

# John

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the Lord may help me, I will continue this evening upon the subject in the 15th chapter of the Gospel by John, the first and second verses.

The 15th chapter, the Gospel by John, the first and second verses. I am the true vine, and my father is the husband's man.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

I suppose there have been as many arguments and contentions about religion as about anything in the world.

And what is right and what is wrong in religion? What is real and what is unreal? And I can quite understand the perplexities of mind that these matters may cause, because I used to be much perplexed that way myself.

[ 1 : 43 ] I remember in my early days, as a very young man, I so often used to say, in the simplicity of my heart, O God, do show me what to believe, and do help me to believe it.

Do teach me what is true, and give thy truth a place in my soul. For I didn't want to go on, holding to what was false, for being misled in matters of such vital importance to my soul.

Well, how may we know what is right and what is wrong? What to believe and what to reject?

What to cleave to and what to forsake? Well, there are, I believe, these two certain guides to direct us.

There is first the scriptures. God in the scriptures to reveal his wills condescending. The scriptures are alive to guide our feet into the above the truth.

[ 3 : 06 ] Will the scriptures are disregarding his men's own fault if they wander in confusion and find at last that they've entirely mistook the way?

What other guide can there be than the inspired word of truth? But of course, with regard to the scriptures, we need that the same Holy Spirit to inspire the scriptures shall enlighten the understandings of their minds to understand them aright.

But given the scriptures and discernment in our minds, we have a safe and certain guide.

And then, as well as the scriptures, there is the experience of those things that the scripture teaches in our own hearts.

Now, there's nothing so confirming with regard to spiritual things as to experience them, to know the power and effect of them in our souls.

[ 4 : 19 ] That gives us a faith that doesn't stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. That gives us a far better foundation, more solid and sure than arguments and reasonings and the like.

Experience of the truth that the scripture teaches in our hearts will surely guide us right. My subject suggested these two opening remarks this evening because there are in this text certain essential principles in godliness that we need to understand and to experience.

I will just sum up a little what I mentioned this morning to connect the subject. I am the true vine, as is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the true vine in distinction from all that's false. There's nothing in Jesus Christ but what's true.

And everything in Jesus Christ is true. He is the truth itself. The true vine. Or as I said it might be rendered, the vine of truth.

[ 5 : 53 ] My father is the husband man. God the father is a distinct person from God the son.

And both are distinct from God the Holy Ghost. Yet these three are one. They're not three gods, but one.

But in the divine nature, eternally, essentially, and gloriously, there are three distinct persons.

My father, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the husband man. As I explained this morning, the dealings of God spiritually, with all who are true branches in Jesus Christ, are set forth under the figure of a husband man's care and culture of a vine.

These things we must know, to be right. We must know Jesus Christ, in his truth, the true vine.

[ 7 : 15 ] We must be brought to believe in him, really, and with our heart. We must know God the Father, to deal with our souls, as a husband man deals with the vine.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit and taketh away. And every branch that beareth fruit he purges it.

There are, as I said, some branches nominally in Jesus Christ. There are some branches vitally, essentially, in Jesus Christ.

Now, this is the test that proves which are which. Proved. If there's no fruit, such and one is only a nominal Christian.

The sooner they come to realize it, the better. Without fruit, there's nothing but a mere nominal union with Jesus Christ.

[ 8 : 24 ] It's not dietary. It's not dietary. In the heart. It's an attachment. More than a real unity. Fruit proves it.

Every branch that beareth not fruit, he may bear perfection, religion, that if he doesn't bear fruit, his end is certain, he will be taken away, he'll be cut off, his religion will come to nothing, and he will sing.

He taketh away. Every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it. Every branch that bears fruit will be purged.

Every branch that bears fruit will be purged. As I said this morning, it doesn't say every branch that only bears a little fruit, he purges it that it may bring forth more.

But every branch that bears fruit will be purged. If there's no purging, what's the reason?

[ 9 : 43 ] If there's no experience of any purging, in our experience, if we can trace nothing that agrees with this culture, what conclusions must we draw?

It cannot be because we are so fruitful that there's no need of purging. It must be because we are not under the divine husbandman's spiritual culture.

It doesn't say every branch that beareth not fruit, he purges it. He takes that away. He cuts that off. He consigns that to the fire.

