

## John 15

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If you haven't been with us we're going on Wednesday night through what's called "The Upper Room Discourse," which is John 13-17. Jesus was in the upper room the night He would be betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and then He would be crucified on the cross for our sins. Jesus had been speaking to them, and up to the end of the fourteenth chapter, at the end of the chapter, it says, "Arise, let us go hence." We don't know if He said that, and they didn't really go yet, they were still in the upper room, but most Bible scholars believe that they were en route. At the end of chapter 14, it's very possible that Jesus taught as they walked together, so they would go out of the upper room, down the stairs, cross down into the Kidron Valley, and they would go out into the Garden of Gethsemane.

I've only taken three trips to Israel, but on my first trip we arrived late the first night at the hotel and my friend that I was with, another pastor, had been many times. Instead of jumping into bed in the hotel room he said, "Do you want to go down to the Garden of Gethsemane?" I thought, Wow! This is amazing! We're in Israel. We're in Jerusalem. I remember being in Jerusalem opening my Bible and reading the word "Jerusalem," and thought, I'm there! I'm there! This is amazing! Late that night we actually made our way, as they would've too, down in through the Kidron and up into the Garden of Gethsemane. We sat underneath one of the olive trees there, as Jesus had in agony, and we prayed and committed our hearts and lives to the Lord saying, "God, use us for Your glory."

They're on their way. They're en route. There are three sections to our text tonight of John 15, if you want to outline it. Some could outline it differently, but the first eleven verses are some of the most popular and well-known texts in that Jesus utters what seems to be a parable. He doesn't label it as a parable, but it's a parable, or at least a metaphor or allegory, of the vine and the branches.

Follow with me verses 1-11. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it,"—or prunes 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 abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." 'Fruit' is one of the key words of these eleven verses, so note that and mark every time you find the word 'fruit.' He says, verse 5, you'll " . . . bringeth forth much fruit"—and that amazing statement—"for without me ye can do nothing."

Verse 6, "If a man abide 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. 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall

abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Jesus had been in the upper room. It would seem as though He stood with them and they headed out toward the Garden of Gethsemane. On the way, some feel that they might've passed a gate of the temple that had carved in the gate the grapevines, which in the Old Testament, by the way, were a picture of the nation of Israel—Isaiah 5, God planted a vineyard, He put a hedge around it and so forth. Described in that Isaiah 5 passage is being Israel. Jesus now uses the imagery of the grapevine and says, "I am the true vine." The emphasis, the emphatic statement there, is the word "true"—I'm not just a vine, I'm the true vine. It means genuine, authentic, or not counterfeit. It could be that He was contrasting Himself with the nation of Israel that had rejected His mission and His ministry, and He's saying, "I am the Messiah. I am the true vine." The nation of Israel has turned away from the Lord and pretty much become apostate. So, "I am the true,"—or the genuine—"vine."

This is one of the seven "I AM" statements of Jesus found in the gospel of John. If you weren't aware of that fact, I didn't bring the list with me tonight, I should've but, there are seven times Jesus uses the statement. In the Greek it's *egō eimi*, which is "I AM." Here is the great, "I am the true vine." He also said, "I am the resurrection, and the life;" "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." He said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Amen? There were seven times...in biblical numerology, seven is the number of completion, so the gospel of John setting forth the deity of Christ, and what Jesus is claiming there is to be Jehovah God.

Remember when Moses was called by God at the burning bush, and the burning bush spoke back, the Lord from the bush, and when Moses said, "Who shall I say have sent me?" The Lord said, "Tell them, 'I Am' have sent you." Jesus there is claiming to be the great "I AM" of the Old Testament. Simply stated, this name for God, this "I AM" statement, means that God is the eternal covenant-keeping God. It conveys the simple thought that God is whatever you need. Whatever you need, God is. If you need forgiveness, He's the God who forgives. If you need provision, He's the God who provides, Jehovah Jireh, the Lord our provider. He's the Lord our righteousness, Jehovah Tsidkenu. Whatever you need, God becomes; and He also is the Good Shepherd, and He is meeting our needs as our Shepherd following Him and providing for us.

