

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Come and See

9. Vine and Branches

John 15:5-11 (NIV)

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Context

In the chapter right before these discourses, chapter 13, Jesus performs a shocking act during dinner by kneeling down to wash His disciples' dirty feet—something that, in their culture, a superior rabbi would never do. Jesus explains that this act is a symbol of His entire life's purpose: to reveal the true nature of God as a being of self-giving love. It symbolizes how Jesus will become a servant, willing to die for the sins of the world. Jesus' teaching in this section reaches its climax when He gives His Great Command: "Love one another as I have loved you." Acts of loving generosity are to be the defining hallmark of Jesus' followers.

Jesus repeatedly reminds His disciples that He is going away. This grieves them, but Jesus assures them that it is for the best. In His place, He will send the Spirit, also known as the Advocate. As a human, Jesus can only be in one place at a time, but the Spirit can be everywhere.

Central Question

But how do we know if we are remaining/abiding in Christ or not?

Are you willing to follow the thread?

Hitting the Wall

"Measure thy life by loss and not by gain. Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth. For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice. And he who suffers most has most to give. Death to self is the way out into a life of sacrifice." — Lillias Trotter

Philippians 2:5-8:

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage;

Rather, He made Himself nothing by taking on the very nature of a servant, Being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,

He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—

Even death on a cross!"

"Abba, into Your hands I entrust my body, my mind, my spirit,

And this entire day—morning, afternoon, evening, and night,

Whatever You want of me, I want of me,

Falling into You and trusting in You in the midst of my life,

Into Your heart I entrust my heart—feeble, distracted, insecure, uncertain.

Abba, unto You I abandon myself, in Jesus our Lord." - Brennan Manning

No More Striving

There is a stark contrast between striving and abiding. Striving is about pushing forward, fighting for control, and trying to make everything align with our expectations. But abiding, as Jesus describes, is about finding rest in Him. It's about trusting His rhythms, His timing, and His grace. When we strive, we carry the weight of the world on our shoulders. But when we abide, we allow Jesus to carry that weight, and we walk in peace, knowing that He guides us.

- In what areas of my life am I still striving in my own strength, and how can I begin to surrender that to God today?
- How can I practice abiding in Christ this week, trusting His timing and direction over my own plans?

NOTES:

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time with John and the message, consider going around and sharing answers to the following prompt: What are you looking forward to the most this spring?

CONNECT WITH GOD (Use one of the below practices or choose one from a previous week.)

- **Use the Lenten Card for Reflection**

Alone: Using SBPC's Lenten card, spend time in [lament](#), [confession](#) and [stillness](#). Then, [posture](#) yourself to receive the unfailing love of God this new day of Lent.

- **Attending to God through Art**

Alone: Using the artwork linked below, spend 5-10 minutes reflecting and journaling on what you see in the painting. solanabeach.church/032325

Pray that God quiets the many distractions within you and beyond you in order to focus on the gift of this artwork before you.

As you focus in on the painting, you might journal your reflections to the following questions:

- Where am I emotionally and spiritually right now?
- Where does God meet me in this painting?

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Together: **Read John 15:5-11**

- Before digging into the scripture and message more, [pray together](#). Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.
- Alone: Reflect/journal on one of the following prompts:
 - What does it look like for you to remain or abide in Christ in your daily life?
 - Are there areas where you feel disconnected from Christ, and how can you address that?
 - Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit guiding you in unexpected ways, like the thread in George McDonald's story? Reflect on that.
- As a whole group: Around the circle, share your personal reflections

from the prompts above. Encourage one another to engage curiosity, confusion, or bigger questions.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- How did God meet you in the message or in worship this week?
- In what ways did the message connect to your own life of faith?
- Contextualize the passage. How does your understanding of the passage shift when you consider it in context of what has come before?
- What does it mean to abide or remain in Christ?
- What does Jesus say is required to "bear much fruit" (vs. 7-10)?
- How do you find connection and contrast between John 15:5-11 and Philippians 2:5-8?
- What questions, observations, or reactions do you have after reflecting on the passage and sermon?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: Explore the quote below in connection with John 15:5-11.

"Measure thy life by loss and not by gain. Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth. For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice. And he who suffers most has most to give. Death to self is the way out into a life of sacrifice." - Liliat Trotter

PRAYER

This week, pray for one another using the blessing of Kate Bowler on the Lenten reflection card.

*Blessed are you
who need a gentle reminder that
even now, even today,
God is here,
walking with us,
meeting us in our places
of sorrow and despair,
desperation and grief.
Slowing lifting our chin toward hope.
Not promising to erase the pain.
But to carry it with us.
Blessed are we who realize
we are never—were never—alone.
And somehow,
That is good enough.*