

The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 66

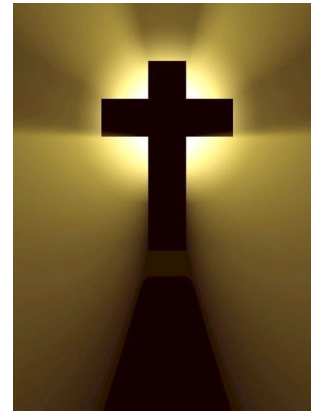
The Vine & the Vinedresser



2012

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If YOU have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have the opportunity to do so right NOW. Simply tell God the Father that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sin of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Then Jesus was buried but He rose again and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. *(Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave us One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*



Lesson

John 15:1-2 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser (Gardener). (2) Every branch (believer) in Me that does not bear fruit (is not living in the filling of the Spirit and the plan of God), He takes away (the Father disciplines); and every branch that bears fruit (follows Christ by obeying His Word and living in His plan for our lives), He prunes it (allows suffering for blessing) so that it may bear more fruit."

God has a unique plan for on your life...a unique calling. Your life in the Vine (Christ) defines your meaning, your purpose and who you really are. At the moment you believed in Jesus, you were saved. You were sanctified...set apart for a purpose on earth. Remember? When we're saved God didn't bring us immediately into heaven. He has a purpose for us as believers...something special to do for Him while on earth. It is in the form of our spiritual gifts, which the Holy Spirit assigned to us at the moment we were saved. Of course we don't know what that gift is immediately, do we? No, we have to sit and take in the Word of God daily and believe it and apply it in our lives. Then after that the Holy Spirit inspires us to do the work He has assigned us to do in our gift. That is when you are really living for Christ, by serving his church...other believers. Remember? When we serve others in our gift, we are serving Christ. He is the Vine.

Okay, you say, I know that...yes, you do and you should because we have been talking about it a lot in our classes. But now we are going to look at it from another angle. Look at those two verses again in **John 15**. They are loaded with information for you to understand what happens in your life and why it happens.

Let's break it down: **JESUS IS THE VINE!!!** HE is where we get ALL of our NOURISHMENT from as His branches, which are believers. This passage isn't about salvation! It's about our lives after salvation in HIM...the VINE!



God the Father is the VINEDRESSER or GARDENER. He does the tending to the vine. He cuts the branches away that are not bearing fruit and HE prunes the ones that are bearing fruit so that they can bear more fruit...abundant fruit!!!

The branches He cuts away are believers who are NOT in His plan and do nothing with the privileges and opportunities He gives us to live in His plan and serve others while on earth.

But then He does something else...He prunes or trims the branches that are producing fruit so that they will produce more fruit. This is when suffering for blessing comes into our lives. It is by going through trials and difficulties, by being pruned, being cut back, redirected, cut off, and humbled, that we find ourselves living the life that God has prepared for us. We will discover that it was this pruning: the frustration, the anxiety, the suffering, the adversity, the sorrow, the disappointment, the trial, the hurt, these were the very means of making us



spiritual...bringing us back to HIM...this pruning will be what God used to do it. Why? Because we become helpless and need HIM and His GRACE to nurture us back and to bring us to keep our eyes on JESUS and do what we were meant to do here...expose JESUS to others!

We owe so much of our spiritual growth and increase in our knowledge of HIM to the suffering through which the Lord allowed us to go. Light suffering which is for the moment works for us to the maximum by producing that eternal weight of GLORY!

Talk to anybody who has really come to know the Lord, who has a mature spiritual life of service and contentment. You know who they are. They are the happy ones...the ones who want to shout out loud about what Jesus has done for them and who aren't afraid to spend a lot of time in His Word and service to Him. They are so grateful and they will tell you that certain things they have come to have that are of great spiritual value have come out of some dark and desperate and terrible experiences in their own lives.



Here's a quote from one:

"Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my 75 years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my experience, has been through affliction and not through happiness." Malcolm Muggeridge

Here's another:

The fiery British Christian teacher Derek Prince was quoted as saying *"Don't trust anybody who doesn't limp."*



In 1962, Victor and Mildred Goertzel published a revealing study of 413 "famous and exceptionally gifted people" called Cradles of Eminence. They spent years attempting to understand what produced such greatness, what common thread might run through all of these outstanding people's lives. Surprisingly, the most outstanding fact was that virtually all of them, 392 had to overcome very difficult obstacles in order to become who they were." [Tim Hansel, Holy Sweat]

There is another unmistakable thing about the Vinedresser: He is totally focused on making sure the vine produces. He is dedicated to the overall health and production of the vine because we need to get the WORD out to the lost and dying world...the good news about JESUS saving work. We also need to reflect HIM to fellow believers who are in or not in the plan of God. We are little Christs walking around this earth because JESUS must be in heaven now. He's only ONE PERSON. We are MILLIONS bringing the good news out now for Him. I hope it's millions!!!

Our Heavenly Father is going about His business of glorifying His Son the Lord Jesus Christ...that is His focus! Christ is the Beloved Son. We receive fantastic and unimaginable blessing because we are IN HIM. Eph 1:3 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ..."*

If something or someone is threatening the production of the Vine, He will do whatever it takes to stop that. Including allowing us to get hurt now so we end up producing more fruit later on! Go through difficulty and affliction now so we come out better for it. We are sons, and our Father is going to discipline us so we produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 2 Cor 4:16-17 *"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (17) for momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison..."*

Now we may right away think that the *"eternal weight of glory"* is reward for all of eternity, and there is something to that. But this is not an even exchange; suffer now, get rewarded later. NO! SOMETHING HAPPENS to us when we go through suffering. Let's look at this passage above in 2 Cor



4:17 from a different angle today by looking at another passage that should blow your mind!!!!

