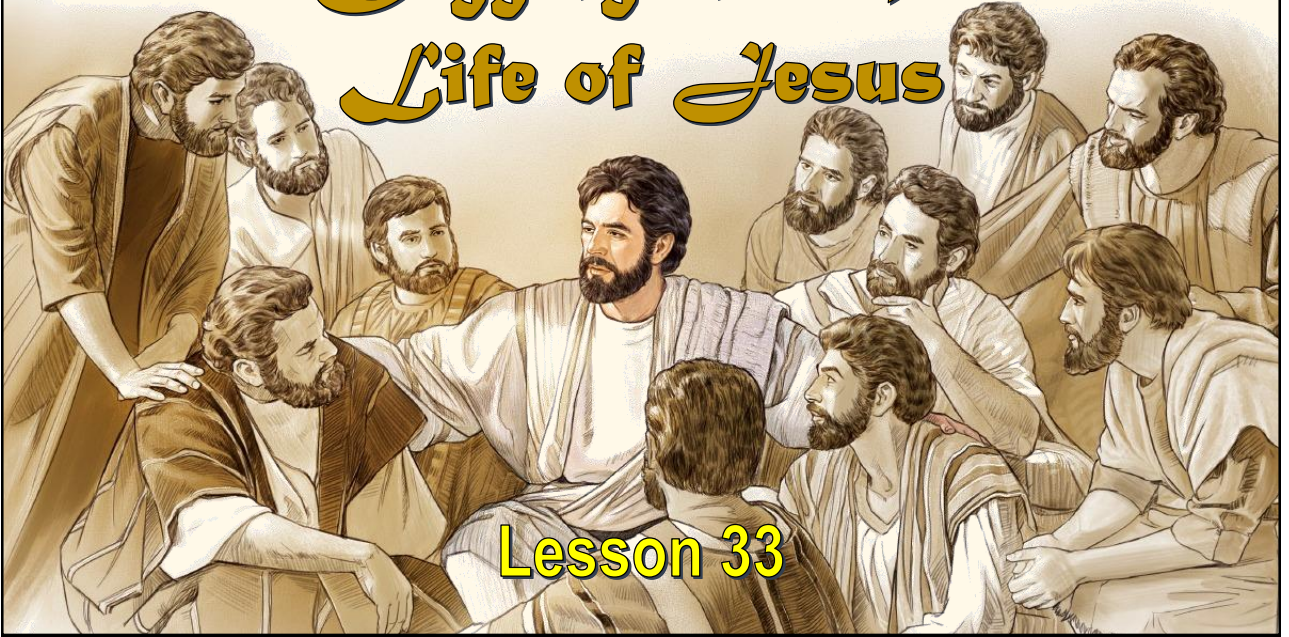


Digging into the Life of Jesus



Is Jesus is Central in Your life?

When Christ isn't central in your life, your faith will always get reduced to theology, traditions and rules.



Danger: if Christ isn't central in your heart, something else will be.

Tonight's Themes and Topics:

- Context
- Connection
- Contentment



1. The Relation of the Disciples to Christ (15:1-11)
2. The Relation of the Disciples to One Another (15:12-17)
3. The Relation of the Disciples to the World (15:18-27)

| General Revelation of Christ John Chapters 1-12 (3½ Years) | Specific Revelation of Christ John Chapters 13-21 (1 Week) |
|--|--|
| Seven Signs (Miracles) To the Public | Intimate Sharing To His disciples |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changing water into wine (2:1-11) 2. Healing an official's son (4:46-54) 3. Healing a lame man (5:1-9) 4. Multiplying fish and bread (6:1-14) 5. Walking on water (6:15-21) 6. Healing a blind man (9:1-17) 7. Raising Lazarus (11:38-44) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Washing of the disciples' feet 2. The Passover 3. The Farewell Discourse 4. Christ's Prayer in Gethsemane 5. Jesus' Suffering in trial & on cross 6. Christ's Resurrection 7. Christ's Appearing to Disciples |



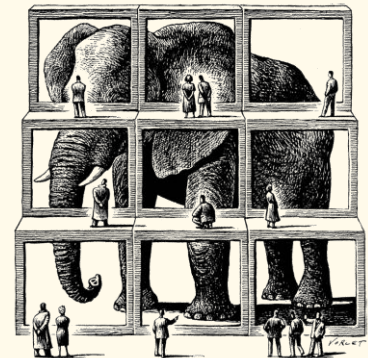
Context: Jesus will in just a few hours be arrested, tried and soon crucified.

So what teaching is He going to leave them with?

