

Gospel of Saint John - Friendship



**Christian
Community Bible**
Catholic Pastoral
Edition
Revised Edition 2013

*All references and
text are taken from
the above edition of
the Holy Bible.*

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Scripture - What is it?

It is important to note that Scripture is The WORD of GOD, the Son of God incarnated in the human body of JESUS CHRIST who lived on the earth over 2,000 years ago. He is both human and Divine! So when we are reading Scripture we are experiencing a living union with the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is in this union of three Divine Persons that we are being asked to participate in a beloved friendship.

This parable from Saint John's Gospel is found in the New Testament section of the bible. It is the written words of Jesus as remembered by the Apostle John. Scripture needs to be prayed so before you begin please start a conversation with God. Ask for His presence as you read the text. Ask Jesus to come alongside you as you experience His words to you. Find a place of comfort where you can relax and give yourself at least 30 minutes. Know that you are not alone... An important part of this study will be to journal your answers...

The Vine and the Branches

GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN 15:1-17

Pondering on the Text...

What exactly is Jesus saying to us in this selected text? He is giving us a sense of belonging - we are part of His family: Those who are listening to His words and wanting to live out His message. By grafting us in the parable to Jesus - The Vine, and saying we are the branches, Jesus is presenting us with an intimate relationship not only to Himself but to God the Father - The Vine Grower. Tenderly Jesus reminds us that His Father and ours is looking out for us, pruning us as we struggle with life to be the best version of ourselves. He is giving us a promise that if we accept this pruning and allow our Father to intercede and direct us in our lives then we will receive a deep and lasting joy! In friendship with Jesus we will know fully the plans of God the Father for our lives. It requires us to trust them both! Are you ready to dive in?

The Vine and the Branches

GOSPEL OF SAINT JOHN 15:1-17

'I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower. If any of my branches doesn't *bear fruit*, he breaks it off; and he prunes every branch that does *bear fruit*, that it may bear even *more fruit*.

You are already made clean by the word I have spoken to you. Live in me and I live in you. The branch cannot *bear fruit* by itself, but has to remain part of the vine; so neither can you if you don't remain in me.

I am the vine and you are the branches. As long as you remain in me and I in you, you *bear much fruit*; but apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not remain in me is thrown away as they do with branches and they wither. Then they are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask whatever you want and it will be given to you. My Father is glorified when you *bear much fruit*; it is then that you become my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love! You will remain in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you all this that my own joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you! There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you.

I shall not call you servants anymore, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead, I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.

You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and *bear fruit*, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my names, he will give you. This is my command, that you love one another.'

*'I am
the true
vine and
my
Father
is the
vine grower...'
John 15:1*

Meditation Text...

'I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower. If any of my branches doesn't *bear fruit*, he breaks it off; and he prunes every branch that does *bear fruit*, that it may bear even *more fruit*.'

Reflection...

It's not easy to be told that I need to be pruned and broken. Surely if my God truly loves me He will love me just the way I am...

In any pursuit in life whether it is in a sport, in a vocational job, as a parent, an artist, a writer, a performer, a teacher, a student, these are only a few examples. We find that we require a measure of excellence to grow. We often learn better from another who has gone before us or has a greater knowledge than we do at the beginning of our

'You are already made clean by the word I have spoken to you. Live in me and I live in you. The branch cannot *bear fruit* by itself, but has to remain part of the vine; so neither can you if you don't remain in me.'

journey and this is also true of our faith.

The difference with God and the measure of the world is that God only wants the best for us. There are no strings attached. He wants us to be the best version of ourselves so that we can develop and grow strong in our faith and grow in knowledge. Fulfilling the desire and dreams we carry within us. Therefore He asks us to stay close to Him and to trust in all He says.

Meditation Text...

'I am the vine and you are the branches. As long as you remain in me and I in you, you *bear much fruit*; but apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not remain in me is thrown away as they do with branches and they wither. Then they are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.'

Reflection...

Again God is asking us to be with Him, to '*remain in me*'. Why does He ask this of us? Have you experienced a time when you were apart from God? What did it feel like? Did you feel isolated, cut-off? Maybe you didn't even notice that a distance had grown. At some point in our lives we notice a

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different experience, a longing for something or someone, a reaching beyond ourselves. It usually comes at a junction in our lives - a STOP sign. Something happens and we are different, see the world differently. Can we trust that God is waiting? What do you feel when you think of these questions?

Meditation Text...

'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love! You will remain in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.'

Reflection...

Here Jesus reflects on His union with the Father and how the Father treats Him. There is a understanding of roles and an affection and respect for the other. Jesus knows the expectations of the relationship. There is a deep and intimate knowledge of the other - both ways. The Father knows that

'I have told you all this that my own joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you! There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you.'

Jesus is responding out of love for Him. So how does this effect my relationship with the Father? Can I trust Him as Jesus does? Love is at the centre of the relationship. Have I experienced this type of love in my own relationships? Are my relationships built on love and respect for each other?

Meditation Text...

'I shall not call you servants anymore, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead, I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.'

Reflection...

Now we are getting to the complete intimacy that Jesus wants us to experience with His Father. All He has spoken throughout His ministry is reflected in the relationship He has with His Father. Jesus wants us to know the Father too, so He is telling us that all He has learnt as a Son He passes on to us.

'You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and *bear fruit*, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my names, he will give you. This is my command, that you love one another.'

He has chosen you and me. He calls us friends. He calls us to relationship as a brother, calling us into the family and common union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It's a big deal! So how are you reacting... Are you ready to experience this love? This union with the three Divine Persons?