



John 15
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to John's gospel chapter fifteen as we continue our journey through the Word.

In verse thirty-one of chapter fourteen, Jesus is at the site of the last supper with His disciples. After the supper, they've been in discussion. As we were studying the fourteenth chapter, we find that they were asking Jesus questions and He was answering their questions just sort of that fellowship after dinner, around the table as you're just talking about issues. But now Jesus in verse thirty-one said, "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, and let us go hence" (John 14:31). Jesus was talking about His journey now to the cross. "That the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father hath given Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, and let's go." He's going to the cross, going first to the garden of Gethsemane where the soldiers will arrest Him, take Him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, and then to Pilate, then to the cross.

In Philippians chapter two, it tells us that "though He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God: yet He humbled Himself or emptied Himself, and came in the form of a man: and as a servant, He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do" (John 14:31). The Father sent Him in the world to become a sacrifice for our sins. This was the Father's commandment or will for His life.

So we leave now the upper room and beginning with the fifteenth chapter, Jesus begins His journey with His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. It is possible that they passed through the temple mount area. During the feast of the passover, the gates of the temple were left open and on the gates of the temple, there were these golden grapes clustered as ornamentation on the gate.

In the Old Testament, in Psalm 80, the psalmist said, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: and you cast out the heathen, and planted it" (Psalm 80:8). Talking about the nation of Israel that God brought out of Egypt and planted in the land of Canaan from which He had driven the heathen. It could be that as Jesus and His disciples were walking past the gates of the temple and saw these great golden grapes there on the temple, that this sort of sparked this particular discourse. It is also possible that they were just passing down the slopes of Ophel and that they were passing through some grape vineyards.

In the eighteenth chapter of John, we read where they cross the brook Kidron and then they started up on the other side unto the mount of Olives to the garden of Gethsemane. So either on the slopes of the hillside going down into the Kidron valley or perhaps the gate of the temple, Jesus said to them,

I am the true vine (15:1),

More literally from the Greek, "I am the vine, the true," which would give the implication that there is a false vine. "I am the vine, the true." Many of the Old Testament prophets--Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Hosea—all spoke of the nation of Israel as the vine. In Isaiah chapter five, he said, "Now I will sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out all of the stones thereof, and he planted it with the choicest vine, and he built a tower in the midst of it, and he also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done? Why is it that when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, that it brought forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I'm going to do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge from it, and it shall be eaten up; and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: and it will not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, and behold there was oppression; he looked for righteousness, but behold there was the cry of the oppressed" (Isaiah 5:1-7).

So the nation of Israel, God said, that's my vineyard. But He was going to let it go waste. Now Jeremiah chapter two, verse twenty-one, Jeremiah said, "Yet I had planted thee [God is speaking to Israel] a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then are you turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me" (Jeremiah 2:21)? Hosea 10:1 said, "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased his altars; according to the goodness of

his land they have made goodly images.”

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus picked up the parable of the vineyard and He said, “There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and he put a hedge around it, and he digged the winepress in it, and he built a tower, and then he let it out to husbandmen and he went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did the same.” And so Jesus then said that “the householder then said, I will send my only son, surely they will respect him. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And so they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and they killed him. And when the lord thereof of the vineyard comes, [Jesus said] what will he do unto those husbandmen? They said unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and he will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons” (Matthew 21:33-41).

So Jesus is speaking of the nation of Israel, God’s vineyard. He wanted the fruit, God sent the prophets. The husbandmen were actually the religious leaders that were supposed to be developing the people’s relationship with God so that they could bring forth fruit unto God, unto the praise of God. But the religious leaders have become corrupted. So God sent His prophets, some of them they stoned; others they imprisoned, and so then the only Son, of course, would be Jesus. God said I will send My only Son, they’ll respect Him. But they said, Let’s kill him and then the vineyard will be ours. So they slew him. He said, What will then the householder do, the Lord? And they said, He will cast out those miserable husbandmen, he’ll let out his vineyard to others. So that Jesus is now saying that He is “the true vine,”

and the Father is the husbandman (15:1).

