



## Exhortation: Abiding in the Vine John 15:1-11

### Jesus Is the Vine—Followers Are Branches

**15** “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 continues to bear fruit, He [*repeatedly*] prunes, so that it will bear more fruit [*even richer and finer fruit*]. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have given you [*the teachings which I have discussed with you*]. <sup>4</sup> Remain in Me, and I [*will remain*] in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself without remaining in the vine, neither can you [*bear fruit, producing evidence of your faith*] 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 [*otherwise*] apart from Me [*that is, cut off from vital union with Me*] you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown out like a [*broken off*] branch, and withers *and* dies; and they gather such branches and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in Me and My words remain in you [*that is, if we are vitally united and My message lives in your heart*], ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified *and* honored by this, when you bear much fruit, and prove yourselves to be My [*true*] disciples. <sup>9</sup> I have loved you just as the Father has loved Me; remain in My love [*and do not doubt My love for you*]. <sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments *and* obey My teaching, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy may be made full and complete and overflowing.

### I. WHAT IS TRUTH?

- A. **Objective Truth:** Is confirmed by science & universally accepted.
- B. **Subjective Truth:** Is not confirmed by science & depends on one’s opinion or belief & may be true or false.
- C. **Relative Truth:** Is the idea that views are relative to differences in perception and consideration...  
**Truth** relativism is the doctrine that there are no absolute **truths**, i.e. that **truth** is always **relative** to some particular frame of reference, such as a language or a culture (cultural relativism)
- D. **Absolute Truth:** Is something that is true, **always**, and **in all places**. It is something that is always true **no matter what the circumstances**. It is a fact that **cannot be changed**. For example: there are no round squares.

### II. J. HUDSON TAYLOR’S REVELATION

- A. **Breakthrough:** “He was a joyous man now, a bright, happy Christian. He had been a toiling, burdened one before, with latterly not much rest of soul. It was resting in Jesus now, and letting Him do the work-which makes all the difference!” Thus, spoke a fellow missionary of Hudson Taylor. The pioneer missionary in the interior of China who had come to the full realization of the savior as the ever-present, indwelling One, testified: “*My soul is so happy in the Lord! And as I think of the blessing He gave me on the happy day...I know not how sufficiently to thank and praise Him. Truly Jesus is the great need of our souls. And He is the great gift of our Father’s love-who gave Himself for us and makes us one with Him in resurrection life and power.*”

#### B. Background

- As a lad Hudson Taylor had come to know the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior.
- In his youth he had been called to the mission field of China.
- For fifteen years he had served earnestly and effectively in that land.
- Hudson Taylor hit his deepest despair in his late thirties...more responsibilities and greater need of special grace to fill it...feeling distance from Christ and inability to imitate Him...buffeted by various temptations...self-condemnation” evil heart “...he loved the Lord and His work...desire to serve Him only in all things...often tempted to think that one so full of sin cannot be a child of

God at all...in his words “ I try to throw it back and rejoice all the more in the preciousness of Jesus.”

- The way to heart satisfaction and rest of soul came via letter from fellow missionary, John McCarthy. The Lord used this letter to lead Mr. Taylor “into the realization of His unfathomable fullness.”

**C. Difficulty:** Hudson Taylor:” As to work, mine has never been so plentiful, so responsible, or so difficult; but the weight and strain are all gone...I long to tell you a little of what the Lord has done for my soul...for there is nothing new or strange or wonderful and yet, all is new! In a word “ Whereas once I was blind, now I see...**When my agony of soul was at its height**, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus as I had never known it before. McCarthy, who had been exercised by the same sense of failure, but saw the light before I did, wrote (I quote from memory): ‘But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One

**D. Abiding in the Vine:** “As I read, I saw it all! ‘If we believe not, He abideth faithful.’ I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed!) that He had said, ‘I will never leave you.’ ‘Ah, there is rest!’ I thought. ‘I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I’ll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me-never to leave me, never to fail me?’ And, dearie, He never will! “But this was not all He showed me, nor one half. As I thought of the Vine and the Branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured into my soul! How great seemed my mistake in having wished to get the sap, the fullness out of Him. I saw not only that Jesus would never leave me, but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. **The vine now I see, is not the root merely, but all—root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit: and Jesus is not only that: He is soil, and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed.** Oh, the joy of seeing this truth! I do pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ...

“The sweetest part, if one may speak of one part being sweeter than another, is **the rest which full identification with Christ brings.** I am no longer anxious about anything, as I realize this; for He, I know is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me; for in the easiest positions He must give me His grace, and in the most difficult His grace is sufficient.

#### **E. Hudson Taylor’s Revelation**

- The Love, Supremacy and “All in All” of Yeshua Messiah

#### **F. The Believers Benefit**

- All of God’s children are being moved towards this great revelation.
- The how of spiritual maturity is problematic for most of us.
- Why: “Time and stress will reveal your functional source of life.” Larry Lozer
- Self-sufficiency or Christ-sufficiency...that is always the question...Daily!

