

## One in Christ Mission

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### John 15

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.

### The World's Hatred

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will

testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

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John chapter 15, which is our main passage of Scripture today, is said to be the summation of the meaning of life. What does it all mean? Why are we here on this earth? What is my purpose in life? John 15 tells us. Another chapter in God's Word that spells out the meaning of life for us is in Romans chapter 8. Between those two chapters IS the whole meaning of life for us, for why God created us and put us on this earth, and what is His plan for our future. That is, to be One in Christ, for all of eternity.

One in Christ Mission is the name for our church. That is what we are all called to. To be one in Christ. We are not called to be Prebyterians, or Catholics, or Pentecostals, or Methodists, or Episcopalians, or any other church denomination. We are called to be one in Christ. I am not speaking against church denominations, though their doctrines range from subtle differences, to rather significant differences that can mean possibly leading a large group of people into hell, most especially those doctrines that speak of any other way towards our salvation and way to eternal life other than through Jesus Christ. We are called by God to be one in Christ. I'm not saying that we alone have the perfect name for our church. But, we are called by God to be one in Christ. That is what He has purposed for us not only in our lifetime on this earth, but for all of eternity; to be one in Christ. We didn't just come up with the name of our ministry, our church if you will, (and by our church I mean OUR church, and by OUR church I mean HIS church), we didn't come up with the name One in Christ Mission because it sounded catchy or it was what came across as super spiritual or religious. It is what we are being called by God to be. That is, God Almighty, Creator of all things, the God who was and is and is to come, the God who has no beginning and no end, the God who searched in all realms for someone like Him and, He found that He alone IS (God). "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me". (**Isaiah 46:9**) As He told Moses to tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, "say I AM sent you for I AM that I AM." He is GOD! There is none who compare to Him for He created everything, all beings and all people, places and things. That is THE God who has created us for His own pleasure (**Philippians 2:13**), His own purpose (**Ephesians 2:10**), and His own glory (**Isaiah 43:7**). His pleasure. His purpose. His glory. He has created us and tells us in His Word that we are created for His pleasure, His purpose, and His glory to be one in Christ Jesus for all of eternity! **Ephesians 1:11-12** says, "In Him [being Jesus] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the **purpose** of Him [being God] who works all things according to the counsel of **His will**, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His **glory**." We are purposed to be one in Christ. How?

Just as John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, explained, "as many as receive[d] Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." When we believe on Jesus, who is the Son of God, who was God Himself manifested in the flesh, by being born of the virgin Mary, through the Holy Spirit, who caused her to be with the child, and then Jesus, after He had grown up and had been in ministry several years where "The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (**Matthew 11:5**), He then died on a cross to pay the penalty of death for us for sinning against God. Jesus paid the full price for our sins against God. **Romans 6:23** says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Jesus was and is God's answer for us, and we are to believe on Jesus for coming to this earth to save us from our sins against God that we can have eternal life IN Christ. To be one in Christ. Before dying on the cross, Jesus prayed to God the Father in heaven, "I do not pray for these alone [being His disciples], but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:20-23) Through Jesus, the Savior of the world, God is building His eternal kingdom. There will be no Baptists or Pentecostals in His eternal kingdom. Just those who are IN Christ Jesus. Those who are called into fellowship with Jesus.

John 15 starts off with Jesus saying that He is the vine and we are the branches. The ground then, with the source of all nutrients, the source to which sustains the vine and the branches, could be said to be God Himself and Jesus is of God. We know from Scripture that Jesus is a person of the godhead which is comprised of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are one (**1 John 5:7**). A point to be made then in this analogy is that WE are not of the Godhead. We were created by God but we are not and will never be God, that is captial God. There is but one God who IS, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, in this analogy God is said to be the vinedresser and Jesus is the vine. Just as with all Biblical analogies, they are meant to explain a point but they can't be over-analyzed to make it say what it isn't saying. Meaning, in the analogy of the vine and the branches, we're told that our source is Jesus, the vine, and that we are the branches, and that God is the vindresser. God then, is the one who prunes us so that we will bear more fruit. Jesus was always with God from the beginning (that has no starting point), and we were created by God, as we are the branches that comes forth from the vine of Christ, or to say that we are grafted onto the vine as we believe on Christ. It isn't then a perfect analogy if we try to figure out who is the dirt, the worms that aerate the dirt and who is the minerals that feeds the vine other than to say that we were always purposed in Christ before we

were even born. So the point is that we were purposed to be one in Christ, not to be our own vine (and be our own god), and not that we meld back into Christ-consciousness which is its own religion which is not Christianity. There is only one way unto the Father and for eternal life and there is only one truth that makes us reconciled unto God and that is through Jesus. When we believe in Jesus He grafts us onto Himself, we become one in Him and that is done through being born again as Jesus described it, being born of the Spirit of God, by believing on Jesus and receiving Him as our source of salvation. But that is just the beginning! When we are obedient, repentant, looking to God for salvation through Jesus, He gives of His Holy Spirit to those who will obey Him. (**Acts 5:32**) That call to believe in Jesus is in believing that He is saving us to abide in Him for all of eternity. Therefore He calls us to repent of our sins and to follow Christ. We stop following the desires of our sinful lusts and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and we can then have fellowship with the Father and Jesus (1 John 1:3) and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). We should then recognize that Jesus is our all in all because He is our all in all. He is our Creator, our Sustainer, our Help, our Protector, our Shepherd to lead us, and our Savior and Lord.

When we abide in Jesus we bear much fruit (for His kingdom). When we abide in Jesus God hears our prayers and gives us what we ask for. When we abide in Jesus we are abiding in His love. When we abide in Jesus we then have love for one another. When we abide in Jesus we keep His commandments. When we abide in Jesus, then He will call us His friends. A friend of Jesus. A friend of God! To be called a friend of God is what we are called to. To abide in Jesus, keep His commandments, love one another, bearing fruit for His kingdom. To simplify our mission, it is to share the love and gospel of Jesus Christ. That IS abiding in Jesus. Sharing Jesus so that others will want to be grafted onto the vine to be one in Christ with us.

So how does one abide in Jesus? Verse 26 of John 15 gives the answer. "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." Jesus said that He would give them the Holy Spirit that would guide them into all truth. (**John 16:13**) Jesus also called the Holy Spirit "The Comforter" that would teach you all things. (**John 14:26**) **Romans 8:14** says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." The Holy Spirit works in us His Righteousness, His Goodness, His Love. The love of Jesus extends to all who will believe but even to all who are perishing. As Jesus said, we are supposed to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." Does that mean we should just set ourselves up to be persecuted? Even Jesus knew when to get out when He needed to just leave. We are not called to be unwise and just let people persecute

us but we will suffer persecution. There is a difference. The Holy Spirit will guide us as we put our trust in Him. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." We will suffer grief and sorrow as long as we are on this earth. If Jesus had to suffer in this wretched world then why would we think that we shouldn't. But, as we abide in Christ, spending time studying His Word, praying to God, and fellowshiping with Jesus, we can find hope when we're hopeless, peace when the rest of the world has gone crazy, and joy in the midst of suffering and pain for our joy and peace comes from the Father, in knowing that He will one day right the wrong, one day He will bring judgment to all things, and one day the King will say to you, "'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'" Yes, we are all called to be one in Christ, to abide in Him, to share the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ for His glory, His pleasure, and His purpose and for His eternal kingdom!