. It thus glorifies God and serves as evidence of genuine, vital discipleship.

15:9. Next Jesus turned to a declaration of His love for His disciples. On the basis of His declared love, Jesus urged the disciples to abide in my love. He wanted them to live in the consciousness of being loved—rejoicing in its fact, depending on its undergirding, being careful not to betray it, and being faithful to all that delights it. That Jesus gave such a command suggests some can live without being mindful of Christ's love for them. Thereby they miss out on the close fellowship between Jesus and His followers and on the obedience and joy that flow from it (vv. 8-9).

15:10-11. Jesus moved from the need to live in awareness of His love to the need to obey His commands (vv. 10-11). Remaining is dependent on obeying. Abide in carries the connotation of living in the awareness and enjoyment of divine love. Jesus then moved to teaching about joy. Wholehearted obedience leads to full-hearted joy. "I have told you this" refers to Jesus' promise in verse 10 that obedience to His commands would lead to an awareness of living in His love. Jesus then explained further the desired outcome: "that my joy may be in you." Jesus probably meant He would impart to them the kind of joy He had found through His obedience to the Father (15:10). The disciples would be the recipients of joy that Jesus gave them through His indwelling presence. The disciples gained a measure of joy through obedience to Jesus' commands, and to that would be added the joy that came from Jesus.

The "commands" to be obeyed (15:10) are reduced in this verse to a single command. We are to love each other and to do it in the way and to the degree that Jesus loves, namely, as I have loved you. Jesus' love for His followers sets the standard for His followers' love for one another and furnishes the motivation for practicing mutual love. Having set His love as the standard for the disciples' mutual love, Jesus described the highest manifestation of love. Willingness to lay down one's life for others is the supreme test of love. Jesus' saying no doubt referred primarily to

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His death as proof of His love for the disciples (“as I have loved you,” v. 12). Having mentioned “friends” as the ones for whom love prompts the giving of oneself, Jesus gave the qualification for people being His friends. The “if” clause in verse 14—you are my friends if—identifies the singular requirement for being His friend: doing “what I command.”