

Life Group Notes 2/19/2023
Pastor Mark Warren John's Gospel Week 15

If you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. -Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18) **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark Warren has raised this week, 2/19, on John 15. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease.

At the end of the message notes, pages 5 to 6, I have made rather extensive notes on the remainder of the chapter and footnotes (*) to help dig deeper into some of the principles, people and events in this passage. *These notes are offered to enhance understanding and are not designed to complicate discussions in life group.* This week I covered:

1. On the seven "I Am" statements in John's gospel.
2. On the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life.
3. On being friends of Jesus.
4. On being slaves of Jesus.
5. On the Asbury, KT revival.

Pastor Mark begins by asking, "What is the one word that the world so desperately needs today?" What did you come up with? Look up 1 John2: 15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in

him. **16**For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not from the Father but from the world. **17**The world is passing away, along with its desires; but whoever does the will of God remains forever. **See the footnote below on Sodom. How is society doing? How are you doing? Think of the Grammys. How attractive has the world become? Pastor Mark says, “When people say, ‘I was born that way,’ the reality is, we were all born that way. Explain.**

Jesus the True Vine

(Isaiah 27:1–13)

1“I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. **2**He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful. **3**You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **4**Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.

5I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. **6**If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7**If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, proving yourselves to be My disciples.

1. Summarize the passage in your own words. What is the purpose of the vine?
2. How sobering is the threat that fruitlessness brings? Is it scary?
3. How much life is left in the stick on the ground? Is there any hope left?
4. **Look up Romans 11: 16***If the first part of the dough is holy, so is the whole batch; if the root is holy, so are the branches.*

17*Now if some branches have been broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others to share in the nourishment of the olive root, **18**do not boast over those branches. If you do, remember this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.*

19*You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” **20**That is correct: They were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. **21**For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will certainly not spare you either. **Is there any hope left for the fruitless branch? Is there room for boasting?***

5. Look up Luke 13: **6**Then Jesus told this parable: “A man had a fig tree that was planted in his vineyard. He went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. **7**So he said to the keeper of the vineyard, ‘Look, for the past three years I have come to search for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Therefore cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

8‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone again this year, until I dig around it and fertilize it. **9**If it bears fruit next year, fine. But if not, you can cut it down.’” **Is there any hope for the fruitless branch? Is there room for boasting?**

6. Describe the hope in the promise Jesus makes if we do abide. Who benefits from our obedience?
7. What does this mean: “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Why not?
8. How does one “remain in Him?” (vs. 7) What does that even mean?
9. Review John 8: [30](#)As Jesus spoke these things, many believed in Him. [31](#)[So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples.](#) [32](#)Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”... What are the benefits of “abiding in His Word?”
10. Jesus reveals another principle of effective prayer. Do you see it? How do you remember the words of your favorite song? How do you cause Jesus’ words to remain in you?
11. What will bearing “much fruit” look like? Have you borne much fruit yet? What do you have to look forward to, according to this promise? What does the church have to look forward to? How do we encourage each other in this? How are we already beginning to encourage each other in this? If your life is drawn from the sap of the vine, what does your life look like?
12. Pastor Mark says, in connection to this analogy, “We need to be connected and stay connected.” Why? How do we do that?

No Greater Love

[9](#)As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Remain in My love. [10](#)If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. [11](#)I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

[12](#)This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [13](#)Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

[14](#)You are My *friends if you do what I command you. [15](#)No longer do I call you *servants, for a servant does not understand what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, because everything I have learned from My Father, I have made known to you. [16](#)You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. [17](#)This is My command to you: Love one another.

1. Who loved first?
2. Pastor Mark reviews his previous lessons: “You can’t give what you haven’t first received.” How do you know the Father loved you first? How much? Can you prove it for your own satisfaction? Remember the woman with perfume at Jesus’ feet in Luke 7:47 who loved much. Why? What did she first receive, before she came to love at Jesus’ feet?
3. How is “remaining in His love” the same as abiding in the vine? What is the requirement for “remaining in His love?”
4. Look at verse 12 and review from last week’s lesson, John 13:34. *A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. 35*By this everyone will know that you are My disciples if you love one another.”... How is this a “new commandment?”

How much fruit do we obtain if we obey this new commandment? How many learn from our obedience?

5. Look at verse 13 and review John 10:11 **I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.** Remember the notes from that week? How was Jesus foreshadowing this moment? From those notes: *"How do we know the extent of God's love? How does this connect to the love Jesus describes to Nicodemus in John 3:16? Again, how do the sheep distinguish the voice of the good shepherd from the rest?"*
6. How do you remain in His love? Review John 14: **15***If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16***And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— 17***the Spirit of truth.... And: 21***Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.**...**And 23***Jesus replied, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24***Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words.** What is the one litmus test we've been given, to prove that we actually do love Jesus? How are you doing? Seeing this theme recur this often in John 14 and again in John 15, how important is this theme?
7. What does Mark say the world needs now? How desperately? What is happening in Asbury, KT, that Pastor Mark spoke of (See the link in the footnote below)? Why is that happening?
8. Pastor Mark's question: How attractive are we when we break away from the vine? What do we have to offer a world that needs love? Pastor Mark lays out steps:
 - a. How do we abide? First and foremost is your relationship with Jesus. What does that entail?
 - b. Be willing to be pruned. Pruning shears are painful, but the husbandman knows how to increase fruitfulness. Do you have a testimony? Look up James 1: **2***Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, 3***because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4***Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* What does pruning produce? Why is that a good thing?
 - c. Ask for more of the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5: **22***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23***gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.** Pastor says if you're lacking in any way any of this, you have but to ask, and He is faithful to provide. Do you have a testimony?
 - d. Experience the love of Jesus. Experience the love of the Father. What are the steps?
 - e. Keep His commandment. What is His commandment? What steps?