- 14:1-31 – the command to love one another
- 15:1-17 – The chain of relationships from Father to Son to disciples
- 15:18-27 – The chain of relationships from the disciples to the world

cQntext

Definition: The circumstances in which an event occurs; a setting.



Knowing more about the context of something helps us understand how it came about and what it is referring, or alluding to, e.g. Matthew 18:20.



Why is it important to pay attention to context?

Stories, parables, analogies, teachings of Jesus do not just hang in space as isolated or disconnected entities; they are rather embedded in a context.

The context adds texture to the meaning and impact of the story.



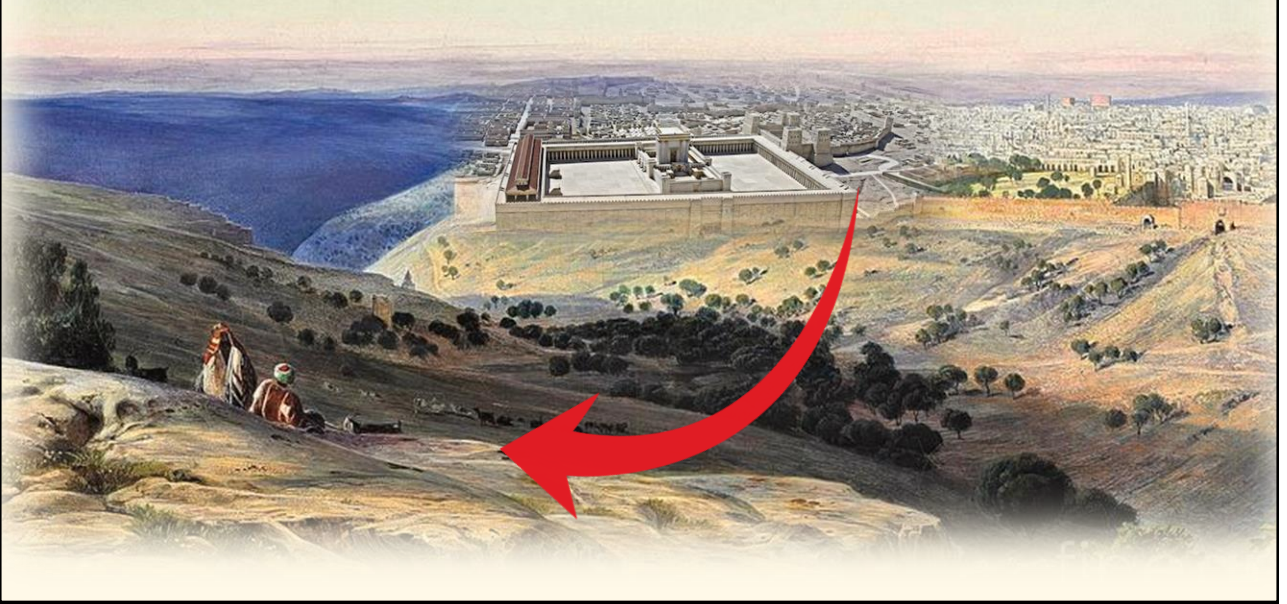
Why is it important to pay attention to context?



We must allow Scripture to have its own voice!

It's very hard to see the meaning of a text if we don't understand what the author says **before and after** that given piece of text.

From the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives



CONNECTION

Jesus is the
True Vine

Unless we are connected to the
vine, Jesus, we will wither.



- Do you feel connected to Jesus?
- How do you practically stay connected to Jesus?



Monitor your connection by asking practical questions:

- What is my calling and am I fulfilling it?
- What are my gifts and how am I exercising it?
- How do I live with integrity what I believe?
- How is my heart? What lies heavy on my heart?
- What do I desire? For what do I yearn? What does God have to say to me about this?
- Is God nudging me to some action in my life?
- For what am I most grateful? Least grateful?

Aloneness

is what we feel when we are functionally disconnected at the core of our being from all that truly satisfies, sustains, and secures.



Contentment

If God was our ultimate source of satisfaction and sustenance, we would be contented and be able to rejoice with others who are more blessed with material goods or a easier life.

If we lived connectedly we would not become resentful and bitter when life disappoints us because we wouldn't be looking to life as our source of satisfaction in the first place.

The Vineyard was a Symbol for Israel

Isaiah 5:7 - For the vineyard of
the Lord of hosts is the house
of Israel,



Isaiah 5:1-2a Let me sing for **my beloved** my love song concerning his vineyard: **My beloved** had a vineyard on a very **fertile hill**.

