

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of April 22, 2018

“The View From The Vineyard” Pastor Temple 8:15, 10:55 Pastor Hall 9:30

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Is there anything that came up this past week in regard to the witness or application points from the previous meeting that you would like to share? (A Voice In The Night, 1 Samuel 3:1-10)
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- What is the biggest change that being a Christian has made in your life?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, John 15:1-8. As you go through the discussion questions, it is ok to skip questions in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 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. ⁶If 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. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- There are 7 “I Am” statements of Jesus in the gospel of John which hold a literary connection with the name of God given to Moses at the burnish bush, Yahweh, or I Am who I Am (Exodus 3:14). This week’s message is about “I Am the True Vine.” What is Jesus claiming about himself in this bold claim?
- What relationships and activities do you see represented in verses 1 and 5?

- Pastor Temple contrasted the word “true” or genuine in verse 1 with our culture which largely denies absolute truth, with many people who do and say whatever they please with little or no consideration of consequences. How is this parable of Jesus about a divine pruning of fruitful branches and the cutting off of unfruitful branches, “true” for everyone?
- If what God judges to be “fruit” does not happen by accident, then how does it happen?
- How have the methodical Methodists traditionally sought this kind of spiritual fruit in their lives?

Another Related Scripture (10 min)

- Would a volunteer please read aloud Galatians 5:16-26.
- What conflict is presented in verses 16-17?
- The acts of the sinful nature in verses 19-20 and the fruit of the spirit in verses 22-23 are presented in starkly contrasting terms. How does this conflict of the sinful nature and life in the Spirit play out in the life of a Christian?
- Do you agree that the fruit of the Spirit or qualities listed are the primary signs of a follower of Jesus Christ or are there others as well?
- Which fruits are most ripening in your life and which are still in the bud? (credit L. Coleman)

Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)

- What were points of encouragement or challenge for you personally in the sermon?
- What is our role as disciples of Jesus Christ in producing this “fruit” and what does it mean in practical terms to “abide” in Jesus the true vine?
- Do you feel that you are more knowledgeable or closer to God than you were at this time last year? If not, are you open to seeking God’s pruning in your life that you might grow in Him?
- What kind of spiritual growth plan are you open to?
- Is there someone in your life who can tell you when you are messing up?

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- Verse 8 presents the idea that our faith in Christ to be shown in observable “fruit.” Who can we be in prayer for in your social network who does not seem to have a meaningful connection with the church but who may have a good view of the spiritual fruit God is growing in your life?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.