A useless thing. Every branch that bears fruit, he purges it. I spoke this morning first a little of the nature of this union with Jesus Christ.

How true children of God are in union. How that union is formed between their souls and Jesus Christ.

[ 10 : 57 ] They grow out of him. They possess his life. It is his life imparted to their souls to quicken them that forms a union.

That forms a union between them and Jesus Christ. And how that union is felt in the exercise of mutual love.

The love of Christ felt in their heart. The love of Christ felt in their heart. And love to Christ unites in a sense of healing, sweet, loving oneness.

Just as naturally, love unites to its object. Especially if it's reciprocated.

Love is the uniting virtue, the uniting feeling, the uniting affection. For we are not united to Jesus Christ by love.

[ 12 : 02 ] We are united to Jesus Christ by life. But we feel that union by love.

Then we notice that every branch in that spiritual union with Jesus Christ will bring forth fruit.

The fruit it brings forth is the effect of the light of Jesus Christ in the soul. It's a fruitful life. We notice that the fruit that's brought forth is mainly first, fruit brought forth in the heart, in its spirit and principles and gracious virtues.

That fruit is brought forth by the lips. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually.

that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. That praise and thanksgiving and testimony is the fruit of our lips.

[ 13 : 18 ] We notice that there is practical fruit in our lives. To do good unto all men, but especially under the household of faith, to keep the Lord's gracious commandments, in the spirit of love, is to bring forth fruit in our lives.

So now you see every fruitful branch brings forth fruit in heart, lips, and life. The point this evening for me to be a little more explicit upon is the purging of the fruitful branches.

No branch is so fruitful that it doesn't need purging. The reasons why fruitful branches need purging are because there's so much, even in the fruitful branches themselves, that hinders their fruitfulness and tends to cause it to wither.

I've noticed that in vines, there's a tendency, perhaps more, in that fruitful tree or plant than in anything.

I remember a vine in a conservatory belonging to one of my relations that one spring looked very hopeful of being fruitful.

[ 15 : 03 ] There were quite a number of bunches of small fruit forming on this vine, but later on when I called and had a look at the vines, they'd shriveled.

There was a white mildew. The leaves themselves looked unhealthy. Some kind of disease had fastened on the vine and quite hindered the fruition of what appeared to have such a good prospect in the early spring of the year.

Well, isn't that so with fruitful branches? There are certain things that work in them, rising from their fallen nature or from the influence upon them of external conditions that bring a kind of life upon their spiritual fruitfulness.

And they need to be cleansed. But actually, this purging means two things, as I think I mentioned this morning.

It means that necessary prune that cuts back all unprofitable and unprudent growth. A vine tends to put forth a good deal more growth than the growth will bear good fruit.

[ 16 : 28 ] therefore, it needs to be pruned to be more fruitful. The more pruned, the more fruitful, so that it's wisely pruned.

There are many things that need to be pruned back in a truly fruitful branch.

But what I want to come to more particularly, is to set before you, as far as I have understanding and experience of it, what this purging of the branch is.

A good and wise husbandman may cut back and cleanse a fruitful branch in many different ways.

For one thing, the branch is often made more fruitful by the work of God's grace and teaching being more deep in the heart itself.

[ 17 : 35 ] There is sometimes a lack of depth to the superficiality. There may be a real work, and there is, a real work of God's grace as far as it goes.

There may be spiritual life brought forth in the soul and the evidences of it, the fruits of it, in measure brought forth too.

But it may be comparatively superficial. There needs to be a pruning of this superficial growth. For instance, God may bring the soul to purge and prune it under a deeper conviction and the deepest sense of its sinfulness than it's ever been under before.

There may have been a lack of what we commonly speak of. There may have been a lack of conviction of sin. There may have been a quickening of the soul.

If there has, there is true union with Jesus Christ. But it may not have been a very deep world. Now, my friends, there's a proportion in these things almost always.

[ 19 : 11 ] Where there hasn't been a very deep conviction of sin, there will always be more or less superficiality in religion. There won't be very much deep faith, warm love, not very much godly fear, nor spirituality of mind.

There may be faith, but it would be more faith springing out of the knowledge that the mind has of the principles of truth than spring out of a broken, humble, contrived soul.

