

# To Provide Fullness of Joy

Proclamation Wednesday Night Gathering; Week of Sunday, July 18, 2021; Steve Thiel

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True believers abide in the Lord Jesus Christ, for apart from Him they can bear no eternal fruit. This union, which originates with Christ, is sealed by His substitutionary death and is completed by our response of faith, love and obedience, which results in pure joy.

## **I. Abide in the True Vine – Read John 15:1-8**

- A. Jesus proclaims “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser”. Where else do we have this kind of imagery in Scripture? What is the significance of the vine and the vinedresser?
- B. According to verse 2, how do you interpret the branches that are “in me [Christ]” that are not bearing fruit and are therefore taken away? Why would it be inconsistent with John and the rest of the New Testament to assert that those who are cut off from the true vine are true believers?
- C. What are the two roles of the vine dresser? Do you see God’s pruning in your life as harsh and unnecessary? Or do you see His pruning as evidence of His love for you? (See Hebrews 12:3-11)
- D. What connections to the ordinary means of grace (Word and prayer) as a means of abiding do you see in this text? How are these means of grace directly connected to you bearing fruit?

## **II. Abide in Christ’s Love – Read John 15:9-17**

- A. We are only able to love others as Christ commanded us because He first loved us and gave Himself up for us (1 John 4:7-11). How would you like to grow in meditating on Christ’s love? How is His love for you the standard and motivation for your love for Him and others?
- B. Jesus is both Master and Friend to those who follow Him. Do you tend to view Jesus in terms of either Master or Friend to the exclusion of the other? How might this affect the way you live?
- C. Are you taking obedience to Jesus’ commands seriously? Are there areas in your life where you’re giving yourself a pass? What would it look like to start obeying Jesus in those areas?

## **III. Pure Joy Found in Christ – Read John 15:11 and Psalm 37:4**

- A. What do you think it means, “To delight yourself in the Lord, that He might give you the desires of your heart?” How might that get played out in a person’s life after coming to faith?
- B. What do you think is the connection between obedience and joy? How does the fruit of believers bring much glory and honor and praise to God? What would be some examples in your life?
- C. Obedience to Christ leads to joy. Do you see Christ’s commands as “burdensome” (1 John 5:3)? Regardless of outcome (persecution, sacrifice, etc.), do you find great joy in obeying God?