It is really, in a sense, a claim to be God, and He said, "I am the true vine,"—and then mentions—"and my Father is the husbandman,"—which is the vinedresser or the gardener. He actually mentions the images and then tells us what they are. Jesus is the vine, that's pretty clear; the Father is the gardener. Now, God being a gardener is quite an interesting picture, but He'll tend to the vine, He'll take care of the vine, He'll prune the vine, especially so that the fruit of the vine would prosper and grow. He also says that we are branches, we who are His disciples and are believers in Jesus Christ.

He says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." Throughout this Upper Room Discourse He mentions His Father over and over and over again. He mentions the Holy Spirit over and over again. We obviously see that there is one God in three Persons. There are sometimes people who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and, by the way, the doctrine of the Trinity, the word "Trinity" is just the term we use to describe God's nature as being three in one. One God, three Persons is essential orthodoxy. If you deny the Trinity, you're denying Christian orthodoxy. It is heretical to deny the triune nature of God; and you'll never understand the Scriptures, if you don't understand the triune nature of God. You may not be able to comprehend how it all works, but what God reveals of Himself we accept and believe by faith, even though we may not be able to compute it or understand it. The best way to understand it is that in essence there is only one God, but in Persons, there are three Persons.

Now, some teach what's called "modalism," and I didn't mean to get into this tonight, but it means that there's a Father who took on a different mode and became the Son; then, the Son took on another different mode and became the Spirit. They don't believe in the Trinity, their oneness, so they believe that there's the Father who became the Son, the Son became the Spirit. Again, this is not taught in Scripture and has been labeled by the church as being heretical. I just thought I'd mention the fact that is there implied because Jesus addresses the issue of His Father so heavily through this whole chapter 15.

Verse 2, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." That "taketh away" is the picture of the gardener when there would be a branch that is dead and not connected to the vine, not producing fruit; and by the way, that's the key to this whole parable is that the branch must be connected to the vine and receiving life through the vine in order to produce fruit. The fruit comes out on the branches, but the vine supplies the life. If you don't have life, you're not bearing fruit, then you're removed, and the word "taketh away" means lift up or to carry away. ". . . and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth." A better translation of that word "purgeth" we would use the word prunes. You don't want me to ever come to your house and prune your bushes. I know nothing about pruning. If bushes could talk when they see me coming with the clippers, they would be freaking out.

There are some things you need to know about how to prune, when to prune, what time of the year to prune, the proper way to prune so that your roses, or whatever it might be, might blossom and bud and produce beautiful flowers. God, the Father, is the ultimate husbandman or vine dresser, and He knows how to prune us at just the right time. We're going to see how we are to abide, and that's the key theme. By the way, I'll mention it right now before I even need to getting down in the chapter in that this parable, verses 1-11, is not about salvation, it's about service. It's about bearing fruit. It's about sanctification that leads to service—growing in Christ, bearing fruit, serving the Lord. I don't think salvation is the theme or topic of this section of this chapter, verses 1-11. So, the Father purges by pruning, ". . . that it may bring forth more fruit." So, you deadhead your flowers or whatever you do, and you cut back and trim back so that the fruit will be produced thicker. He prunes us, we're going to see, through the Word of God and through trials.

How do we abide in Christ? If you're taking notes, the first way is through God's Word, and that's seen in verses 3 and 7. Notice verse 3, "Now ye are clean"—or you're purged, you're purified or you're pruned—"through the word which I have spoken unto you." God prunes us to clean up the dead stuff and to make the good stuff grow by using His Word, "through the word which I have spoken unto you." First, we abide in the Lord as branches in the vine by the Word of God abiding in us and us abiding in the Word of God. You cannot grow and be a fruitful Christian if you don't get grounded in the Word. You need the Word of God in you for God to be able to work through you. You feed on the Word of God, you grow on the Word of God, and it's through the Word of God that we're strengthened and our lives come to bear fruit.

We're all familiar with Psalm 1, right? "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law"—or His Word—"doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted . . . his leaf . . . shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." So, you want to be a growing Christian, you want to be a flourishing Christian, you want to be a Christian that produces a great amount of fruit, then you want to be grounded in God's Word.

I want you to see the progression in verse 2. First you have "no fruit," the King James has "not fruit;" then you have just the word "fruit;" and then you have the phrase, "more fruit;" and in verse 5, you have "much fruit;" again, we'll get it in verse 8, "much fruit." So, it starts with "no fruit," then there's "fruit," then "more fruit," then there's "much fruit." That's the progression we want to be on—growing through the Word of God, grounded in the Word of God, connected to the vine so that we can have that life source in our hearts and lives and grow through the Word of God. The Word of God is absolutely essential for your spiritual life and spiritual growth and spiritual well-being.