And there's something wanting there when it is so. For the richest faith springs out of the most humble, contrived heart.

convictions of sin, the grace of God, working with them upon the Spirit, brings it into a deeper contrition.

Now, that may be very painful. We may be in the profession of religion sometime before we come into this purging. David appears to have been somewhat of that type and character.

[ 20 : 45 ] David feared God from his youth. But it wouldn't appear that David experienced very much of the purging work of God till later years.

And then he was purged by him. I should think that David's advancement from the lowest state that he was in in the kingdom to the throne and the prosperity that attended, his reign, and his success in many ways, wasn't too good for David.

That it permitted in David the indulgence of certain things that were not good and the branch needed purging.

And David came under a deeper sense of sin than he'd ever felt before. He said, there may just me to possess the iniquity of my youth.

And although David's iniquities had been forgiven in so much as he was a believer in God, they'd been forgiven but they came back upon his conscience again with a more poignant sense of distress and guilt than he'd ever felt before.

[ 22 : 19 ] and besides that, David was permitted to fall and to incur fresh guilt and therefore the 51st Selm, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, oh God, they will not be sighed.

David had never felt such a broken heart before, nor such a contrite spirit. You see, there's a purge in that way in David's cave.

Besides that, often, by one means or another, the heavenly husband man brings very searching thoughts and feelings on our heart and mind that really calls our whole religion into solemn questions.

And we feel that we've been resting on things too light and too easy. Now, I know this well, and perhaps it may not be out of place for me to just briefly refer to my own experience in what I'm preaching.

The Lord, I believe, brought me into the knowledge of the truth without much real deep distress of soul. It was more concern of mine than real distress of soul.

[ 24 : 01 ] And I was under a ministry that was a good, sound ministry as regards truth, but not very searching nor very separating nor very discriminating.

It instructed me in the knowledge of the gospel and it was good to me. And I received the truth of the gospel into my heart and into my mind.

And that ministry brought me into the church. I was baptized, sound believe. And looking back now over the long years where I was a very young man when I was baptized, not much more than a lad.

Looking back now, I don't feel that I took a wrong step. If I'm right now, I was right then. But in a certain way, I came under a very churching period of my life.

churching and it was this way, speaking in this chapel, a friend lent me a volume of J.C. Philpott's sermons. And I began to read these sermons.

[ 25 : 18 ] And I must say that no ministry I ever heard preach affected my soul like J.C. Philpott's sermons when I began to read them. And they affected me this way.

They searched my religion so, and Mr. Philpott made such distinctions between a faith that stood in the letter of the scripture, and the faith that was wrought by the power of God in the soul, that seemed to me as though he just pulled my religion to pieces.

And I wasn't pleased about it. I resented it. I remember one night, I read powering for the night, and put the book down in anger.

My friends, no one lives can have their religion pulled to pieces, do they? And the weakness of it, and the superficial character of it, and that which is lacking in it, shown up to them.

But in due time I was healed when I was wounded. No minister's ever affected me like Mr. Philpott did. And it seemed so direct as though Mr.

[ 26 : 36 ] Philpott had seen my character before I was born. For he died of course years before I was born. So just my character, just my case, just my lack here, and lack there in my religion, and had left it all ready for me to read.

And he was in the grave. It was as close work as man. But I know this, if I hadn't been through that purging experience, and lost a good deal of what I thought was quite good religion, I shouldn't be preaching this sermon tonight.

If I had been preaching the truth, I'm afraid I should have been preaching it in a more superficial way. We need this purging for this reason, that although we are taught of the Lord, shown the truth, brought to feel our need of it, and brought into the profession of it, rightly, a true branch, not a barren one, but a true branch, in true union with Jesus Christ, the truth is, we gather a lot into our religion that the Lord has never imparted to it.

A good deal, a good deal that just will not stand being weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it's found wanting.

It isn't that the Lord's work is ever found wanting, never. There's a good deal that comes from ourselves and mixes with it, and it's just that on the branch that hinders its true, gracious fruitfulness, and it's just purged away.

[ 28 : 39 ] the word of truth itself, the scriptures, in the truth of them, purge the fruitful branches.

