

Fact Sheet for **“Abide in Me”**
John 15:1-11

Pastor Bob Singer
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We have been traveling through some weighty passages in the book of Hebrews. As we have come to Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday we will look at two passages better suited for this season.

Palm Sunday was never a biblical holiday. There were actually three biblical holidays in the week Christ died...

Thursday, Passover, the Last Supper

This began the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Sunday, the Feast of First Fruits, Resurrection Sunday (Leviticus 23:9-12; Joshua 5:10-12)

Palm Sunday has gained its importance because of what happened on that day.

1st – *To the very day* it was the fulfillment of a specific prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-26a, 483 years earlier. That prophecy goes on to say that the Messiah would be “cut off” after that day.

2nd – It was the day the Passover lamb was to be chosen that week (Exodus 12:3-6).

3rd – Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 that day (read Matt. 21:4-5). It was very much like the day Solomon became king (1 Kings 1:33-34). This is possibly the reason for what we find in Luke 19:29-31.

4th – Jesus was identified by the people in the street as the Messiah the King. They shouted words from Psalm 118:25-26, some of the same words they sang at the Passover (see John 12:13).

That week, between the first Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday, was filled with great passion on both sides.

Jesus knew that He was coming to Jerusalem to be crucified, and then raised to life on the third day...

Matt. 16:21-23; Mk. 8:31-33; Lk. 9:22

Matt. 17:22-23; Mk. 9:30-32; Lk. 9:43b-45

Matt. 20:17-19; Mk. 10:32-34; Lk. 18:31-34

He knew that He was going to pay the price for our sins (Lk 22:41-44; 1 Jn. 2:2).

The Jewish religious leaders were also passionate. They had been seeking for a way to kill Him for two years, and this week they would succeed (John 5:18; 7:1; Mark 14:1).

On Thursday night following the Passover is a wonderful passage known as the Upper Room Discourse, or Last Discourse of Jesus (John 14-17). These were Jesus’ last words of instruction to His disciples before He was crucified. It is a passage that speaks volumes to us today, just as it did to the eleven disciples in the upper room.

ESV ¹ ¶ **“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.**

Grape vines are what Jesus is referring to. We see vineyards all around us. They are plants we know well.

² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

To truly understand this passage you now have to clearly make a distinction between the illustration Jesus uses and what He intended to teach. If you don’t you are going to get all fouled up. Let’s begin with the illustration. You have to aggressively prune grape vines. Only the branches that grew this year will bear fruit next year. The older ones will grow a lot of leaves but no fruit. So you keep the old center of the vine, prune away the old branches, and keep a couple of the strongest newer ones. You prune away also all the spurs on the newer branches. This is the illustration Jesus uses. Now look carefully at

every word in verse 2 again. Don't make the mistake of connecting every part of the illustration to a spiritual truth or you will end up with questionable theology based on illustration rather than on direct statement (compare Luke 18:1-8 and the parable of the persistent widow). Keep going and see what Jesus' point is.

³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ^{4a} Abide in me, and I in you.

clean - pruned

Abide – This has the grammatical form of a command. It is one we can choose to follow or not.

^{4b} As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

If the branch is cut off from the vine it will not produce fruit.

unless you abide in me

If we choose not to abide in Christ we will not bear fruit.

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Apart from a daily reliance on our Christ we don't bear the fruit God wants from us.

⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

This is what happens with grape vines that you cut off.

Here are some observations. The point Jesus is making is that we should have a continuous close abiding relationship with Him. If we let that relationship grow old and distant we will stop bearing the fruit God wants in our lives. But if we constantly renew our relationship with Christ and seek to daily abide in Him we will bear good fruit in our lives as Christians. If you think about grape vines, every branch will one day get cut off and thrown into the fire. Our task is to constantly be like a branch that abides in Christ and bears fruit. The subject of this illustration is a constant abiding in Christ, not our eternal salvation. Don't push the illustration beyond its intended use.

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

The first application was to the eleven. But there is application for us also.

⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Now Jesus goes on to describe some of what that abiding entails.

⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

These words were some of the last instructions Jesus gave His disciples following Palm Sunday. He urges them to constantly abide in Him, in His love and in His commandments. If they do they will be fruitful as Christians. If they don't they will not be fruitful. We know how, and are encouraged to, abide in Christ through the Scriptures, through fellowship with other believers, through prayer, and through dedication to our Savior. We have all seen those who name the name of Christ, yet have let these things grow cold in their lives. We have seen their fruit dry up and God's favor on them wane.

Jesus' words to the eleven still ring true today... "Abide in Me."