And that now you, the church, the disciples, you will now become God’s vineyard. You will become the branches. You will become that which will bear the fruit that the Father is seeking. So “I am the true vine. My Father is the husbandman.” It’s been taken away from those who He had given it to, and now the Father takes the responsibility of developing the vineyard.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away (15:2):

That is, the pruning. The cutting off of those branches that don’t bear fruit.

but every branch that bears fruit, he then cleanses it or purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit (15:2).

The purpose of God for your life is that you bring forth fruit that is pleasing unto God. If you don’t bring forth fruit, then Jesus said, You will be cut off. “Every branch in me that bringeth forth not fruit, he taketh away,” cut off. But if you’re bearing fruit, then the Lord wants you to bring forth more fruit. And so He begins that cleansing process.

Now you are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you (15:3).

The word of God, a cleansing power in our lives. Keeping us from sin. Guiding us in the path of God. Helping us that we might bear more fruit as we are washed and cleansed by the Word. Jesus said, “Abide in me,” the process by which I can bear more fruit,

Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me (15:4).

That is declaring again that the fruit that God wants from our life is not something that we can produce ourselves. I think that many times we feel sort of an obligation to do, to perform, to bring forth works unto God that we might be pleasing unto Him as the result of our efforts and our works. It’s interesting that in Galatians 5 as Paul is writing to the Galatians, he contrasts work with fruit. “Now the works of the flesh are these,” and he gives you that long list of the works of the flesh. But then he says, “But [in contrast to the works] the fruit of the Spirit.” So the fruit is contrasted with works. Now God isn’t interested in works, our works of righteousness.

God is interested that we bear fruit and fruit comes from a relationship. Abiding in Christ, Christ abiding in me, the natural result of that is going to be my life is going to bring forth the fruit that the Father desires. It comes automatically by abiding in Christ. Now Jesus is saying to His disciples,

I am the vine, you are the branches (15:5):

In the Old Testament, God had planted the vine, the nation of Israel in a goodly field. Did everything necessary that it would bring forth fruit. Nurtured it, took care of it, watched over it. But it

only brought forth wild grapes. Now Jesus is declaring, "I am the vine, you are the branches." And so the responsibility of bringing the fruit that God wants is now upon us, the branches.

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same will bring forth much fruit (15:5):

Again the secret is abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in you. You will begin to bring forth much fruit. And then again,

for without me you can do nothing (15:5).

Apart from Christ, there's not one thing that you can do that is pleasing or acceptable unto the Father. You can do nothing to please God apart from Christ. "Apart from Me you can do nothing."

If a man abides not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (15:6).

The nation of Israel did not bring forth the fruit. The prophet Isaiah spoke of them as the vine, he said, was burned. But he said, it's not really good for even burning. What can you do with the wood of a grape? He said you can't make a peg out of it. It's brittle, it's only good for the fire and it's not even good in the fire. It sort of burns like a punk. He said it's just of no value.

Jesus said, "If a man abides not in Me." Is it possible for a man not to abide in Christ? Evidently so or Jesus would not have even brought up the issue. "If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and they cast them into the fire, and they are burned." But,

If you abide in Me (15:7),

Rather than getting into the theological aspects or debate, just abide in Christ and there's no problem. You don't have to worry about the issues. And for one, I have no intention of ever doing anything but just abiding in Him. Because I know that apart from Him, I can do nothing. He is my life, He's everything. And thus, abiding in Him is all important to me and I have no intention of ever doing anything other than that. So, "if you abide in Me,"

and My words abide in you (15:7),

Here He's saying, "If My words." Earlier He said, "If you abide in Me and I abide in you, then we will bring forth much fruit." Now, "if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,"

you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you (15:7).

Here in the final discourse that Jesus has with His disciples, He's giving to them some extremely broad promises concerning prayer. Back in the fourteenth chapter, verse thirteen, He said, "And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do." That "whatsoever," that's pretty broad. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do, that the Father might be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask any thing." Any thing is pretty broad term. "If you ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14). Now He's giving some limitations. "If you abide in Me, and My word abides in you, you can ask what you will and it shall be done unto you."

There are those who take these broad promises of Jesus concerning prayer and they twist them and they teach that you can have anything you want. They are speaking now generally in a fleshly kind of carnal way. That is, you can have any kind of carnal desire that you might have for a sports car or for a big bank account or for a yacht, any of these things to consume on your own lust. And that's not what Jesus is saying.

