

LIFE BEYOND THE CROSS

Texts: Matthew 16:21-24; John 16:4; John 15

In preparation for the cross, our Lord did something quite remarkable: He prepared His disciples for life beyond the cross and subsequent resurrection.

I. THE MISSION DEFINED

John 15:1-5

A. Connection (verse 1)

Our Lord is telling us that through Him we have direct relationship with our Heavenly Father. Insight into this desire of Christ's heart is given to us in John 17:20-23.

B. Caution (verse 2)

Branches are designed to bear fruit. The Lord is telling us in no uncertain terms that He will deal with fruitless branches and encourage the bearing branches.

C. Clean (verse 3)

We see the inestimable value of the Word of God. John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26, 27.

D. Complete (verses 4, 5)

Our union with Christ is not just the motivation force behind us; He is the source within us! "And ye are complete in him..." (Colossians 2:10). The key phrase is "... without Me ye can do nothing."

II. THE MASTER'S DISCIPLINE

John 15:6-10

A. Castaway (verse 6)

Paul said in I Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The word for "castaway" is translated from the Greek word, "adokimos" which is taken from the root word "dokimos" which is found in Romans 16:10. Here the word is translated "approved." Castaway means "disapproved," but in I Corinthians 9 the term is even more severe. Paul is referring to his observation of the Isthmian or Olympic games and if one is disapproved, he is disqualified.

II Corinthians 5:10; I Corinthians 3:15.

B. Communication (verse 7)

In obedient relationship we are guaranteed answers to prayers. I John 5:14, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."

C. Continuation (verses 8-10)

1. Continue in Fruit Bearing (verse 8)

Gal. 5:22, 23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" I Thessalonians 2:19.

2. Continue in Love (verse 9)

Philippians 1:8, 9. God wants us abounding in His love.

3. Continue in Commandments (verse 10)

I John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

III. THE MARKED DICHOTOMY

John 15:11-27

A. The Disciples' Fellowship

John 15:11-17

1. Joy Desired (verse 11)

John 16:24; I John 1:4; I Peter 1:8

2. Love Unparalleled (verses 12, 13)

I John 3:1

3. Intimacy Initiated (verses 14-17)

It all starts, continues and goes on because Christ has chosen and made something of us. II Corinthians 3:5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

B. The Disciples' Challenge

John 15:18-27

1. The Identification (verses 18-21)

Romans 6:3,4

2. The Reason (verses 22-25)

IV. THE MAGNIFICENT DIRECTOR

John 15:26,27

Christ is speaking of the gift of none other than the Third Person of the Godhead, The blessed Holy Spirit. What a Director in this life!

John 16: 12, 13; John 14:12

Conclusion:

There was only one way to reap the harvest in the Vineyard. It is found in Matthew 21:33-46. In John 12:24 we read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and features a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right from the end of the name.