

26. John 15:1-17

Getting started

If your personality could be expressed in being a particular type of fruit, what would you be? *[For example, banana = happy but a bit bent, durian = regal but smelly (the durian is rightly called the 'king of fruits')]*

Observations

1. In what ways is Jesus the true vine?
2. What commands of his Father has Jesus obeyed? *[See verse 10.]*
3. Who did Jesus choose? (verse 16) *[Here Jesus is probably just referring to the disciples who were with him in the upper-room. Yet the invitation to ask in his name applies to all followers of Jesus.]*

Interpretation

1. What relationship between faith and the fruit of faith do we see in Jesus' teaching here?
2. How do we bear fruit? And what fruit might Jesus want us to bear?
3. How are Jesus' disciples cleansed by the word Jesus has spoken?
4. Jesus says the way to remain in his love is to obey his commands. What commands? *[See 15:12, but also consider whether, when Jesus mentions 'love', he may have in mind all his teaching, and Scripture's teaching about obedience to God.]*
5. In verse 13, is Jesus saying this to show his love for the disciples, or to encourage his disciples to sacrificial action (or both)?
6. How does this teaching, on 'non-fruit bearing branches' being thrown into the fire and burned, fit with Jesus not losing any of the sheep given to him by his Father? *[See 6:35-40. You may also like to think about how this sits with the teaching about 'falling-away' in Hebrews 6:46.]*
7. What might lead you to think that, in this passage, Jesus is using 'remain in' as a substitute for 'believe in'?

8. How does this passage contribute to John's twin goals of explaining who Jesus is and the nature of life for a believer in Jesus?
9. Why do you think Jesus repeated his command to love? *[See verses 12 and 17.]*

Implications

1. What fruit do you try to produce, drawing on the life giving and cleansing power of Jesus?
2. Do you think of Jesus as a friend, and, if you do, in what ways do you enjoy his friendship?
3. Don Carson defines eternal security as, 'a believer's confidence that he or she is already in right standing with God, and this will issue in ultimate salvation.' The keys to this are the belief that one is currently living a transformed life that has the two essential and related attributes of right standing with God and salvation to eternal life. This definition permits no lasting doubts and no conditionality. How do you feel about your 'eternal security'? How does this passage help you? What other passages help you?

Prayer suggestions

1. Ask to know what to ask in Jesus' name.
2. Ask that Jesus help you to bear good fruit, and thus bring glory to God.
3. Pray for those you know who have fallen away or may be falling away.