### **III. THE FATHER’S PURPOSE**

#### **A. Father’s Purpose: Deeper Work in the Soul**

Vs. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that continues to bear fruit, He [*Repeatedly*] prunes, so that it will bear more fruit [*even richer and finer fruit*].

Cf. Heb.12:11-For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems sad and painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness [right standing with God and a lifestyle and attitude that seeks conformity to God’s will and purpose].

**B. Definition of the Flesh:** The flesh(self-life) is the condition (mind-set, attitude, strategy of living), Where my focus is primarily on myself (even if it is “good looking” self, “well-adjusted” self, or “socially accepted” self). Where I am living out of my own resources (such as heritage, education, I.Q., personality, sense of humor, looks, talents, abilities, etc.).

1. In order to
    - 1) Cope and deal with life
    - 2) Solve problems
    - 3) Meet my needs
    - 4) Become a success
  2. “All that I am apart from Christ as I function in self-sufficiency, with or without God’s help.”  
Lee LeFebre
  3. “All that you do in seeking to have, and to do, and to be, apart from what Christ is.” Major Ian Thomas
  4. “Man trying to meet his needs his way.” Tom Grady
- Proverbs 16:2 AMP-All the ways of a man are clean and innocent in his own eyes [and he may see nothing wrong with his actions], But the Lord weighs and examines the motives and intents [of the heart and knows the truth]. Cf. Jeremiah 17:9
- C. Quote:** “People fall in private long before they fall in public. The tree falls with a great crash, but the secret decay which accounts for it, is often not discovered until it is down on the ground.” J.C. Ryle

#### IV. PERSONAL THOUGHTS/EXPERIENCE

##### A. Reflections

- I, at various times approach the exhortation “to abide in Christ” as if its optional instead of supremely beneficial.
- Abiding for the child of God is an absolute necessity, an imperative for Kingdom growth.

##### B. My/Our Ministry Experience: As Martina and I have grown in this *abide in Christ* principle, we’ve seen many doors of ministry opportunity open to us.

1. Caveat: I state the above not to boast (if you were to see how I approach some of these opportunities you’d understand). Instead I state this because God can use anybody who desires to step up to the challenge. And Martina and I both have full time jobs. Please keep us in your prayers!

##### C. Circumstances that Led to my Flesh Run:

- First incident: Falsely accused by a customer in attempt to slander my reputation with my company.
- Second incident: Wipe out on an icy and powder snow-covered landing at a customer’s home after completing estimate.
  - Completely severed a tendon attaching a major muscle-psoas-to femur bone right hip.
  - Surgery to repair damage has never been performed in the USA or abroad, according to Mayo clinic trained surgeon, “It would be a very high risk surgery with no way to guaranty success ratio.”
- Third incident: As if I wasn’t depressed enough, my brother Tyrone died of pneumonia.

##### D. My Flesh Run

- I checked out and headed for the wilderness and began patterns of isolation and self-pity.
- Began to live out of my soul as a resource...separated myself from the Father...tuned God out and tuned myself in.
- Negative tormenting thoughts, fear driven agendas and absolutely no prayer life, sat in front of the T.V. for hours. Most of the time it was watching me.
- My descent was progressing & I was beginning “to fall in private.”
- Weeping, mourning and lamenting
- Peder Olsen: Repent, hit delete, figure out the “Big Rocks” (priorities), and do them.

##### E. Truth Encounter

- “Truth is the most valuable thing in the world, so valuable, that often it is covered by a bodyguard of lies” Winston Churchill
- “We protect the truth so much sometimes because where it takes us, we don’t really like where it leads” Ravi Zacharias

## F. Repentance

Gal.6:9.10AMP-Let us not grow weary or become discouraged in doing good for at the proper time we will reap if we do not give in. Vs.10-So then while we [as individual believers] have the opportunity, let us do good to all people[not only being helpful, but also doing that which promotes their spiritual well-being] and especially [be a blessing] to those of the household of faith (born again believers).

**G. Reflection:** What comes to mind for me is how often in my walk with Father, abiding is preceded by conviction and repentance.

- Abiding is not a me-centric activity
- Abiding is a Christ-centric activity which allows me unhindered access to all of God's blessings.  
Cf. Gal.2:20 Rom 5:10 Ps.81:13,16; Dt.5:29; Jer.7:23

<sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one fully knows *and* accurately understands the Son except the Father; and no one fully knows *and* accurately understands the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son [deliberately] wills to reveal *Him*.

<sup>28</sup> "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavily burdened [by religious rituals that provide no peace], and I will give you rest [refreshing your souls with salvation]. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me [following Me as My disciple], for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST (renewal, blessed quiet) FOR YOUR SOULS. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy [to bear] and My burden is light." Mt.11:27-28