He **dug it and cleared it of stones**, and planted it with **choice vines**;

he **built a watchtower in the midst of it**, and **hewed out a wine vat in it**;



Isaiah 5:2b and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.



Color: Wine beautiful dark ruby color.

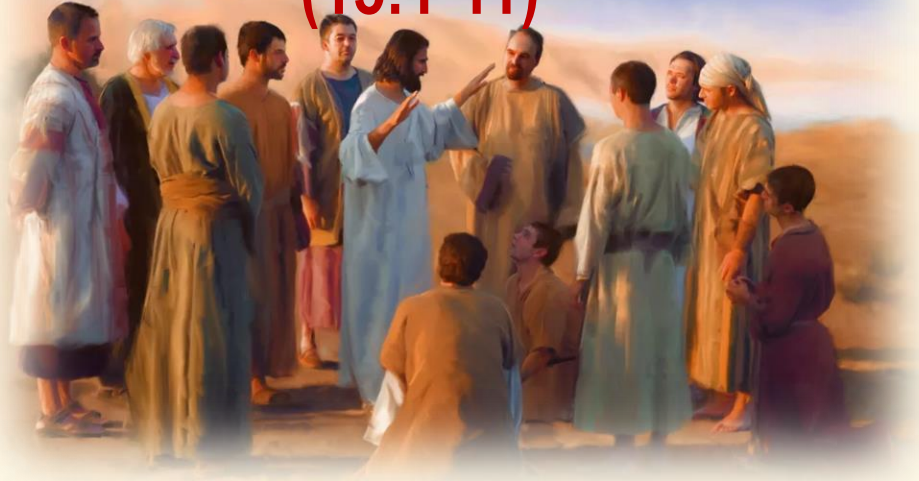
Taste: The wine is surprisingly deep, complex, dense, full-bodied taste with a long finish strong.

Aroma: The aroma of wine tones of black fruits interwoven with hints of tobacco, earth, flowering citrus, Mediterranean herbs and dark chocolate.



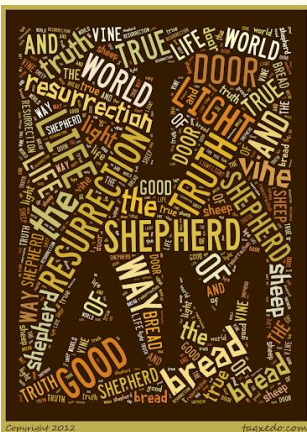
<https://eng.winestyle.ru>

The Relation of the Disciples to Christ (15:1-11)



15:1a “I am the true vine,”

The last of the ‘I am ...’ sayings



I AM the Bread of Life (6:35, 48)

I AM the Light of the World (8:12)

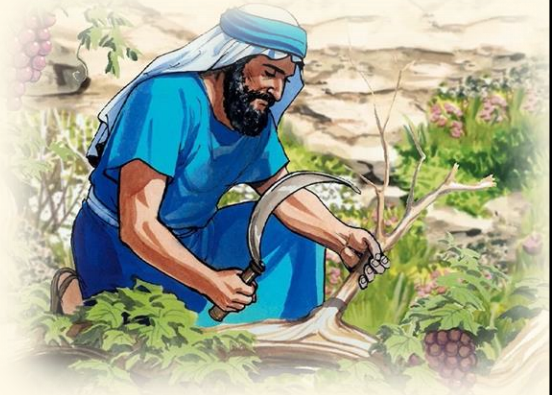
I AM the Good Shepherd (10:11)

I AM the Door (10:7,9)

I AM the Resurrection & the Life (11:25)

I AM the Way, the Truth & the Life (14:6)

15:1b “...and my Father is the vinedresser. 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.”



Hebrews 12:4–11, the Lord disciplines His own the way a father disciplines his children. All this is ‘for our good, that we may share in his holiness’ (Heb. 12:10).

The role of the Father, the heavenly gardener, is twofold:

1. He prunes or trims every branch that does bear fruit. No fruit-bearing branch is exempt.
2. He cuts off every branch that bears no fruit, i.e. He gets rid of the dead wood so that the living, fruit-bearing branches may be sharply distinguished from them, and may have more room for growth.



Possible Interpretations of the Unfruitful Branch:

- a person pretending to be a Christian
- a Christian who has lost his salvation
- an unfruitful carnal believer, who backslides in his Christian walk and does not manifest the fruit of the Spirit
- the Father “lifts up” the unfruitful branch to encourage fruitfulness

In both the vine, and in our relationship to God, merely being “attached” or “associated” to the concept of Christ is not enough.

