

Sermon-Based Study Guide

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

John 15.1-17 | January 30, 2022

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1. Introduction to this Study

The mission of Good Shepherd is to “invite all people to grow into a Christ-centered life in God’s family.” And so, after the past two years, with so much that has changed, we are asking the question, how can we stay “on mission”?

In previous weeks, we have reflected on how we were invited to Jesus, that we are now called to invite others to Him, we have asked who the people are in our networks and neighborhoods that we can invite, and even this important question: What are we inviting others *to*? So, this week we explore “the answer” – a Christ-centered life...as Jesus so powerful illustrates in John’s Gospel.

1. Connecting with One Another

As a branch on Christ’s vine, how would you describe the fruit in your life?

What does a Christ-centered life look like?

1. Study the Text
2. Read **John 15.1-17.**

Share what initially catches your “heart’s attention....”

1. **Verses 1-6.**

Have you ever felt far from Christ since becoming a Christian? What circumstances made you feel that way?

Jesus’ instruction to his disciples in this passage revolves around three symbols—the vine, the gardener, and the branches. What is Jesus trying to communicate by calling himself the “true vine”?

What is the significance of calling his disciples “branches”?

Instead of commanding us to bear fruit, why is Jesus’ only command, “Remain in me”? What does it mean to remain in Christ? Or, as Dr. Dale Bruner translates, “make your home with me” ....

The Father’s ministry as the gardener is to “[cut] off every branch...that bears no fruit” (v.2). What do you think that means?

The Father prunes fruitful branches to make them more fruitful. In what ways have you experienced the Father’s “pruning,” and what were the results?

1. **Verses 7-11.**

What spiritual benefits result from remaining in Christ?

1. **Verses 12-17**.

How do **verses 9 and 12** tie together? How is love the essential dynamic of the Christian life? How does your relationship with Jesus change once you start practicing his example of love?

Jesus already told his disciples to love each other (**John 13.34-35**). How does his instruction in **verse 12** raise the standard of our love?

How would you rate yourself on laying down your life for your friends? **(v.13)**

Do you feel more like Jesus’ servant or his friend? What helps develop that friendship?

What is the fruit that will last in **verse 16**?

1. In this teaching of Jesus, he repeats *remain in me, love, and bear fruit*. How are these words related?
2. What are the joys and blessings of living a Christ-centered life? How can it be challenging to keep Christ at the center of your life?
3. Pray
4. For those in need in our community – those with physical needs, emotional needs, and spiritual needs.
5. For the Holy Spirit’s guidance in growing into a Christ-centered life.
6. Lift up those you know whom God is equipping you to invite into His family.
7. Digging Deeper
8. Read **Colossians 3.12-17.** What impacts you the most about these verses? How are you encouraged? How are you challenged?
9. **Read Galatians 5.22-26**. You may know **verses 22 & 23 and** may know them as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Verse 24** is a powerful truth and declaration. How is our sinful nature crucified? I love the beauty and the challenge of **verse 25**. How are you “keeping in step with the (Holy) Spirit”?

1. Engage together:

*“Our Up relationship with Jesus is how we abide in him. As his disciples, we are to model our lives after our Master. We (the branches) must abide in him (the Vine) if we are to produce fruit (John 15). Our efforts are worthless if we do not have the Up in our lives. We will be fruitless without it—there is no other way.”*

Mike Breen, Building A Discipling Culture