The word of God is quick and powerful, it's sharper than any two-edged sword, and it pierces even to the dividing of standard of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discern of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That is, there's a certain pointedness about the word of God that's penetrating. That is, the word of God in the hand of God, by the Holy Spirit.

There's so much in us that the word of God purges. I mean, it condemns and reproves and shows up things in us.

My friends, the word of God may condemn much in the charge of God without condemning him. That's the point.

[ 29 : 59 ] It may condemn a good deal without condemning him. and we need it. This applies to true living branches.

Those who are not living branches, very seldom if ever, feel the point and penetration of the sacred word. They can read it, the most solemn scriptures, doesn't touch them.

they can hear things the most searching, they can pass it over. They're right. There's no need of any concern.

Nothing touches them. Oh, that does show a hardness in the heart and conscience, when perhaps the most solemn points of truth fail to penetrate the conscience.

But now with the charge of God, in the purging of the branch, the word penetrates. It comes home, it cuts back a lot, or sometimes it may make us wonder if we've got anything that's right and real, when all that is of self, all that is whole, all that is of the flesh, all that may be imagined in our religion, has all just been cut away.

[ 31 : 34 ] It may seem as though there's hardly anything left, but I must tell you this, this is just the feeling of a branch when the husband man is purging it.

Just like that. You look at a branch, look at a vine when it's been purged. I think a vine is pruned back as much as any fruit bearing plant.

It looks as though there's hardly anything left on a vine to bear fruit when it's pruned. And yet you see it grows again, and just where it's cut back, that's just where more fruit appears.

fruit appears. I'm thankful for the surging of the word. I've proved this that the word of God, although it hurt my conscience and penetrated into my heart, has never done me any harm.

Faithful are the wounds of that friend, the word of God. every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purges it.

[ 32 : 49 ] Sometimes the heavenly husbandman purges the branch by cutting away from it many things that are in themselves unprofitable.

For instance, an inordinate desire after the things of this world is something that will be cut back. not providential prosperity, that with the Lord.

If the Lord gives prosperity by his good providence, there's nothing wrong about that. But inordinate desires after the things of this world draw the heart away from spiritual affections towards the things of God and hinder fruitfulness.

And in some cases, prove the branch to be altogether barren. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

The Lord may cut off those things from us that we hanker after, and in due time bring us to field. That was best.

[ 34 : 05 ] That was best. the Lord may so act upon our hearts in the way I've mentioned as to cut back the desire after them, even if they're not taken away.

every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purges it like that. That it may bring forth more fruit.

That is the aim, more fruit. No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but rather grievous. Nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.

Now for the last few minutes, I'll try and demonstrate this in one or two particulars. For instance, the Lord purges our souls of pride that we may bring forth more humility.

Now humility is the richness of all true fruit. Doesn't matter what a man feels, doesn't matter what he says, doesn't matter what he does.

[ 35 : 28 ] If a spirit of pride is in it, that ruins the fruit of it. Not that it is right, that it really fruit, may have a good deal of pride behind him.

Now this will be purged back, cleansed out, that there may be more humility. For humility and pride can never grow together.

If pride works in the spirit, humility is withered by it, and there's nothing that is more abominable in sight of God than pride.

Pride itself is an abomination. Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. An abomination!

a child of God doesn't fall under that, because touch will never be an abomination, but there may be that in their heart which is an abomination, though they may not be so.

[ 36 : 41 ] Oh, how pride works, secretly in the heart, influences demoted, prompts many an action, if it were left to do it, even when the action may be right.

There were many things that fallacies did that were quite right, but all the pride of their hearts made all their self-righteousness such an abomination as brought upon them more stern rebukes from Jesus Christ than all the harlots and adulterers in the city did.

It was their pride oh, to bring forth more humility, and especially that humility that we can see so pure, so sweet in Jesus Christ.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though he were in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but humbled himself, made himself of no reputation.

If there was one feature of the pure, lovely spirit of Jesus Christ, it was his entire humility. God purges the pride of the branch that it may bring forth more humility.

[ 38 : 21 ] humility. I know we cannot always see it working that way. It may be as well we could not. Humility is a very reserved grade in those that bring it forth.

It does not show itself, at least not to those who manifest the spirit on it. For the most part, humility veils itself out of view, and if it's seen, if not seen in an ostentatious way, the most humbled soul can seldom see its own humility.