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, then you can ask whatever you will." But it follows that what I ask will be in harmony with Him and His will. Because to be a disciple of Jesus, the first thing I have to do is deny self. So these promises, these broad promises that Jesus makes concerning prayer is not opening the door for prayer to be a means of accomplishing selfish ends. But they are doors open to accomplish the purposes of God that now become the chief desire of my heart.

The psalmist said, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). That's been misinterpreted or misquoted in a way. If you delight yourself in the Lord, the psalmist isn't saying, He's going to give you the fleshly desires of your heart. But He will give you the desires of your heart. That is, He will put His desire in your heart. If you delight yourself in the Lord, He then plants His desires in your heart. God said to Jeremiah, "The day is coming, saith the Lord, when I will no longer write my law "on the tables of stone but I will write them in the fleshly tablets of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3).

So God inscribes His law, His will, His purpose in my heart. He makes that my longing, my desire. That's why doing the will of the Lord is such a pleasurable, exciting thing. Because He has first of all

worked in me, planting His desire in my heart, making that the longing of my heart. Oh I wish I can live in Hawaii. Where did that desire come from? Be careful now, this one's tough. But you don't know. You see, it could be that God has put that desire in there because He's calling you to Hawaii. So be open, but be careful. Make sure you really have discernment on this one. I would have to confess it would be very hard for me to have discernment. But it's wonderful how God does work and prepare our hearts for that which He wants for us to do.

People oftentimes have a very false sense of the will of God as though God's will is something that is awful, terrifying. And so I've heard say, Be careful, if you say anywhere, God, you just might find yourself in some jungle filled with all kinds of poisonous reptiles, parasites and everything else. So you've got to be careful when you say, Lord, Your will be done. As though God is going to then make you do some horrible terrifying thing that is going to just put your life in total terror, living in fear and terror.

If God is going to call you to say, Irian Jaya or New Guinea to work among the native people there, you can be sure that He will, first of all, give you a desire and a longing and an intense interest in bugs.

My son, Jeff and I, were in Irian Jaya and we met a couple of young men there. In fact, we flew into the mission station of this one young fellow, good looking fellow, had two small children, brilliant fellow, college degree. He's a hundred and twenty miles from the closest road so we had to fly in. And the pilot buzzed the field once to see what direction the wind socket was because you can only land one direction. If the wind socket isn't for you, you just have to come on out. But the wind socket was coming downhill so we were able to land. But the fact that we have buzzed the field once. By the time we landed, both sides of the runway were lined with the naked natives who, when the plane stopped, came rushing up to the plane and they greeted us very warmly. They later showed us around the village. Beautiful spot up in this canyon. There are two streams that converge, beautiful, crystal clear water. And he showed us the little water system that he had developed for his house where he piped it from upstream where he had the gravity flow of this crystal clear water into his house. He turned to us and his face was just beaming. And he says, Tell me, tell me, look what happens when you yield yourself to the will of God. He puts you in the most beautiful spot in the whole world to raise kids. He said, This place is fabulous. He was absolutely in love with it. And that's what God does. He plants His desires in your heart. So with Jesus you can say, "I delight to do Thy will, O Lord" (Psalm 40:8).

Another fellow that we met at that same conference is thirty-five miles from the nearest road. When he wants to go to the store, he has to walk thirty-five miles to get a new lightbulb. But they don't have lights out there. To get a can of tuna or whatever. This fellow was from this area, Garden Grove. Loved to surf, Huntington Beach. And walking from his village to the nearest town, he has to walk along the beach thirty-five miles. He said the most gorgeous surf in the world. And so he said, I have my little walkman, I put on the Maranatha praise tapes, and he said, It is just heaven walking along the beautiful beach, seeing the beautiful surf, and just praising God and listening to the praise music. He said, I'm in the closest place to heaven as you can get.

You see, God puts these things in your heart. And then when He places you there, you think, This can't be the will of God, this is too nice. This is too good. But that's because Satan has given this false concept concerning God's will, that the will of God is the most miserable place in the world. That's not so. The will of God is the most blessed place in the world. Walking in the will of God is glorious.

And so, Jesus is talking to His disciples and He is telling them, You can ask whatever you will. But the thing is, your will is now His will. He has planted His will in your heart and thus, when you ask according to His will, as John later says in his epistle, He hears us and if He hears us, we have received that which we have asked of Him.

Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit (15:8);

*That's what God is looking for from your life. That you bear much fruit;
so shall you be my disciples (15:8).*

Earlier He said, "You're to love one another as I have loved you and by this sign the world will know that you are My disciples." And now, when you're bringing forth much fruit, then you'll know that you are His disciple.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (15:9,10).

In keeping the commandments, He's relating the keeping of the commandments to loving, to abiding in His love. And that basically is His commandment. This is My commandment, that you love one another. If you keep the commandments, then you abide in His love.

These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (15:11).

He is about to face the cross and He knows it. He knows this ugly experience that He'll be going through tomorrow. Actually, because their day starts at sundown, before this day is over, before the sun goes down tomorrow, He will have been killed upon a cross, He will have been mocked, jeered, buffeted, scourged, insulted, humiliated. He knew all that He was going to go through and what's He talking about "My joy?"

In the book of Hebrews, we read, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). His joy was the redemption of man. His joy is that ability to say to you, Your sins are forgiven. Enter into the joy of the Lord. To receive you into the kingdom of God, that's His joy. And for that joy, He endured the cross though He despised the shame.

So now facing the cross, He is speaking of "My joy, that it might remain in you, and that your joy may be full." That you might have fullness of joy.

This is my commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you (15:12).

Paul gives one rule for marriage to the husbands and that is, "Love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). That's a pretty incredible love, "as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it." That's a self-sacrificing love. A selfless love. A complete love. In a little bit, He's going to say,

Greater love has no man than this, that a man will lay down his life for his friends (15:13).

And then He laid down His life for us. That's how husbands are to love their wives but that's how we're to love each other. "This is My commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you." Now again, as we go to First Corinthians 13, the kind of love He is talking about is described there. It's also described in Galatians 5:22 where Paul is speaking of the fruit of the Spirit. The Father wants you to bear fruit. He wants you to bear much fruit and the fruit of the Spirit is love which manifests itself in joy and in peace and in patience, long suffering, and gentleness, in meekness, in goodness, in faithfulness, in temperance. That's how God wants you to be.

Now you can't be that. Jesus said, "Apart from Me, you can't do it." The branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine. But if you're abiding in Christ and Christ's word is abiding in you, then this should be the evidence of your relationship with Him in that your life begins to bring forth much fruit. You are being transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit within your life and your life begins to bring forth the fruit that the Father desires from us. "Greater love has no man than this," this is the kind of love that He had for us. "That a man will lay down his life for his friends."

You are My friends, if you do whatsoever I command you (15:14).

The fruit of the friendship, obedience to His command. And His command, "Love one another as I have loved you." So He said,

From now on I'm not going to call you slaves; for the slave doesn't know what the lord is doing; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you (15:15).

I'm going to call you now My friends, not My slaves. You're My friends. It's interesting though that each of them as they refer to themselves in their later writings refer to themselves as slaves. Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ. James, a servant of Jesus or bondservant of Jesus Christ. Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Peter, a bondservant. They refer to themselves still as bondservants but the Lord said I'm going to call you My friends. And then He said,

You did not choose me, but I chose you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you (15:16).

Divine election. You haven't chosen Me, I chose you. Jesus called them. Jesus was going by the sea of Galilee, saw a couple of fellows as they were washing their nets and He said, Come and follow Me, I'll make you fishers of men. I chose you. Went a little further, two fellows mending their nets and He said, Come and follow Me and they left their nets and followed Him. He chose them. He called Matthew from his place at the customs. He was a custom officer and He said, Follow Me. And Matthew left the custom

booth and he followed Jesus. He said, I've chosen you. (Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 9:9)

But it also followed that they had to obey the command to follow Him. It's interesting, we're getting into an area that nobody really understands. Some people pretend they do. But it's that sovereignty of God and the human responsibility of man and where are they reconciled? And God only knows. But as someone has said, The Lord gives the call and He said, "Whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). For "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). So the invitation is given to all, to all men. God hasn't excluded anyone as far as the invitation. Whosoever is whosoever. The invitation is to all.

