

Branch Life of the Believer

Lesson 3: The Branch

Every Branch in me that Beareth Not Fruit, He taketh It away - John 15:2

I. Introduction

- a. Thus far in our study of this passage we have considered the words Vine and Husbandman. The next significant word that we will examine is the word "branch".
- b. As we consider this Biblical text we must bear in mind whether we ought to understand words literally or figuratively.
- c. When we read the text literally we should realize that we mean that we are reading the words in accordance with the primary or strict meaning of the word or words. They mean what they appear to mean.
- d. The purpose of literal text is to convey in unambiguous terms just exactly what the Holy Spirit meant to convey with no room for misinterpretation. I.E. Thou shalt not steal.
- e. When we read a text figuratively we mean that the words involve figures of speech, metaphors, similes, etc. In this case the words represent ideas by means of a figure or likeness, as in a drawing, photograph or sculpture.
- f. The purpose of figurative language is to convey imagery with which the reader or listener would be familiar. Their use creates interest and provokes thought but it does so at a cost of technical accuracy and objectivity. I.E. "I am the true Vine"
- g. In this parable of the Vine and the branches Jesus is using figurative language to suggest complex relationships that might otherwise escape the comprehension of His hearers.
- h. This week we consider the lessons suggested to us by the branch as it draws its life from the vine. Therefore, let us first of all take in what a branch is, and what it teaches us about our life in Christ.

II. The Nature of the Branch

- a. As important as it is to know about the Vine, and the Husbandman, it is equally important to understand the nature of the branch and how vital it is to the work and purposes of the Vine of which it is a part.
- b. A vine needs branches if it is to achieve its purposes. Without branches to bear its fruit and produce its leaves the vine itself would serve no real purpose. Believers, as branches, exist to fulfill the purposes of God.
- c. A branch is simply a bit of wood or vine fiber, brought forth by the vine for the one purpose of serving the vine in bearing its fruit and leaves. Sucker shoots may grow out of the vine but they will never produce fruit and are worthless. Matt 13:38-39 but the tares are the children of the wicked one; ³⁹ The enemy that sowed them is the devil; KJV
- d. The branch is of the very same nature as the vine, and shares one life and one spirit in common with it. Acts 17:28 *For in him we live, and move, and have our being;* KJV
- e. Believers similarly, receive this same nature as our Vine in the spiritual act of regeneration. It is at this point that the Holy Spirit imparts to the believer the nature of Christ who is our new life. John 10:10 *"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly"*.
- f. As long as the Vine has life, its branches will also have the life of the vine flowing through them. John 10:28 *"I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand"*
- g. While being born again may be a figure of speech, the life imparted by Jesus Himself is real. John 6:63 *"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life"*
- h. Paul distinctly teaches that this new life is given to those who have previously been spiritually dead. Prior to regeneration they were incapable of bearing fruit. Eph 2:5-6 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* ⁶ *And hath raised us up together,* KJV
- i. A very real spiritual resurrection has taken place as the new branch begins sprouting out from the Vine. This regeneration causes a complete revolution in man and he operates under a new life-giving law. Rom 8:2 *"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"*
- j. The change is so radical that it is possible now to speak of this emerging branch as a "new creature" 2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
- k. The nature of this new creature is that of the Vine from which it springs. Eph 4:24 *"new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth"*
- l. Therefore the real person that now exists is of the same composition and nature as that of the Vine from which he springs. Col 3:10 *"the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him"*
- m. Since his real being as he appears in the sight of God is thus transformed, it is not accurate to refer to him as his former self. Gal 6:15 *what counts is a new creation.* NIV
- n. This is so because the Author of this change is none other than the Spirit of God. Therefore, God now refers to this new branch as a son, adopted into the family of God. Gal 4:6-7 *Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba," Father.* ⁷ *So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.* NIV
- o. Paul himself experienced this change, and subsequently exhibited the powers of the unseen world (branch life in Christ) in his life of service. Gal 2:20 *"It is no longer I that live," he exclaims, "but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me"*

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III. Perfect Conformity

- a. Further, the branch teaches us that it possesses a life of **perfect conformity**. The branch is exactly like the vine in every aspect-the same nature, the same life, the same place, the same work.
- b. In all this the branch and the Vine are inseparably **one**. The branch produces only the fruit of the type, quantity and quality as dictated by flow of nutrients and hormones from the Vine.
- c. And so the believer needs to know that he is **partaker** of the divine nature, and has the very nature and spirit of Christ in him, and that his one calling is to yield himself to a perfect conformity to Christ.
- d. The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is, the one is great and strong, and the source of strength, the other little and feeble, ever needing and **receiving** strength.
- e. Even so the believer **is**, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ.

IV. Entire Consecration

- a. We may also learn the lesson of **entire** consecration from the branch. The branch has but one object for which it exists, one purpose to which it is entirely given up. That is, to bear the fruit the vine wishes to bring forth from it.
- b. And so the believer has but **one reason** for his being a branch-but one reason for his existence on earth -that the heavenly Vine may through him bring forth His fruit.
- c. Happy the soul that knows this, that has consented to it, and that says, I have been redeemed and I live for one thing-as **exclusively** as the natural branch exists only to bring forth fruit.
- d. We must acknowledge that as exclusively as the heavenly Vine exists to bring forth fruit; I too have been planted by God into Christ, I have **wholly** given myself to bear the fruit that the Vine desires to bring forth from my life.

V. Absolute Dependence

- a. We may learn the lesson of **absolute** dependence from the branch. The vine has its stores of life and sap and strength, not for itself, but for the branches.
- b. The branches are and have nothing but what the vine provides and **imparts**. The believer is called to, and it is his highest blessedness to enter into, a life of entire and unceasing dependence upon Christ.
- c. As branches of the Lord's planting we must **contemplate** our absolute dependence day and night, every moment, remembering that Christ is to work in us to provide all we need.

VI. Unfailing Confidence

- a. And then finally, the lesson of **unfailing** confidence. The branch has no resources of its own; the vine provides all; the branch has but to yield itself and receive.
- b. It is impossible that anything that is a true necessity or required of us for our daily sustenance or fruitfulness would be **withheld** by our Heavenly Vine or ignored by our Husbandman who always cares for us.
- c. Recognizing that everything that we need for our strength and survival and fruitfulness is provided for us by the Vine should enable us to say **confidently** along with Paul: "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"
- d. This unfailing confidence should produce a song within our hearts, a smile on our faces and dispel any hint of **worry** from our minds for our confidence is in our Vine and our Husbandman who can not fail us. Gen 22:8 *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering so they went both of them together. KJV*

VII. Application

- a. Knowing that our new nature guarantees us that the supply of the Vine of which we are branches is continuous, inexhaustible, and sufficient for everything that we could possibly need:
 1. To what extent do you manifest perfect conformity?
 2. To what extent do you manifest entire consecration?
 3. To what extent do you manifest absolute dependence?
 4. To what extent do you manifest unfailing confidence?