The theme is, verse 4, "Abide in me." Now, being in Christ means that we are saved and placed in Him. The Church has not come into existence yet, so the Church is not born yet, but we are in Christ individually and personally. Then He says, "and I in you,"—would be sanctification. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide me." He's basically saying you cannot produce fruit apart from abiding in Me, and you cannot abide in Me apart from having My Word in you and being rooted and grounded in My Word. Then He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Isn't it interesting He didn't say, "Without Me you can't do a lot." He didn't say, "Without Me you cannot do much." He said, "Without Me you are a big zero," and that's true. I just thought I'd encourage you. You are a big zero apart from Him, so don't think you're anything hot. You're not hot stuff. God just takes nothing and makes something. He chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

If you're going to grow as a Christian, if you're going to grow stronger in the Word, you need to realize, I need Him. I love that old hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour." I need Thee ev'ry hour / I need Thee / O bless me now, my Savior. We need the Lord. Do you need the Lord? I need the

Lord. Amen? I need Him every day. I need Him every moment of every day. I need Him through the night. I need Him all the time. We need to stay connected to Him by His Word abiding in us and we are abiding in Him.

I remember as a young Christian I just started walking with the Lord, and I was struggling with some sins that were still in my life. I remember just getting on my knees and praying. I said, "Lord, I can't do it. I can't be a Christian. I can't live the Christian life." I actually said, "Lord, if You don't do it, it'll never happen." That was a turning point. I didn't perfectly walk with the Lord from that day on, but it was a turning point for me to begin to experience victory in my life when I realized it's not me, it's not my strength. If you're feeling defeated tonight and you're looking at the Christian life thinking, There's no way I can do that. I can't be a Christian, you're right. But He can do it in you and through you. Amen? He's the One that gives you the strength, so without Him you can do nothing.

Verse 6, and this is the verse that is quite controversial for many, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." We read earlier in verse 2 about the branch that bears no fruit that it was taken away. Now, this branch does not bear any fruit and it's " . . . cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." I don't want to tarry long on this verse, but this is one of some verses that some feel teaches that a Christian can lose their salvation. I don't agree. I don't believe that's what Jesus is teaching. First, the context is not about salvation, nor would it certainly be about that you can lose your salvation. He's trying to encourage them. He's trying to strengthen them. He's trying to fortify them. He's trying to give them hope about His leaving and the Spirit helping them, so I don't think He's trying to tell them, "Beware that if you don't bear fruit, if you don't produce and you don't get stronger in the Lord, then you're going to lose your salvation."

A little note that you should make in verse 6, He said, "If a man," He uses more of a general concept here, "abide 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." I believe the clear teaching of the New Testament is that if we have been born again, we've been regenerated, we've been indwelt, we've been " . . . sealed with that holy Spirit of promise . . . until the redemption," that we are safe and secure in the arms of Jesus. Amen? Then, if we're in Christ, there is no condemnation. He's not telling us here, "Hey, if you don't produce fruit, you're going to lose your salvation." You'd never be able to have assurance. How do you know you're fruitful enough? How much fruit? Over what period of time? What would you need to do to lose your salvation? You would need to take yourself out of Christ and put yourself back into Adam. Now, you didn't take yourself out of Adam into Christ, you can't put yourself back in. The Holy Spirit would have to leave you, and Jesus said, "He'll never leave you or forsake you," and God would have to lose His grip upon you. I believe we start with grace, we continue with grace, and we end with grace or in glory.

But why would you take a verse from a parable that's not that clear and build a doctrine on it that you could lose your salvation when you have multiple clear verses that teach that you're secure in Christ. Take Romans 8 and meditate in that chapter. You take the clear passages

over the unclear; you take the didactic teaching of the New Testament over the parabolic teaching, even in the gospel when Jesus is speaking, not that His words aren't important, but you have to compare Scripture with Scripture. It's so very, very important.

I believe He's talking about professing Christians who don't have the life of God in them. They haven't been born again. They haven't been saved. They haven't been regenerated. They haven't been indwelt. It's evident because they don't bear any fruit. They're not abiding in Christ, and they can't bear fruit if you don't abide in Christ, “. . . and is withered; and men gather them,” it could very well be that Jesus is just keeping the image consistent here, when a dead branch is removed from a vine it's no good but just to be thrown into the fire. You don't build houses out of grape wood. You don't even build furniture out of grape wood. Grape was not good even hardly for burning in the fire, it just burns real quickly and it's gone. So, it's really good for nothing but producing fruit.

