

TRUE BRANCHES OF CHRIST

The fifteenth chapter of John portrays Christ as the true vine and individual Christians as the branches. One who obeys the gospel is a branch in Christ. Man-made denominations are not the branches spoken of by John as is made clear in verse five. The disciples who are followers of Christ are the branches under discussion. Each child of God has the responsibility to produce fruit as a branch in the kingdom.

Denominations teach that these “branches” are different “churches” in a futile attempt to justify denominationalism. The context, however, will not allow such an erroneous interpretation. It is individual people under consideration and not different religious groups. Man-made religious bodies are desperate to find New Testament Scripture to back up their existence but they will search in vain. There is only “*one body*” (Eph. 4:4), and one does not mean many!

Only those who obey the gospel (Rom. 1:16) are branches “*in Christ*” (2 Cor. 5:17). One puts on Christ in the act of baptism (Gal. 3:27). A penitent believer who obeys the gospel plan of salvation is “*baptized into Christ*” (Rom. 6:3) and “*raised*” to walk “*in newness of life*” (Rom. 6:4).

One who does not bear fruit is not maturing in Christ. The apostle Paul identifies the fruit that every child of God is to produce as being “*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, [and] “self-control”* (Gal. 5:22-23). The Christian who is bearing fruit for the Master will continue to mature as Peter demonstrates in saying, “*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity*” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). A Christian will also strive to teach others the gospel in planting and watering as the opportunity arises (1 Cor. 3:6).

When the Word of God is proclaimed, the seed of the kingdom is sown (Lk. 8:11). The gospel is still to this very day God’s power to save souls from sin (Rom. 1:16). No one has ever been saved by the wisdom of man (1 Cor. 1:20-25), and this truth strikes a deathblow to all the gimmicks that are employed today by religious shysters to draw a crowd. A true follower of Christ, who is bearing fruit for the Lord, will preach the Word and be content to let God give the increase.

The Word of God has the ability to clean and make pure. The apostle Peter says to brethren, “*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever*” (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

It has already been noted that a person puts on Christ at the point of immersion into Christ (Gal. 3:27). One who is **in** Christ must choose to continue to **abide in** Christ (Jn. 15:4). If one fails to “*walk in the light as he is in the light*” (1 Jn. 1:7) or “*goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ*” (2 Jn. 9), he does not “*abide in the vine*” (Jn. 15:4) and **cannot** bear fruit. Many today pretend to be “branches” while refusing to do the Lord’s Will. Jesus notes this truth in saying, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*” (Matt. 7:21-23).

May we submit to the Master’s commands so that we will not hear Him say at the judgment, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say*” (Lk. 6:46)? John 15:6 says, “*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*” This makes it clear that Jesus is speaking of individuals and not “churches.” One is obligated to

remain in the vine. Whatever is required to do he must do or be purged from the vine. This shows that man can apostatize and lose his soul.

Different fruit does not come from the same vine. Religious division is contrary to Jesus’ prayer (Jn. 17:20-21). All “branches” in Christ are to produce the same fruit. In other words, each Christian is to “*speak the same thing...that there be no divisions...be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (1 Cor. 1:10).

One cannot claim to follow Christ while refusing to obey His commands. A true branch of Christ abides in His Word and enjoys fellowship with the Father and the Son and all others who are content to abide in the teaching of Christ. May we strive to be true branches of Christ!

Marvin L. Weir *from Eastside Edifier*

A Congregation Of The Lord’s Church Is Certain To Grow When...

1. Each member has a deep concern for the lost and their souls.
2. Each member is regular in attendance and engages in worship with enthusiasm.
3. Each member is interested in improving his teaching ability.
4. Each member is interested in faithful Bible classes and being present to study.
5. Each member is dedicated to the work of the church and serving faithfully.
6. Each member is personally involved in the work of teaching the Gospel to others.
7. Each member expresses brotherly love to every other member.

ANNIVERSARY

John and Debra Gragg, 11-16.

BIRTHDAY

Natalie Parish; 11-22.

ILL

Sunday: Millie Robertson (PM).

Tom Tucker is being treated for an eye disorder. Steve Brown, Melissa Cole and Leah Thrasher all have broken bones healing at this time. Barbara James is recovering from her surgery.

Those battling cancer: Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Please remember these in your prayers.

HOME BOUND

Kathleen Camp is in Room 101 at the Royal Terrace Nursing Home in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Barbara James' aunt, Evelyn Marquardt is at the Sweet Life of Rosehill in Shawnee. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Paula Stillwell is vacationing in Hawaii. Joel Nelson was in Las Vegas last week on business. Wilba Hopkins was visiting relatives in Neosho, MO last weekend. Julia Thrasher was in Marietta, OK with her mother last week. Chris Edwards was out of town last week on business.

GUEST SPEAKER

Brother Eugene Jenkins will be our guest speaker this Sunday, and will be giving a presentation of his mission work. We welcome the Jenkins to Olathe!

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 41; Sunday PM, 34; Wednesday PM, 34.

BITS OF WISDOM

- *Life is really simple; we ourselves create the circumstances that complicate it.*
- *Buying what you don't need often ends up in needing what you can't buy.*

Those To Serve

November 16, 2008

BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Cole

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS.....Trent Thrasher
SONG LEADER.....Joel Nelson
OPENING PRAYERChris Edwards
PRESIDE.....Steve Brown
ASSIST.....Jared Nelson
ASSIST.....Dave Parish
CLOSING PRAYER.....Jeff Nemechek

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYERJohn Cody Carter
CLOSING PRAYER.....George Thomas
LORD'S SUPPER.....Steve Brown

WEDNESDAY 19th

SONG LEADER.....Jeff Nemechek
INVITATIONJoel Nelson

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

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