

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

THE
BRANCHES

OF

THE VINE

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THE BRANCHES OF THE VINE

In the Gospel of John 15:12-17 we see that the branches should love one another to express the divine life in fruit-bearing. These verses reveal that fruit-bearing has very much to do with our loving one another. We must keep a right relationship with one another in life, that is, in love by life. We must keep our relationship in love and love one another by the life that is in us. This life is the Lord Himself. Loving one another is the church life, the Body life. The Body life is a life of love and a life in love. We should not love one another with a human love but in the divine life and with the divine love.

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 will be very difficult to bear fruit. 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.

The life within all of us is one life. The life in you is exactly the same as the life in me. This resembles the circulation of the blood in our physical body. The blood in our body circulates through every member of our body. In like manner, the inner life of all the branches is one. This life should continually circulate through all the branches. Then all the branches will be so living and filled with the riches of life in order to bear fruit.

THE BRANCHES BEING ONE

Although the branches are many, they are one. They are one with the vine and with one another. All the branches together with the vine are one entity, one organism.

THE BRANCHES BEING IN AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VINE

The branches are in an intimate relationship with the vine ([vv. 13-15](#)). The branches are not the Lord's slaves; they are His friends. Because they are the Lord's friends, the branches can

know the Father's desire that He be expressed in a corporate Body.

THE BRANCHES BEING CHOSEN AND APPOINTED TO BEAR REMAINING FRUIT

The branches have been chosen and appointed to bear remaining fruit. In [verse 16](#) the Lord said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I appointed you that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you." The King James Version uses the word ordained instead of appointed. I like the term ordained. We all have been ordained. To be ordained means to be appointed. Ordained is an old-fashioned word for the modern word appointed. All of the sisters, including the younger sisters, must realize that they have been ordained. Do you know that we all have been ordained? We have been ordained to bear fruit. Do not say that you are too young for this. Regardless of how young you may be, you have been chosen and ordained to bear remaining fruit.

In [John 15](#) there are four ways of referring to the fruit: bearing fruit ([v. 2](#)), much fruit ([v. 8](#)), more fruit ([v. 2](#)), and remaining fruit ([v. 16](#)). How

long the fruit remains depends on how much life we impart into it. It all depends upon the amount of life we impart into the new converts. This determines how long they will remain. Often in bringing people to the Lord we impart into them only a small amount of life. Therefore, they scarcely remain. It is difficult for them to remain for a longer time.

The branches have been chosen to bear remaining fruit through praying in the Son's name. When we pray for fruit-bearing, we must pray in the Son's name. To ask in the Lord's name requires us to abide in the Lord and to let Him and His words abide in us that we may actually be one with Him. Then our asking will be His asking. This kind of asking is related to the fruit-bearing and surely will be answered by the Father. As we pray in this way, we must claim that we are one with the Son. We should not beg but rather claim that we are one with Him. Whatever the Son is and has is ours, and we are in His name. Pray in this way.

We should not only pray in the Son's name but also be one with the Son, live by Him, and let Him live in us. This matter is very crucial. Our prayer depends upon our living. We must be one with the Lord in our living. Then we can

be one with Him in our prayer and pray in His name. It is by this kind of living and prayer that we bear fruit that can remain.

THE BRANCHES LOVING ONE ANOTHER

The branches need to love one another in the life of the Son, in the love of the Son, and in the commission of the Son which is to bear the fruit for the glorification of the Father. We need 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 source of the Lord's life, in the condition of the Lord's love, and for the goal of fruit-bearing, we shall surely love one another. Different sources of life, different conditions, or different goals will separate us from loving one another.

Christians are fond of talking about loving one another. If we love one another in our human life, that will bring in death. If we love one another in an emotional way or for our own purpose, that also will result in death. We must love one another in the life of Christ, in the love of Christ, and in the commission of Christ. We must not love one

another in our natural life, with our emotions, or for our own purpose. We must love one another in the divine life, with the divine love, and for the divine purpose of bearing much fruit that the Father may be glorified ([v. 8](#)).

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD

[John 15](#) has three sections. The first section, [verses 1 through 11](#), is about the relationship between the vine tree and the branches; the second, [verses 12 through 17](#), is about the relationship between the branches; and the third, [verses 18 through 27](#), is about the separation between the branches and the world. As branches, we have been separated from the world. We have nothing to do with the world, for we have been fully attached to the vine tree.

In this portion of the Gospel of John, the term world mainly refers to the religious world ([15:18](#); [16:2](#)). In other words, the world in [chapter fifteen](#) is just religion, especially the Jewish religion. To the disciples of the Lord Jesus at that time, the world was the Jewish religion. They had been separated from that Jewish religion unto Christ, the vine tree.

RELIGION, AS A PART OF SATAN'S WORLDLY SYSTEM, HATING THE BRANCHES OF THE DIVINE ORGANISM

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. In [chapter sixteen](#), the Lord told His disciples that the religious people would consider killing the Lord's followers as a kind of service offered to God. Although the religious people served God in name, they served Satan in actuality. Hence, the so-called religion is actually a department of the satanic system, the world.

We must be separated from the world because it is against the church. 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 church. The church 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 church, the branches, the Body, is the organism of the Triune

God. The Triune God is living within and expressing Himself through this organism. Your body is an organism in which your very being lives and through which your being is expressed. Likewise, the Triune God also needs an organism such as the church, the Body of Christ. The Triune God wants to live in and manifest Himself through such an 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. The purpose behind the enemy's cosmic system is to oppose the church 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.