If you're a Christian, God's number one purpose for you is to bear fruit for His glory, to glorify Him through a fruitful life. It's so very important. By the way, Judas, in John 13, was an example of verse 6, of chapter 15, in that he was a false believer, he was a false professor, and he went out at night and went to perdition—he died and was lost. Although he might've been looked at by the other disciples as being a genuine disciple, he was a tare among the wheat, which is common today in the Church.

Here's the second way to abide in Christ and to grow in Him, through prayer, verse 7, and then He'll also mention it in verse 16. He says in verse 7, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,”—again, He's going to talk about prayer, but He's still thinking in terms of the Word of God as well. You can't separate, I call them the dynamic duo, the Word of God and prayer; the Word of God and prayer, prayer and the Word of God. They fuel one another. You pray, you read the Word; you read the Word, you pray. If you neglect one, you'll lose with the other, so both are there in verse 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.” Again, prayer is one of the ways in which we abide in the Lord. If you're going to produce fruit, you have to be grounded in the Word of God, you have to be talking to God in prayer. It's so important if you're going to stay connected to the vine, if you're going to produce fruit in your life, you must be a man or a woman of prayer. It's so very, very important.

Now, when we do pray and He says, “. . . ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you,” again we need to remember that it's asking in Jesus' name, for His glory, and it's asking for God's glory and God's will. When you pray, you should never be afraid to say, “Not my will, but Thine be done.” You never want God to answer your prayer if it's not His will. You never want to try to twist God's arm. You don't want to try to overcome God's reluctance. You want to surrender your will to His will. You want Him to be glorified. You want Him to have your way.

I don't care if you're praying for a loved one that's sick and you want them to be healed, you pray, but you put it in God's hands and you ask for God's will to be done. Now, there are some that think that's anathema, the idea that you pray for someone sick and ask God for His will to

be done. They assume God's will is always to heal; I don't believe the Bible teaches that. Sooner or later there's going to be a sickness for which you will not be healed of that will take you home to heaven, " . . . to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." There's going to be a time that you don't want to be healed, you want to go home to be with the Lord, you want people to just say, "Lord, have Your way."

Do you know how many times I've been in the hospital praying for people that are terminally ill and said, "Lord, we believe You can heal, we know You can heal, we're asking You to heal, but we're also wanting Your will. We want Your will." That takes faith. That takes loving God and knowing God and trusting God that His will is better than ours, and He's a lot smarter than we are and we should want His will. When you pray, verse 7, you ask according to His will again, " . . . and it shall be done unto you."

Verse 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." So, we bear fruit, we want more fruit, we want much fruit. We haven't talked about what fruit is.

Years ago I saw a bumper sticker, I've only seen one my whole life. I don't know why we don't make some of our own today. It said, "God wants spiritual fruit not religious nuts." I love that. God wants spiritual fruit not religious nuts. There's a lot of religious nuts out there, but God wants fruit. Fruit is found in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace. Fruit is also winning souls to Christ. Fruit is also living a godly life. Fruit is giving your money to the Lord to use for His glory and the furtherance of His Kingdom, so there's a lot of different facets to this concept of bearing fruit, but that's what we want to be—fruitful Christians.

Verse 9, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." Now, He says that we should love Him as He loves us, and we should continue in His love. How do we do that? Through obedience to Him. First, abide through God's Word, verse 3; secondly, abide through prayer, verse 7; and thirdly, abide through obedience to Him. The Word of God that you're studying, reading, and hiding in your heart you need to obey, you need to put it into shoe leather and practice God's Word, and you need to rest in God's love, verse 9.

Verse 10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." I love that concept of my abiding in Him is a love relationship. That's what motivates me, God's love for me and my love for God. We grow through that. God also, by the way, would use trials to prune us that we might bear much fruit. You'll never grow fruit in your Christian life apart from trials and testings and difficulties.

Verse 11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Remember, as I said, Galatians 5:22-23, that joy is the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace. So, the fruit of the Spirit in our lives bearing the joy of the Lord, and abiding in the Lord, brings that joy as we love Him and we obey Him.

