

Famous Chapters in the Bible, Part 3: John 15:1-11, Page 1 of 2

Notes from the class taught by Pastor Doug Livingston, April 4, 2012

Background: The Gospel of John is believed by some scholars to have been written by the apostle John between 85 – 95 A. D., although others have proposed a much earlier date. He & his brother, James (another of the first 12 apostles), were nicknamed by Jesus the “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17). He is also believed to have been “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26) & “the other disciple” who followed Jesus into the court of the high priest along with Peter (18:15-16) & ran to the tomb of Jesus along with Peter (20:1-9). He also was the one whom Jesus entrusted with the care of His mother just before He died (19:26-27).

WM comments on this Gospel: “This is the most theological of the Four Gospels. It deals with the nature & person of Christ & the meaning of faith in Him.” John’s Gospel mainly focuses on proving the divinity of Christ through 7 miracles & the 7 “I am” statements of Christ, the last of which is found in the first verse of Chapter 15.

Context: Jesus was in the Upper Room with His disciples celebrating the Passover the night before His crucifixion (13:1). John then goes on to tell us about Judas’ soon betrayal of Jesus (2), of Jesus washing His disciples’ feet & the significance of that (3-20). He then records Jesus identifying Judas as His betrayer, though none of the other 11 disciples seemed to get it (21-30). Jesus then spoke of His departure with the 11 who were greatly grieved by this (31-38). And so, Jesus gave them words of comfort, telling them about heaven & how He would come back for them to take them to be there with Him (14:1-6). He then spoke with them about His oneness with the Father (7-11) & of “the greater works” they would do (12) & the power of prayer in His Name (13-14). He then taught them about the Holy Spirit, the Helper (15-26). Read verses 27-31.

1. WM: “In the OT, the nation of Israel was depicted as a vine planted by Jehovah. But the nation proved unfaithful & unfruitful, so the Lord Jesus now presented Himself as the ‘true vine,’ the perfect fulfillment of all the other types & shadows.”
2. This verse can be interpreted 3 different ways & refers to a person who:
 - a. looks & sounds like a Christian, but never really had faith in Christ;
 - b. was a believer & lost his/her salvation;
 - c. is a true believer who has backslidden & become carnal.

WM: “Exactly what the Lord does to the unfruitful branch depends on how the Greek verb *airo* is translated. It can mean ‘takes away’ as in the KJV (& NASB). Then it would refer to the discipline of physical death (I Corinthians 11:30). However, the same word may mean ‘lifts up’ (as in John 8:59). Then it would be the positive ministry of encouraging the fruitless branch by making it easier to get light & air, & hopefully, to bear fruit.”

We all need to be “pruned” by the Lord to “bear more fruit.”

3. We are saved by the Word (salvation) & cleansed by the Word (sanctification).
4. CR: “Abiding depends upon keeping Christ’s commandments” (10). WM: “To abide is to stay where you are. The Christian has been placed in Christ; that is his position. In daily walk, he should stay in intimate fellowship with the Lord.”

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5. The more we depend upon Him, the more fruit we bear for Him. WM: “Sometimes we pray, ‘Lord, help me to live my life for You.’ It would be better to pray, ‘Lord Jesus, live out Your life through me.’”
6. This could refer to professing Christians who did not possess Christ or the believer whose works will be “burned up” at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Corinthians 3:11-15).
7. Abiding in Christ will greatly affect our prayer life because we will pray according to His will.
8. The more fruit we bear the more we resemble Christ & glorify God.
9. WM: “The love which the Savior has for us is the same as the love of the Father for the Son. Our hearts are made to bow in worship when we read such words. This means we should continue to realize His love & enjoy it in our lives.”
10. We can abide in Christ’s love by keeping His commandments, just as Jesus did on earth with His Father in heaven.
11. As we abide in Christ’s love by keeping His commandments, we begin to experience His joy which He desires to give us in full.
12. Jesus would soon be leaving His friends to return to His Father in heaven. The enemy would attempt to divide & destroy them (Acts 20:28-31). He encourages them to “love one another.”
13. We, like Christ, should be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers & sisters not only in death but also in service. 14. What a Friend We Have in Jesus!
15. Servants are hired or forced to work for their master. Rarely are the two friends. Friends have an intimate relationship with Jesus & His people. Solomon (Proverbs 17:17): “A friend loves at all times.”
16. Jesus chose us to be His friends “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4), called us into His ministry (II Corinthians 5:18-20) & gifted us through the Spirit with gifts to do that work (Ephesians 4:7-8). When we abide in Him, we will pray effectively. James: “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (5:16b).
17. Jesus stresses the importance of loving one another in a world hostile to His friends (18-25). He knew from personal experience.

WM: William Macdonald