But not all respond to the invitation. So on the outside of the gate it says, Whosoever will, let him enter in to the gate of life. And so you feel the tug of God upon your heart and you say, Yes, I'm tired of this life of sin and this going nowhere. I want meaning and purpose so you enter the gate because it says, Whosoever and that's pretty broad, it includes you.

And so when you get inside and you have the joy of being here now in the kingdom of God, you look back and you read on the inside of the gate. It says, You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you. How do you discover you're chosen? By entering. And when you enter, you find you have been chosen. If you don't enter, then you weren't chosen. Too bad! You say, Well, that's not fair. But wait a minute, Yes, it is fair. Because He said, Look, whoever wants can come. So you can't blame Him for not being fair, for not choosing you.

The thing is, and of course, here's the whole thing. That we can understand, and that's why it puts it out of our category: He knew who was going to respond because He knows everything. And so "those He did foreknow, He did also predestinate" (Romans 8:29). But you don't know. So the door is open to you and whoever you are, you may come and receive the gift of salvation. No one is excluded from the invitation to come. And thus, you can't blame God because He gives you the invitation.

If you reject the invitation, He lets you do that but He always knew you were going to reject it. You say, That's sort of difficult. Yes, solve the whole problem, just accept the Lord and you don't have any more problem. You discover that He chose you. "I've chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." That's what He has chosen you for. "Bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." Abiding fruit.

It isn't just flash, spectacularism. Drawing a big crowd. Making an appeal and having thousands of people come forward. It's not how many come forward, it's how many stick. How many are still walking with the Lord five years later? ten years later? The fruit that abides, and that's the kind of fruit that we're interested in, the abiding fruit that which remains. It's not being sweet for a few days and then going back to your cantankerous old self. But the fruit might remain that you might continue to love. And "that whatsoever you ask the Father, He may give it to you asking in the name of Jesus."

These things I command you [He emphasizes again, I command you], that you love one another (15:17).

Now in contrast,

The world is going to hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (15:18,19).

In the early period of the church, the church, of course, was born during the time of the Roman government. And the Roman government looked with disfavor upon Christians because they considered them insurrectionists against Rome. Rome actually ruled from the Euphrates to England. And that whole vast territory. So vast that there was oftentimes difficulty of maintaining the rule over such a vast territory.

Now for the most part, the people who were conquered by Rome loved being under the Roman government because there was a form of justice that they had not known under the feudal kings that once ruled in their areas. Most of the people were very happy for the Roman rule. There was law and order and the people appreciated it. And thus, the Caesars, the rulers and the emperors of Rome ultimately came to be worshipped as god.

They first sought to discourage that but then they saw that they could use that for their own purposes by letting the people look upon the emperor as god. Caesar is Lord. And by looking upon him as god, he could have better control over the people. So it developed in time that every year, a person had to bring a pinch of incense and offer the incense and declare, Caesar is Lord. And then you got your

certificate that affirmed that you were a true Roman citizen.

But there is no way the Christian would say that Caesar is Lord. And thus, they were looked upon as insurrectionists and it came to the place where it was a capital crime to be a Christian. If you were known to be a Christian, you would be put to death. It was a capital crime to be a Christian because it was considered insurrection against Rome. Not only did Rome hate the Christians but also the Jews hated the Christians. They stirred up a lot of animosity against the Christians.

Paul, when he would go out in his missionary journeys, you will read in the book of Acts the problem that he had and later he testified the perils among his own countrymen, among the Jews, how they stirred up the strife and all against Paul and his company who were preaching the gospel. Now Jesus is saying you're to love like I have loved. And His love was an unconditional love for us. But the world is going to hate, it's going to hate you. But, He said, it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, they'd love you because they love their own but because He has chosen you out of the world, therefore, it's going to hate you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they're going to persecute you (15:20);

Jesus didn't pull any punches. He let them know what it was going to cost to follow Him. It's going to cost you because the world is not going to like you because you disdain the fleshly things of the world, the fleshly ambitions of the world. And you want to follow after the Spirit. That's not the world's way. And so they will hate you.

if they have kept my saying, then they will keep yours also (15:20).

But you're going to have persecution.

But all of these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not him that sent me (15:21).

Because they're really ignorant of God. They're going to do this for My name's sake. When the apostles were beaten by the Jewish leaders, religious leaders, they went from the beatings rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer persecution for Christ's sake. Jesus said it's going to happen for My name's sake.