Now, the second section is verses 12-17. We leave the parable of the vine—the Father is the husbandman, Jesus is the vine, we're the branches, we're connected to Him and we're to bear

fruit—now He gives a commandment. He had earlier given us a new commandment, John 13:34, and He comes back to the same commandment that we should “. . . love one another.” He’s going to leave them and He wants them to love each other. Verse 12, “This is my commandment,”—He just mentioned the need for obedience to His Word, so now He’s commanding us—“That ye love one another”—how?—“as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends;”—that’s an amazing thought, and by the way, this idea that we’re His friends was God’s idea, not ours. We didn’t say, “God, can I be Your friend?” “Well, I guess so.” He comes to us and not only wants to save us and He wants us to abide in Him and He loves us, but He wants us to be His friend. Friends share with each other openly and honestly. They love and trust one another.

He says, verse 13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” That’s exactly what Jesus would do. In just a matter of hours He was going to the cross to lay down His life for us. Verse 14, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants;”—or slaves—“for the [slave] knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” Jesus came to reveal God the Father to us and He made known all things to us. John 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”—or revealed Him to us. Remember Abraham was called a friend of God? Now, Jesus says we are His friends.

Now, in verse 16, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,”—He’s speaking to the disciples, but I think the New Testament bears this out that if you’re saved, it’s because God chose you, Ephesians 1. You’re chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Spurgeon used to say, “It’s a good thing He chose me then, if He waited until after I was born, He never would’ve chose me.” I don’t think so because He knew all the time. You say, “Well, I thought I chose Him.” You did, but you chose Him because He chose you. Which is it? Both. You say, “How can that be?” I don’t know, but isn’t it awesome? “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you,”—again, He’s speaking in context here to His disciples—“that ye should go”—and here it is again—“and bring forth fruit.” We’re still getting fruit in this chapter. “I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask”—here’s prayer again—“of the Father in my name”—which means you’re praying for His glory, you’re praying for His will—“he may give it you. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

As I said, in John 13:34 Jesus said, “A new”—or renewed—“commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you”—then He said these words—“By this,”—that is, your love for others, His disciples—“shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” It’s the birthmark of a true Christian—love for the brethren.

Here’s the third and last section, verses 18-27. Here we have a warning. He’s warning them of the hatred that comes to them from the world. It’s all about the hatred and persecution that they

can expect when He leaves and goes back to heaven. As the world gave to Christ, they rejected Him and crucified Him, His followers will also be rejected and in some cases they would be crucified or definitely slain.

The description of this persecution is verses 18-20. He said, "If the world hate you,"—the "world" there in verse 18 and all through this section, is talking about the evil unregenerated, unsaved, non-Christian world, the haters of God, the haters of Christ, those who oppose God that aren't believers, it's the secular world apart from God. It's also talking about the evil world system apart from God as John mentioned in his epistle—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life which is what controls the unregenerated man. So, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." We will be hated because of our identification with Christ

I can't read these verses without thinking it's so so fresh in our minds of the assassination, and some say martyrdom, of Charlie Kirk just a few weeks ago, how hated he was because of his bold witness to the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the moral standard that he got from the Word of God that was actually clashing with the world—two kingdoms colliding in the hatred there. Now, that's not going to dissipate. That's not going to go away. It still exists today, and it's getting more clear in our world today that it's darkness and light—God's Kingdom and Satan's kingdom.

So, ". . . it hated me before it hated you." We are identified with Christ, we will be hated by the world. Verse 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own"—the mutual admiration club. If you are a Hollywood actor, Hollywood loves you, the world loves you. If you're a child of God, the world hates you and despises you. I love that passage in Hebrews 11 where it says, "(Of whom the world was not worthy)." These people of God, these men and women of faith, the world was not worthy. They were martyred. They were put to death for their faith, but the world was not worthy of them.

Verse 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would"—applaud you, the world would laud you, the world would praise you. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." I want you to note these reasons for our persecution as believers, our identification with Christ, verse 18, then that we don't belong to this world. If you're a Christian, you should feel more and more not at home in the world—the world's ideas, the world's philosophies, the world's loves, the world's pleasures. You should say, content to let the world go by, / To know no gain nor loss, / My sinful self my only shame, / My glory all the cross. I love those words. Just content to let the world go by, / To know no gain nor loss, / My sinful self my only shame, / My glory all the cross. You're not of this world. This world's not your home. Amen? So, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love"—the things of—"the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

". . . but I have chosen you out of the world,"—I love that, verse 19—"therefore the world hateth you,"—this is the reason. "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater

than his lord”—that goes back to John 13:16 when He washed their feet and said, ‘You’re not greater than I am,’ so He washed their feet. He says, verse 20, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” How marvelous that is. The description of the persecution: we’re identified with Christ, we do not belong to this world.