THE BRANCHES BEING CHOSEN OUT OF THE WORLD

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 church 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 church life. For the church to be the organism for the expression of the Triune God, we have to be separated from any kind of religion.

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD, HAVING PERSECUTED THE VINE, PERSECUTING THE BRANCHES

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. 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.

The religious world persecutes the people who follow the Lord in life because they, as the branches of the true vine, are one with the Lord, acting and doing things in the Lord's name. Because the religious people do not know the Father who is the source of the Lord, they hate the Lord's true followers. Because the religious people hate the Father in the Son (15:23), they also hate the Son's followers. This hating and persecuting is their sin in the eyes of God (15:22, 24). By all of this we can see how evil religion is, even the religion formed according to God's Holy Word. Here we see the subtlety of the enemy in religion.

THE COMFORTER TESTIFYING

Verse 26 says, "But when the Comforter comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality Who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me." Religion persecutes, but the Spirit of reality testifies. The Holy Spirit is the reality of all things, and we are to be witnesses of the Spirit of reality.

In this verse 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. 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.

In verse 26 the Lord said that He would send the Comforter from the Father. The Greek preposition translated "from" in this verse is *para*. The sense of this preposition in Greek here is "from with." The Spirit of reality is sent by the Son, not only from the Father but also with the Father. The Comforter comes from the Father and with the Father. The Father is the source. When the Spirit comes from the source, it does not mean that He leaves the source but that the

source comes with Him. This Spirit, sent by the Son coming with the Father, will testify concerning the Son. Therefore, His testimony concerning the Son is a matter of the Triune God.

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. Through the believers as the branches this testimony will go forth throughout the whole world. It is going on today.

RELIGION'S PERSECUTION FORETOLD

In 16:1-4, religion's persecution of the vine and the branches is foretold. Firstly, religion will excommunicate the branches of the organism (the vine) from the organization (the synagogue, v. 2). In verse 2 the Lord said, "An hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think that he is offering service to God." Religion thinks that it is offering service to God by killing the branches of God's organism. As we have seen, in this Gospel religion is revealed as the enemy of life. In the Gospels, Judaism opposed and persecuted the Lord Jesus. In the Acts, Judaism

continued its opposition and persecution toward the Apostles ([Acts 4:1-3](#); [5:17-18, 40](#); [6:11-14](#); [7:57-59](#); [26:9-12](#); [Gal. 1:13](#)). In subsequent history, Catholicism persecuted the Lord's followers. Any kind of organized religion persecutes those who seek and follow the Lord in life. All the religions consider this kind of persecution as a service offered to God. First religion persecutes; then it kills. Religion knows neither the Father, the source, nor the Son, the expression ([John 16:3](#)). As the Lord said, “These things they will do because they have not known the Father nor Me.”

The Lord told His disciples beforehand so that they would not be offended and stumble and so that they would not be perplexed when the persecution came. In a time of persecution the disciples might easily say to themselves, “These religious people worship God. Yet, because we take this very God as our life and abode and make ourselves God’s abode, these religious people threaten to kill us. They not only drive us out of the synagogues but will even kill us. Maybe it is we who are wrong.” The Lord predicted the coming persecution so that the disciples might not think that they were wrong. If this persecution happens to you, do not think that you are

wrong. On the contrary, that persecution proves that you are right. If the religious people do not persecute you, then you may be wrong. If the Roman Catholic Church and the denominations do not persecute you, then you must realize that you are wrong. But if you take the Lord as your life, experience Him as your abode, and make yourself His abode, then you must be prepared to meet the persecution of the religious world.

As a satanic, organized system, the world has persecuted the Body of Christ in three main phases: the phase of the Jewish religion, the phase of the Roman Empire, and the phase of Greek philosophy. These are the three phases in which the world has persecuted the church. In the Gospel of John the Lord spoke several times about the world, by which, in particular, He meant the religious world. If we are truly faithful to follow the Lord in the way of life and in the spirit, taking the Triune God as our abode and making ourselves an abode for the Triune God, the religious world will persecute us. Tell me, who put John Huss to death by burning him at the stake? It was Roman Catholicism. Who imprisoned John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*? It was the Church of England. Who imprisoned Madame Guyon? It was the Roman Catholic

Church. This word of the Lord has been fulfilled throughout the generations. Whenever a person or a group of people has followed the Lord in the way revealed in John 14 and 15, they have been persecuted by the religious world. And the religious world will continue to persecute the people who follow Christ in the way of life.

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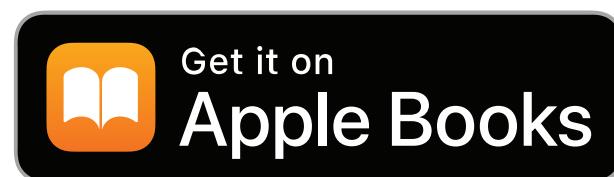
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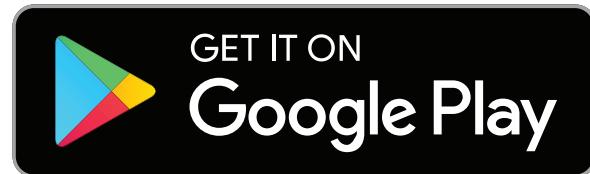
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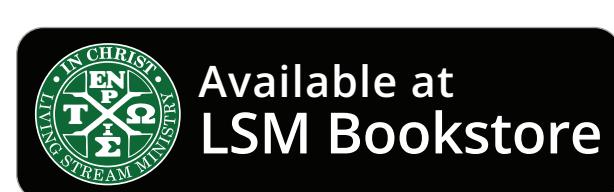
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