

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. The text for today comes from our Gospel reading in John 15.

Dear Friends in Christ,

We're going to say our Vision statement three times. Let's review, Centered in Christ Jesus, we Love, Teach, Serve, Reach, Repeat! We're going to say it three times and I want you to say it like you mean it. 1) Centered in Christ Jesus, we Love, Teach, Serve, Reach, Repeat! 2) Centered in Christ Jesus, we Love, Teach, Serve, Reach, Repeat! 3) Centered in Christ Jesus, we Love, Teach, Serve, Reach, Repeat! Why do we do this? Because we believe God transforms lives for eternity. That is why we're centered in Christ Jesus. That is why we Love, Teach, Serve, Reach, Repeat. Because God transforms lives for eternity.

Today, we are going to talk about Teach. What do we mean when we say teach? What does it look like? For our answers, we're going to look in the Bible at John 15:1-17 and Jesus' teaching on being the vine.

Jesus says, **"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.** So far, we understand Jesus is the Vine. God the Father is the vinedresser, the pruner. Every branch that is in Jesus that does not bear fruit, God prunes, so that it will bear more fruit. God the Father is working and desiring that all of the branches bear fruit, and He's going to prune them so that they bear more fruit.

**<sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.** Verse 3, to me just seems to be standing by itself. What is its purpose, why does Jesus say vs. 3? He's talking about vine and branches, and before He gets into the heart of this discussion, He wants the listeners to know their status. He told us the Father prunes the dead branches. Are you a dead branch? Am I? Have we already been cut off, is it too late for us? Vs. 3 tells us no, you are not dead, it's not too late, you are clean because of God's Word. God's Word produces life. God's Word cleanses, washes away sin. You're not dead. You have not been cut off. So now, listen up! Vs. 4-10.

**<sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.**

In these 7 verses, verses 4-10, there is one word that Jesus says 10 times. Can you guess what that word is? Abide. It comes from the Greek word *menō*, which also means, remain. You can use Abide and remain, interchangeably. What does Jesus really want you to know and take away from verses 4-10? Abide, Remain, Abide or remain in what? Jesus. Vs. 5, **I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides (remains) in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

What does Jesus say is absolutely critical in verses 4-10? That we abide/remain in Him. Because if we do not abide, if we do not remain in Jesus, what happens? We die. Vs. 6, **If anyone does not abide (remain) in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.** Vs. 7, **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** Did you catch what Jesus just said here in verse 7?! Who is greater than God? Who can overpower or overcome God? We know the answer, no one is greater or more powerful than God. Abiding, remaining in Jesus, and Jesus' Words remain in you,

ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. If we are doing what God is calling and desiring for us to be doing, nothing will be able to stop us. If we are doing what God is calling and desiring for us to be doing, nothing will get in our way that cannot be overcome. Because it is not us doing it, it is all the power of God. Because who are we abiding in, remaining in, trusting in to provide? It's all God! **Abide in My (Jesus) love.**

**<sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.** This is the deep, abiding, remaining joy, that in good times and in bad times, we are always people of God, in Christ Jesus, and that will never change. Being a child of God, being in Christ Jesus, our joy is full! We are now, and for all eternity, people of God! As we abide in Christ Jesus, that will never change!

What does Jesus talk about in vs. 12-17? Love. **Love one another, as I have loved you.** Now wait a minute, stop the train, hold the bus! What did Jesus just say?! **Love one another, as I have loved you.** What did we just talk about last week that is our core value, we are centered in Christ Jesus, therefore we... (Love). And that Bible reference we learned about Love was from 1 Corinthians 13. Now, we're in John 15, and He's telling us the same thing! Remaining, abiding, being in Christ Jesus, we (Love)! We love one another as Jesus has loved you/us.

Vs. 16, **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.**

When we say, centered in Christ Jesus, we Teach, what does teach mean? It means we remain, we abide, we are in Christ Jesus. That means, we are constantly, continually, in God's Word. And we're not just in God's Word, where we read it or listen to it, and then we're finished. We continually, constantly apply God's Word and live in God's Word. Every single day. 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We remain, we abide, we apply and we live God's Word.

Why? Because God's Word transforms our lives for eternity. Being in, applying and living the Word of God means we have life in Christ Jesus. Being in, applying and living in the Word of God means we are people of God and we are doing what God desires us to be doing. Jesus tells us, commands us, that we are to love people the way God loves us.

Jesus tells us, that in Him, doing what He calls and tells us to be doing, nothing is impossible for us. Nothing will be able to stop or hinder us, because we have God, His power, His Word, His strength. Jesus is the One we are trusting and relying on. Jesus, His power, His strength, His promises will provide for us.

Teach, is all about you and me seeing and knowing who we are in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus, we are people of God. In Christ Jesus, our sins are fully forgiven. In Christ Jesus, heaven is absolutely our home. In Christ Jesus, we have God's love and promises that never end and never fail.

Teaching is all about, knowing and trusting these promises of God and seeing, they are not just for us, they are for every single person we see and meet. Everyone we see and meet inside church and everyone we see and meet outside of church. Teaching is all about helping as many as we possibly can, to see and know and believe all that Jesus has done and what it means. Teaching is all about helping people to be in the Word of God, apply the Word of God so that they too can live in the full Word and promises of God.

This is God transforming the lives of people for eternity. Your life has been transformed by God for all of eternity. My life has been transformed by God for all of eternity. And that is what we are all about here at Zion. We are all about transforming lives by God for all of eternity. And how do we do it? We do it by being in the Word of God. We do it by abiding, remaining, in Christ Jesus, and teaching and showing others all that Jesus has done. Centered in Christ Jesus, we teach! In Jesus' name. Amen.

May the peace that surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.