

## Remain in Christ

John 15:1-11 (New American Standard Bible)

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He **prunes** it so that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> **Remain in Me**, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must **remain in the vine**, so neither can you unless **you remain in Me**. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who **remains in Me**, and I in him bears much fruit, for **apart from Me you can do nothing**. <sup>6</sup> If anyone **does not remain in Me**, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If **you remain in Me**, and **My words remain in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. <sup>9</sup> Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; **remain in My love**. <sup>10</sup> 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**. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

### Introduction

Last Sunday, I spoke about what it means to be without Christ. Without Christ, we are nothing. Without Christ, we can do nothing. Without Christ, we would not even exist. We owe Him life. We owe Him every blessing in life. He is the source of our every blessing.

Without Him, no one can come to the Father. Without Him, God’s wrath would remain on us due to our sins no matter how good morally we are. Do you accept Christ’s claim that He was with God in the beginning? Do you also believe in your heart that all things including yourself came into existence through Him, by Him, and for Him? Do you confess that Christ is the Only Way for our salvation? Make up your mind about Christ and His claims.

This morning, we will consider the opposite side of without Christ. That is, ‘within Christ,’ or in Christ. Christ commands us to remain in Him. *What’s that mean to remain in Christ?* Let’s go to Jesus to find out.

### Content

#### The Necessity of Remaining in Christ (for survival, nutrition, and fruition)

To help us understand our relationship with Him, Jesus uses a metaphor. He says, *I am the vine, and you are the branches* (John 15:1, 5). And God the Father is the vinedresser.

The key word in today’s text is ‘to remain.’ It appears ten times in eleven verses. So, almost in every single verse, Jesus reminds us of our necessity to remain in Him.

Imagine branches that are detached from the vine. Cut off from their life source, they have no chance of survival. No nutrition. No life. Dead. As the vine means everything to the branches, so does Christ to us. Apart from Him, we are cut off from the life source. No chance of survival. No nutrition. No life. No fruit. We need Christ for life, nutrition, and fruition. We belong to Him and are inseparable from Him. He sustains us. He nourishes us and helps us to bear fruit in our lives.

In His metaphor, Jesus points out **three different types of branches**. Let's check them out ourselves. I am going to read to you the whole passage one more time. You can follow along in your bulletin and see what verses I skip. In those verses you will find a clue to identify them.

*"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> **Remain in Me**, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must **remain in the vine**, so neither can you unless **you remain in Me**. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who **remains in Me**, and I in him bears much fruit, for **apart from Me you can do nothing**. <sup>7</sup> If **you remain in Me**, and **My words remain in you**, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. <sup>9</sup> Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; **remain in My love**. <sup>10</sup> 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**. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*

Have you found which verses I skipped? Verses 2 and 6. Have you identified three branches? Here's the first one (the branch that doesn't stay with the vine) found in verse 6: *If **anyone does not remain in Me**, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

The second (the branch in the vine with no fruit) and the third (the branch that bears fruit) are found in verse 2: ***Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit**, He takes away; and **every branch that bears fruit**, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.*

Of course, Jesus is talking about **three different types of people**.

First, the branches that do not remain in the vine—they refer to those who reject Christ and remain outside salvation. *<sup>6</sup> If **anyone does not remain in Me**, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them **into the fire, and they are burned**.* This refers to those who choose not to believe in Jesus. Jesus is not shy about telling us what will happen to those who reject Him as Savior. Their life will be dry, scorched, fruitless. Their end is to be thrown into the fire. No true believer in Christ falls into this category.

Next, the branches that are still hanging to the vine but with no fruit. *<sup>2</sup> Every **branch in Me that does not bear fruit**, He takes away;* This verse refers to those who start with faith

in Jesus and still hang in the Body of Christ yet bear no fruit. It refers to those who confess they are in Christ yet bear no fruit of the Holy Spirit. They may worship the Lord with lips, but their lifestyles betray their confession. E.g., Unforgiveness.

As the vinedresser takes away the branch with no fruit, so will the Heavenly Father take away those who are not bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Have you noticed that the first two branches share the same fate: *dried up, thrown away into the fire and burned*? So will those who reject Christ and the believers in name only. E.g., I take care of 30+ plants in my house. Big and small. They are doing well with weekly watering and occasional pruning. Whenever I see the dead leaves or stems, I cut them off from the plant with no qualms about throwing them away, because they are dead.

