

The Gospel of John 15:12-27

I The Branches Loving One Another to Express the Divine Life in Fruit Bearing

- A. We are not branches of many separate trees; we are all branches of the same tree. So we need to maintain a good fellowship with all the other branches as well as with the tree. This is why in this chapter the Lord also tells us to love one another (vv.12, 17). If we do not love one another, it means that our fellowship with the vine tree has been cut off. Therefore, there is no way for us to bear fruit. In order to bear fruit we must love one another.
- B. The Greek word for go forth means leave here to go there; hence, it is rendered go forth. It is the same Greek word as that for "go" in 14:4 and 16:5. The fruit borne by going forth in this way does not denote the virtues of the fruit-bearer's character, such as the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the believer's living, mentioned in Gal. 5:22-23, but it denotes the believers produced by the fruit-bearer. This corresponds to the subject of this section, 12:20—17:26, which is Christ's multiplication. The virtues we possess through our abiding in the Lord cannot be counted as Christ's multiplication. Only the believers that we produce in the Lord are the tangible multiplication of Christ. The Father's house in ch.14, the true vine in this chapter, and the man-child in ch.16 are all related to the multiplication of Christ.
- C. After we go forth to produce believers in the Lord, we need to care for them. The best way is to set up meetings in their homes to cover and protect them that they may be cared for by being nourished and taught, and may become the remaining fruit, living in the branches of the true vine, that is, the Body of Christ, to be Christ's increase.
- D. To ask in the Lord's name requires us to abide in the Lord and allow Him and His words to abide in us that we may actually be One with Him. Then when we ask, He asks in our asking. This kind of asking is related to fruit-bearing and will surely be answered by the Father.
- E. To love one another is to love one another in the Lord's life, the divine life, in the Lord's love, and in His commission of fruit-bearing. Life is the source, love is the condition, and fruit-bearing is the goal. If we all live by the Lord's life as the source, in the Lord's love as the condition, and for fruit-bearing as the goal, we surely will love one another. Having different sources of life, different conditions, or different goals will separate us and prevent us from loving one another.

II The Vine and the Branches, Separated from the World, Being Hated and Persecuted by the Religious World

- A. Religion, as a part of Satan's world system, hates the branches of the divine organism for the expression of the Triune God (15:18). Many religious people would not consider religion as a part of Satan's worldly system. But, in the eyes of God, religion is a department of Satan's world. We must be separated from the world because it is against the assembly. The world, as a satanic system, is against the Body of Christ. The world hates the Body, it hates the branches, and it hates the assembly. (Gal.1:4, 6:14-15)
- B. The assembly is the Body, an organism of the Triune God, but the world is a system of Satan. Satan's system always opposes and persecutes the organism of the Triune God. We must realize deeply that the assembly, the branches, the Body, is the organism of the Triune God. The Triune God is living within and expressing Himself through this organism. But Satan, the enemy of God, has organized a system known as the cosmos. This cosmic world is an organization systematized by the enemy of God. (1John2:15) The purpose behind the enemy's cosmic system is to oppose the assembly as the organism of the Triune God, the Body of Christ. Therefore, we must have nothing to do with this world. We are out of the world, having been separated unto the organism of the Triune God.
- C. As branches who have been chosen out of the world, we should have nothing to do with the satanic system of religion (v.19). However, among almost all Christians there is a mixture. By the Lord's mercy, we want to stand apart from the system of any religion and stand with the assembly in a pure way, not having any mixture at all. The system of any religion is originated by Satan to frustrate and damage the proper assembly life. For the assembly to be the organism for the expression of the Triune God, we have to be separated from any kind of religion.
- D. The Lord told His disciples that if they were willing to follow Him in the way of life, they must be ready to suffer persecution (15:20-25). If we are willing to experience the Triune God as our life, to be mingled with the Triune God, and to be the mutual abode with the Triune God, we must be prepared to suffer persecution from religion. The persecution of the disciples was not to come from the so-called secular world, but from the religions that worshipped God and seemingly loved Him. The Lord was telling His disciples that because of Him the religious people would persecute and even kill them.
- E. The Comforter comes-from with the Father. The Spirit of reality, who is sent by the Son from the Father, comes not only from the Father but also with the Father. The Father is the source. When this Spirit comes from the source, He does not leave the source but comes with the source. This Spirit, sent by the Son and coming with the Father, testifies concerning the Son. Therefore, His testimony concerning the Son is a matter of the Triune God. We have seen that the disciples, as branches of the vine, are the Body of Christ, the organism for the life and expression of the Triune God, and that the world, as a cosmic system, is the organized system of Satan. In the eyes of the Lord, the religious system as part of Satan's system, is the world that will hate the disciples.
- F. In verse 26 the Lord said that He would send to the disciples the Spirit of reality. But in 14:26 the Lord said that the Father would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, in the Son's name. John has two different ways of speaking about the same thing. First, in 14:26, he says that the Father will send the Spirit; now in 15:26, he says that the Lord Himself will send the Spirit. Then who sent the Spirit—the Father or the Son? We must say that the Spirit was sent by both the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son are one. The Father's sending is the Son's sending, and the Son's sending is the Father's sending. The two are one.
- G. Regardless of who it is who sends the Spirit, the Spirit is always sent with the Father and in the name of the Son. Once again we see the Triune God. When the Spirit comes, He comes with the Father in the Son's name. So all three of the Godhead are here. This Spirit of reality testifies concerning the Son as the vine. It testifies in front of the persecuting religion. Furthermore, the Spirit testifies to the branches and through the branches to the world. Religion may persecute, but the Spirit of reality testifies that the Son is the vine.