In verses 21-25, we have some more reasons behind our persecution from the world. “But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.” Why does the world persecute the believer? Because they know not God. They don’t know God. Verse 22, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke”—or no excuse—“for their sin”—knowledge brings responsibility, light brings judgment if it’s not responded to. He came to them as a light, as a witness with His Word, with the Word of the Father. They rejected that. They have no excuse for their sin.

Verse 23, “He that hateth me hateth my Father also.” They don’t know God, verse 21; they hate God, verse 23; and they reject God’s work through Christ, verse 24. “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” It’s that they actually hate God. They hate God. They hate Christ. They hate His Word. They want to throw off the restraints. They don’t want God’s law. They don’t want God’s standards. Read Romans 1, they suppress the truth, they believe a lie, their minds become reprobate, which means they don’t work.

Have you ever looked at people that are haters of God and some of the things they say and do and think, What’re they thinking? The answer is they can’t think, their minds are completely blown away. They’re shot. They don’t think clearly. The word “reprobate” literally means doesn’t work. It doesn’t work. If you have a clock that doesn’t work, it’s a reprobate clock. If you have a mind that doesn’t work, it’s a reprobate mind. They can’t even think properly or think straight.

So, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me,”—and they hate God, verse 22. Verse 23, “He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law,”—this is a quote from Psalm 69:4. The statement here that Jesus makes is drawing from Psalm 69:4. This is Jesus quoting Scripture, “They hated me without a cause.”

In verses 26-27 He closes with God’s provision and God’s answer to the persecution that they would face, and that we face today in the world as well. The answer to it is the Holy Spirit, verse 26. He says, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he”—that is, the Holy Spirit—“shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” Again, speaking to His little band of disciples, “You’ve been with Me from the

beginning, the Holy Spirit's going to testify of Me and you are going to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and you will testify of Me as well."

Again, the "Comforter," and we get to John 16 next week, there's a ton of marvelous teaching on the Holy Spirit. The word "Comforter" there is the Greek word *paráklētos* which means one who comes alongside - remember? - to comfort and to strengthen and to help us so we're never alone. He's our comforter. It's also used for an advocate or a lawyer. The *paráklētos* has come, "... whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he"—the Holy Spirit—"shall testify of me."

If you mark in your Bible or highlight your Bible, mark, highlight, underline, "he shall testify of me." That's a reference to the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus. You know, one of the ways, and I could talk for a long time on this, I won't though, to know that the Holy Spirit is at work, Jesus gets all the glory. I've been in church services that they said the Holy Spirit was moving, but Jesus didn't get any glory. It was just a big show. When the Spirit of God is working, Jesus, the Son of God, is glorified. In your life, in your church, in your family, in your marriage, in your home, on the job, when the Spirit of God fills your heart and life and mind and you're walking in obedience to God, you're grounded and growing in the Word of God, you're praying in the will of God, the Son of God gets all the glory. Amen? It's so important. That's always been my prayer as a pastor, that the church that I pastor as the undershepherd that all praise, all glory, all honor goes to Jesus Christ; that no person, no individuals, no organization receives any glory, all glory and all praise be to Jesus. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

It's fascinating to me, here's just a little footnote that popped in my brain, some of the most Christ-exalting books of the Bible such as Hebrews say the least about the Spirit. One of the most Christ-exalting books in the Bible is Hebrews, and you have almost no reference to the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit is working, He doesn't talk about Himself. When it's all about the Holy Ghost, "The Holy Ghost! The Holy Ghost! The Holy Ghost! The Holy Ghost!" and nothing about the Son of God, it's not the Holy Ghost. Jesus is always glorified by the Spirit's work. That's what He's come to do. It's one of the great barometer's or tests of whether or not it's really the Spirit of God, is Jesus the One who's getting the glory.

So, His life is flowing through us producing fruit. His love is abiding in us as we obey His Word and love one another and have the joy of the Spirit. His name is being glorified through the works of the Spirit in our lives to bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ. Amen?