Heb 5:8-10 "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. (9) And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, (10) being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek." Our Lord Jesus Christ was changed in His humanity by suffering, because right here it says He learned things. This change, this learning made Him in his humanity into this beautiful, mature, merciful, faithful, sinless Man who has what it takes to be our permanent High Priest.

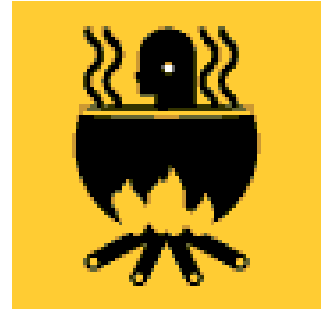
Heb 2:10 "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings."

Heb 2:17 "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation (satisfaction) for the sins of the people. (18) For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted (and suffering)."

SOMETHING HAPPENS to us when we go through suffering in God's plan. And understand, as we go on our journey that Christ went on ahead of us. He was tempted and suffered in every way. Col 1:17-18 "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead (Resurrection), so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."

So we too, as we move along on our journey and we go through a harsh winter season of suffering, and we are pruned realize that as we go on in God's plan, we are being changed, there is a transformation, and there is real spiritual growth because of it. And NOW GOD can USE YOU!!!!

1 Peter 5:10-11 "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. (11) To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen."



He who began a good work in you will complete it to the day of Christ Jesus.

Rom 8:28-30 "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (30) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified (+R given to every believer); and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

When we get to the end of the journey and we see the glorified Christ, we will also see something else that we have been made to be LIKE HIM in His perfect humanity. 1 John 3:2-3 "2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (3) And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

2 Cor 4:16-17 "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day (by the Word of God in our souls). (17) for momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison..."

Remember...SOMETHING HAPPENS to us when we endure suffering in God's plan. So consider the eternal weight of glory not so much as a trophy that we will get but rather think of it as the fullness of the degree to which we are being made into the image and likeness of Christ. Col 3:3-4 "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (4) When Christ, who is our life, is revealed then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Rom 8:16-18 "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also

be glorified with Him. (18) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." And the Bible says that glory for the Christian is none other than becoming like Christ. 2 Cor 3:18 "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." Knowing God the Father the way Jesus does.

IN fact the Bible actually defines eternal life this way: John 17:1-3 "Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, (2) even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.' (3) **This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**"

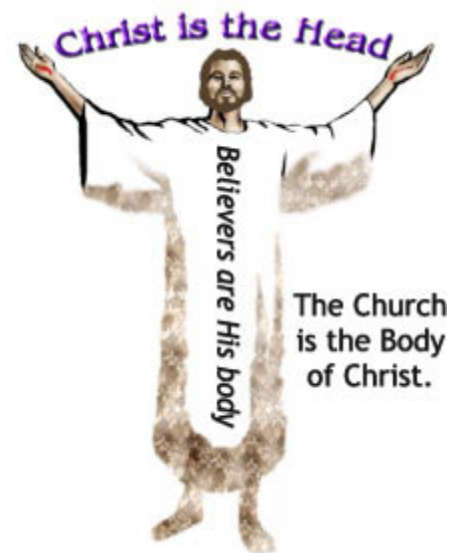
So start to use one principle to test your progress in the plan of God for your life: Am I growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? It may be winter, it may be summer. You may be producing fruit or you may be under the pruning knife of the Vinedresser. Regardless of your circumstances...are you growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the



object of your trials, and blessings, and journeys, and the peculiar and wonderful things that happen along the way. To grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ...THIS is eternal life! This is the point of it all, and this, this grace, this knowledge, will come with you when you kiss your earthly life goodbye and head for heaven. This, this eternal meaning, this eternal weight, this glory, it is ONE THING; the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the reason why we are occupied in a great contest, a great struggle here on earth. There is only one fully (truly, completely and eternally) heroic pursuit in this life and that is to give your life for growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Growth in yourself and growth in others.

There will be great opposition and YOU ALL know it...it is the Angelic Conflict!! 2 Tim 3:12 "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (by the world and the unseen forces of evil)." John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." The church is always under siege to the level it participates in growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you are a warrior for Christ, you are in for the fight of your life. 2 Peter 3:17-18 "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own dedication, (18) but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

The Church is the Body and Christ is the head, and the Church is the fullness of Christ in this world. We are under assault because it is God's vineyard for this great flowering and fruitful adding up, and what is to be coming in with the fullness of the crop in the vineyard, what is the fruit? It is the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!!! It is the Word of God in your souls and pouring out of your branches.



It is impossible for a plant to produce quality of fruit which is wanted without pruning the branches. By proper pruning techniques, we can remove some of the fruit buds that would mature the fruit. By having to mature fewer fruit, the vine can concentrate all available nutrients into those fewer fruit and consequently produce the juiciest of fruit that we want...the Best Fruit.

This reminds us of the fact that when our Father prunes our lives, He is helping to shape our destiny. Our personal sense of destiny is not about us. It is about God. God created us for His pleasure. So we can either use our time to be pre-occupied with our selves and our problems, or we can use our time to prepare for eternity. When we discover our personal destiny (problem solving device # 6), a wonderful thing happens. This discovery makes our life simpler with lots of quality in it. Our personal sense of destiny becomes the foundation we use to evaluate which activities are most important or essential and which are not. And discovering our spiritual gift is a big part of this.

Cling to the Vine, young warriors for Christ!



Close in prayer

Prepared from Pastor John Farley's lesson on November 30, 2011
Lighthouse Bible Church