But the Lord can see it and approve it. What does the Lord thy God require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humble.

with thy God. But we're not easily humbled, brethren. We're not easily cleansed of our pride. It's such a subtle evil.

It affects us in ways we don't realize. It withers our fruit and we don't perceive what disease it is that is bringing such a mildew on our religion.

[ 39 : 45 ] then again every branch that bears fruit he purges it. He purges it of anger that it may bring forth more meekness.

Now anger is sin. It's hastiness. It's often involved in other sins as well. Hastiness of speech and utterance.

sin. Be not angry brethren. Angry is the fruit of the flesh but meekness is the fruit of grace.

Put on meekness. Let not the sun go down in your wall. Some true branches in Jesus true Christians have naturally a strong disposition to hastiness of temper and is grieving grieving to the Lord wounding sometimes to one another it needs purging that there may be more meekness.

Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God to indicate amongst other things his meek spirit. It struck me sometimes reading the book of the Revelation that word that Jesus Christ is said to be the lion of the tribe of Judah and at the same time the lamb that has been slain.

[ 41 : 36 ] It's a remarkable thing that the Lord Jesus Christ should bear the character of both a lion and a lamb seeing that they're both animals of such an extremely opposite character.

But the meaning is this the Lord Jesus Christ is a lion for fearlessness but not ferocity.

He is a lamb for meekness but not cowardice. You see a lamb will run with danger threatens.

Jesus Christ was a lion with danger threatens. As fearless as a lion but where suffering was concerned as meek as a lamb.

Now that's what indeed my friends more of that spirit. Where there's no meekness where is there any likeness to Jesus Christ.

[ 42 : 43 ] Where there's no likeness to Jesus Christ where is there any real religion. More of thy spirit Lord in heart means Lord purge me of all that which is contrary to it.

The heavenly husband man in purging a fruitful branch will purge that branch of resentment that it may bring forth more of a forgiving spirit.

A forgiving spirit is Christ like. It is God like. Master how often shall my brother offend against me and I forgive him till seven times I say not unto you till seven times but until seventy times seven yea as often as thy brother sin against thee and turn again and say I repent thou shall forgive him.

that's rude isn't it? A forgiving spirit but there may be the opposite a spirit of resentment and even though there may be a professed forgiveness there may still be a rankling resentment it it will be purged down it will sure to bring a chastening upon the soul that it may bring forth more of that tender forgiving grace be kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you I mention just these points to demonstrate the subject there are many others in fact all that is of the flesh in us of our natural disposition of our carnal hearts and minds needs to be purged from us it's a continual word and all to this end that we may be more fruitful to be more fruitful is to be more



Christ from him our fruit is found how true that is without him we can do nothing from him from his life from his meek spirit from his pardoning grace from his redeeming love all our fruit is found just comes to my mind that there's another way of purging the branch which I cannot prepare to mention and that is he purges the branch with his love the love of Christ made effectual in our heart purges out all that which is contrary to that love oh love divine how sweet thou when shall I find my willing heart all taken up by thee is what has sometimes been called an expulsive power in the love of Christ that is to say it expels from the heart what is contrary to itself and its nature it purges it's purging love well I leave these considerations with you today the Lord knows whether we are fruitful branches or fruitless and the day will declare it the day in which every man's world shall be tried will prove whether we are fruitless or fruitful branches but if we can trace this union with Jesus

[ 47 : 21 ] Christ in life and love if we can trace anything of God's wise husbandry if looking back over a period of years we can see now how that our trials of humbleness our sorrows have chastened us our very frustrations have cut down our ambitious spirit and if we can trace how the love the mercy and the grace of Jesus Christ are softened and humbled still more our heart at his feet and imprinted we hope something of his own pure image upon our souls if after all our experience we come to this Lord do not lessen the pain that purges my conscience from dross but cause it to engrave more of the likeness and spirit of Jesus

Christ deeply upon my soul then surely we know this truth in our own experience of it I am the true vine and my father is the husband man every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit he purges it of its pride resentment carnality ambitions self righteousness he purges that branch that he may bring forth more fruit more tenderness more love more meekness more humility and more of Jesus Christ the Lord and his blessings and the word of his truth

Amen Pam the him ■■■■■ he ha so he