The Hatred of the World

18If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me first. **19**If you were of the world, it would love you as its own. Instead, the world hates you, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.

20Remember the word that I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they kept My word, they will keep yours as well. **21**But they will treat you like this because of My name, since they do not know the One who sent Me. **22**If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.

23Whoever hates Me hates My Father as well. **24**If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. **25**But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated Me without reason.'

26When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—He will testify about Me. **27**And you also must testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

1. Has the world hated you? Do you have a testimony? How did you feel? How did you respond?
2. Name people the world loves. Why does the world love them?
3. Look at verse 20. Pastor Mark asks, "Why do we get so upset when the world acts like the world?" Answer him. He says, "We have to be the antidote." How? How does being attached to the vine help? What can we draw from the vine itself? How does Jesus say our life in Him will be evident to the world? What is the outward manifestation of the life of Christ within? (See note 3 in the previous section.)
4. How much compromise is there in the world's hatred of Jesus?
5. How much compromise is there in our love of the world?
6. Look at vs. 25. When does the Advocate come? How do you know He has already come? How have you heard His testimony? What difference has that knowledge made? Who knows that we're His disciples?

Scribe's notes:

1. **On the seven "I am" statements in John.** One of the most noteworthy peculiarities of John is the way Jesus refers to Himself metaphorically. Chapter fifteen introduces the seventh: I am the vine. There is an excellent article that reviews the other six times where we have seen Jesus say, "I am..." It also mentions the two times where Jesus simply calls Himself "I AM," an echo that the Jews recognized immediately as God's ineffable name. Reading this article is well worth the time: [What are the seven I AM statements in the Gospel of John? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/seven-I-AM-statements.html) (<https://www.gotquestions.org/seven-I-AM-statements.html>)

2. **On the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and the pride of life:** The Greek word translated “desires/lusts” is not evil in itself. Jesus strongly *desired* to eat the Last Supper with the disciples. But Paul warns us in Romans 7 that what the eyes desire, and what the flesh urgently desires is at war with what the Spirit desires. (Read Romans 7 and remember.) The first manifestation of these temptations goes all the way to Eve in the garden. Genesis 3: “**6**When the woman saw that the tree was *good for food* [flesh] and *pleasing to the eyes* [eyes], and that *it was desirable for obtaining wisdom* [pride], she took the fruit and ate it.” The Greek word translated “pride” can be translated as “bragging rights.” It’s what would cause us to artificially lift ourselves up in status, and prevent us from seeing our own humble state. John lists these as being everything the world has to offer. Ezekiel 16 points to these as the symptoms that doomed Sodom to destruction: “**48**As surely as I live, declares the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as you and your daughters have done. **49**Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness; they did not help the poor and needy. **50**Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me.” Why is the love of the world so catastrophic?
3. **On being friends of Jesus:** The Greek word here, φίλος, *philos*, a friend; is described as someone *dearly* loved (prized) in a personal, intimate way; a trusted *confidant*, held dear in a close bond of personal affection. *Note:* The root (*phil-*) conveys *experiential, personal* affection – indicating **5384** (*phílos*) expresses *experience-based* love. If you remember our footnotes on “love,” this is in contrast to *agapao*, which is a “value-driven and decision-based” love, love not earned but freely given by one party without consideration of return or cooperation. This is the “love that lays down its life for its *philos*.”
4. **On being servants of Jesus:** The Greek word here, δούλος, *doulos*, means slave or bondservant. Strong’s defines it like this: “**1401** *doúlos* (a masculine noun of uncertain derivation) – properly, someone who belongs to another; a *bond-slave*, without *any ownership rights* of their own. Ironically, **1401** /*doulos* (“bond-slave”) is used with the *highest dignity* in the NT – namely, of believers who *willingly* live under Christ’s authority as His devoted followers.” Paul describes himself as Christ’s willing *doulos* when he introduces himself in Romans, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. For Paul, servanthood is a badge of honor. **Why is this significant? What does it take to be great in the kingdom of God? Can one be both slave and friend? How?**
5. **On the Asbury KT revival.** Something significant happened on February 8, 2023, at a chapel service in the Christian School in Asbury, KT. Pastor Mark said the speaker, Zach Meerkreebs, called the folks there to grab hold of the love God is offering, that they longed for in their own lives. Here is the link to the original service that launched over a week now of meetings that have not ended: [The service that launched revival](https://youtu.be/VGvvGbgUmMU) (<https://youtu.be/VGvvGbgUmMU>) Judge for yourself.