Now here's where we need to keep things in perspective. The hatred that the world has for you, you should not take personally. It's really Jesus Christ that they hate. You happen to represent Him. You happen to love Him. But it's their hatred of Jesus, the hatred against God that you experience. And thus you have that opportunity of suffering for Christ's sake. Now Jesus said here something very interesting, verse twenty-two:

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin (15:22).

Remember Jesus said, "Woe unto you, Chorazin! woe unto you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you" (Matthew 11:21,22). Tyre and Sidon didn't see the wonderful miracles of Jesus. Thus theirs was the sin of ignorance. This is the sin of open rebellion against God, it's sin against light.

"This is the condemnation, [Jesus said] light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. They would not come to the light, lest their evil deeds be reproved" (John 3:19,20). Had I not come, had I not done the works, had I not brought the light, then the sin would not be as great because it would still be sin of ignorance. Jesus said in Luke 12, "The servant, which knew the lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, will be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not [the ignorant], who had done things that were deserving of many stripes, will be beaten with few. For unto whom much is given, of them much shall be required: to whom He has committed much, to him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47,48).

So Peter said, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled back in the things of the world, and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:20,21). With knowledge comes responsibility. So it's too late for you. You've heard. And thus the sin is greater because it's the sin against light if you reject Jesus Christ. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now there's no cloak."

For he that hates me hates my Father also (15:23).

If I had not done among them the works (15:24)

That is, the miracles. That's what He's saying to Chorazin, If the works that were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would remain. More tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for this generation.

but now they have both seen and they have hated both Me and my Father. But this is come to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that's written in their law, They hated Me without a cause (15:24,25).

There are people today who hate Jesus and they really don't know why. And they speak in very hateful terms about Jesus. Next time you hear someone speaking in a very disparaging and hateful way about the Lord, ask them, Why do you hate Jesus so much? See if they can give you a reason. He said, "They hated Me without a cause." That's what the prophecy was. But now He turns from this and He says,

But the Comforter when He is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me (15:26):

When the Holy Spirit comes, His witness to you will be of Jesus Christ.

And you also [now He will bear witness but you also] shall bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning (15:27).

The witness of Jesus to go out into the world. Through the Holy Spirit and through those who had been with Jesus from the beginning. When in the book of Acts, when the disciples were assembled together waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit, Peter stood up in the midst and he said, You know, it's important that we choose someone to take the place of Judas Iscariot. One to be numbered with us, who can bear witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:15-21). So they said we need to choose a man who has been with us from the beginning who can also testify of having seen the risen Christ. So Jesus is saying to His disciples, You're going to be My witnesses because "you have been with Me from the beginning." You become My witness. Now Jesus said His works bore witness. John the Baptist bore witness of Jesus.

You see, Jesus is the Messiah. John is seeking to prove it but like an attorney, he is presenting all of these witnesses that testify that Jesus indeed is the Messiah, the Son of God. The works that Jesus did, he calls them to bear witness. Yes, no man can do these works except He is from God. God the Father bore witness of Him. The disciples are going to bear witness. The Holy Spirit bears witness. All of these witnesses which affirm the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. That's why John in the twentieth chapter will say, "Many other things did Jesus, which I did not write: But these things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah; and by believing have life in His name" (John 20:30,31).

So here Jesus is giving this final kind of instructions, has to do with abiding in Him, has to do with keeping His commandments, it has to do with prayer, it has to do with bearing fruit and it has to do with love. Loving, that's the ultimate sign. That's the ultimate experience. That's the ultimate evidence. That's the ultimate witness to the world. That love that He has commanded we're to have one for another. And so may the Lord help us to love one another even as He loves us.

Father, we hear Your word. We hear Your commandment. And we confess that we have fallen short. But we also declare that our desire, Lord, is to obey. And so we ask in the name of Jesus that Your Holy Spirit might so control our lives that we might love even, Lord, as You loved us. Unconditional love. Self-sacrificing love. Not trying to exalt our own position or place. Not seeking our own way. Not puffed up. But Lord, just loving even as You love. And so put Your love in our hearts that we might indeed be a witness to the world that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the only hope and the Saviour of the world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.