It is possible for a person to claim the name of Christ, and to associate with believers, and yet not have a life-giving connection to the “true vine.”

He is “in the vine,” only in the sense that he’s intertwined or touching the other branches. Yet, he is not truly part of the life of the plant.

Matthew 7:15-20

15. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.
16. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?
17. So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.
18. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.
19. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
20. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Was there a time in your life that God pruned you in order for you to grow?

How was the experience like?

What were the results?

What kind of fruit should we be bearing?

- spiritual maturity (cf. Galatians 5:22-23)
- evangelistic fruit
- good deeds and righteous acts

The only way to bear this type of fruit is to stay connected to the vine, where the branch and the fruit find all of their nourishment.

This is why Jesus says that “apart from me you can do nothing” (verse 5); for spiritual fruit (both in maturity and salvation) is produced by Christ alone.

3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

- It is by grace through faith in Christ that we are cleansed.
- The word “already” indicates that they are already saved.
- God washes the believer at the point of salvation: **But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Co 6:11b).**

The Greek tense for “have spoken” indicates that what Jesus said would remain with them permanently. Their salvation is secured!

There are two kinds of cleansings in the Bible:

- **Absolute (Position/Standing)**
- **Progressive (State/Sanctification)**

God cleanses our soul once for all when we become believers, but He develops us into maturity progressively.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

“Abide” = “to remain, continue, dwell, endure, be present.”

The effectiveness of the believer depends on his receiving the constant flow of life from Christ.

What practical ways can you continually dwell in Jesus' presence?

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."

The process of growing from spiritual barrenness to spiritual abundance, is possible only through Christ.

Branches cannot bear fruit alone. They must have a source of supply for their needs.

So, we must bear fruit; but we cannot do it alone. We must have the blessings Jesus supplies.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

Colossians 2:19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

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.

The purpose of every plant, tree or vine is to bear fruit. This is the reason for its existence. If not, there is no reason for it to exist.



Likewise, the purpose for Christians is to produce fruit for God. If we do not produce, He will not continue to consider us His.

That fruit, like any other good works or holiness, is always presented as **evidence of salvation, never as a requirement for it.**

The pruning Jesus refers to here echoes Matthew 7:21–23. There, Jesus likewise points out that putting on an appearance of faith is not the same as being born again.

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

This is not a license for believers to treat God like the cosmic “Claw”.

Answered prayer only happens when what we pray is part of the will of God.



1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

God’s will is for us to know Him and to live for Him (i.e. choosing to live your life as He commands in His Word).

The Bible invites us to an intimacy with God that will lead us to the life we are meant to live.

Psalm 32:8 “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”

Yield to Christ in the details of your lives.

Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Obedience rather than power is the hallmark of spirituality.

How to Apply God's Will to Our Lives:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

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

The purpose of fruit bearing is to bring glory to God, not to the disciple!

1. Winning People to Christ

Romans 1:13 - As expressed by Paul in his desire to go to Rome

Matthew 28:19-20 – The Great Commission

2. Sharing with Those in Need

Romans 15:25-28 - contribution to poor believers c/f 2 Corinthians 8:1-2; 9:12-14

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

3. Developing Christlike Character

Galatians 5:22-24 – Fruit of the Spirit

2 Peter 1:5-8 – Grow in the Knowledge of Jesus

make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

4. Praising God and Giving Thanks

Hebrews 13:15 - Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

9-11 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Love unites the disciples to Christ as branches are united to a vine. Love is where we must always begin with God. 1 John 4:8 "Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love."

Two results: obedience and joy.

Obedience is the cause of their fruitfulness; joy is its result.

Jesus intended that the disciples' lives should be both spontaneous and joyful rather than burdensome.

Obedience asks us to be open to change, to adopt new priorities and sometimes to radically re-orientate our whole life's direction.

The result is always joy. Jesus never set us up for sadness.

Joy and happiness are not the same thing.

- **Happiness is based on circumstances.**
- **Joy is based on God.**

Joy is something more – it's a fruit of the Spirit, something that God divinely gives us through the power of His Holy Spirit.

Joy will spontaneously follow because the life of Christ is always fruitful – something they could never produce in their own strength.

Carson: “No one is more miserable than the Christian who for a time hedges in his obedience. He does not love sin enough to enjoy its pleasures, and does not love Christ enough to relish holiness.

He perceives that his rebellion is iniquitous, but obedience seems distasteful. He does not feel at home any longer in the world, but his memory of his past associations and the tantalizing lyrics of his old music prevent him from singing with the saints. He is a man most to be pitied; and he cannot forever remain ambivalent.”