Ask yourself: is my life bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit as God expects from me? Such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)? May we never be rejected by God due to no fruit in our lives.

That leads us to the third type of branches.

Finally, the branches that bear fruit. *And every branch that bears fruit, He **prunes** it so that it may bear **more fruit*** (John 15:3). This refers to those Christians who bear fruit through their obedience to God's Word. They bear fruit through Christ's power, not their own. God also helps them to bear more fruit through 'divine pruning.' Let's check it out a little more on

### **Divine Pruning**

**He disciplines every child of His.** God doesn't use shears to prune us. Rather, He uses our life experiences, both good and bad, to shape us into the image of Christ. This divine pruning is called sanctification. It is a lifelong process. God begins His good work on you from the first day of following Christ. He doesn't stop it until the last day of your life on earth. *Why does He do that*, you may ask. Because He is committed to bringing you to His presence in Heaven. He is dead serious about making you holy as He is holy. To accomplish His goal, He will not stop working on you until Christ's image is fully formed in you; until you are fully transformed into Christ's image (2 Corinthians 3:18). He intends, devises, and executes a customized plan for you to bring you closer to Him.

Wake up from the naïve thought that there will be no refining work of God in your life. When you signed up for being a Christian, you might have missed the fine print in the covenant that says, *'sanctification is included and will be thoroughly executed by your God in truth and love.'* Remember: sanctification is done through three ways: *training, discipline, and hardships*. You may cry out, or even complain to God, how hard your life has been or still is. God responds, <sup>2</sup>*Consider it all joy, when you encounter various trials,*<sup>3</sup> *knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance* (James 1:2-3). God never advocates suffering or pain for its sake. No, rather, He desires the outcome of it. *Your endurance and maturity.*

Remember: He makes all things (good and bad) beautiful in due time (Romans 8:28). For our own good. I pray that all of us see God's providential will in hardships. I really do.

Consider Paul for example. He went through numerous dangers, life-threatening situations, stoned once, whipped many a time, imprisoned, hunger and thirst, nakedness, sleepless nights and so forth. Keep in mind that God allowed Paul to go through all of that. In the end, Paul came out much stronger than he would have ever imagined. To the point where he says, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13).

### **Remain in Christ Means to Keep His Words**

There is a crisis among Christians in America today. *They don't read the Bible.* Too many believers are illiterate and ignorant of God's Word. Many worship, pray, believe, think, and walk without the Word of God. Listen to what Jesus says. <sup>7</sup> ***If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ... "remain in My love."*** <sup>10</sup> ***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.*** You want to remain in His love, right? Jesus says, keep My commandments. You also want to keep His commandments, right? Jesus says, you must know them first. How would you know His commandments unless you open the Bible? How can you remain in His words unless you get into the Bible first?

Staying ignorant of God's Word is a great disservice to yourself, but a great service to your enemy. The devil loves it and does everything to keep you away from God's Word. Why? It is the source of your eternal life. If you remain ignorant of the Bible, there will be a rude awakening one day that bears an eternal consequence on you. Ask yourself. *How much time do I spend in God's Word every day?* Let me tell you this. Listening to Sunday sermons helps you a little bit, but not much. It is like eating one meal for the entire week. Your spirit will remain famished. You must get spiritual nourishment from the Word of God yourself daily.

Here's what you can do. Have a goal of spending 15 minutes daily. That's a good start. Don't fall into the devil's lie that God's Word is too difficult to understand. Dive right into it. Ask God to help you understand His Word. He will help you. Will you understand everything in God's Word right away? Of course, not. Will you fall asleep at times? Definitely. However, let them not stop you from getting into God's Word. Remember: to remain in Christ means to remain in God's Word. To remain in God's Word means to keep His commandments. You cannot keep His commandments unless you know what they are by getting into the Bible first.

### **Conclusion**

Remain in Christ and bear fruit of the Spirit. Going through tough times? Consider it divine pruning. God wants you to bear more fruit. You will come out strong. You are being transformed into His image. Commit everything into God's hands and trust in Him. Amen.