

Eternity Daily Bible Study No. 292

THE PASSION SERIES – THE GOSPEL OF JOHN CHAPTERS 12-21

To subscribe send a blank email to: eternity-dbs-subscribe@strategicnetwork.org

Read the Eternity archives at: <http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/>

Send feedback – <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/feedback.htm>

How To Handle Stress In Ministry: http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/pastoral_stress.htm

John 15:1-8 MKJV I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. (2) Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every one that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bring forth more fruit. (3) Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken to you. (4) Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. (5) I am the Vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (6) If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered. And they gather and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. (7) If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. (8) In this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you shall be My disciples.

In these eight verses Jesus covers the secret of a fruitful spiritual life. We find the fruitful life is the result of in interaction where God responds to His Creation and His Creation responds to the life of Christ within it. Jesus is the Vine, the Life, the Source and we are the branches that flow from that life and which are filled by that life. Those branches have a choice about what to do with the (spiritual) life within them. Before we proceed a quick correction from the Greek in verse 2 “he takes away” should be “he lifts up” or “he lifts away” as in a vinedresser lifting a branch up, tying it back and making sure it is not in the mud. It implies corrective action, not removal from the vine.

All truly born-again believers have the life of Christ dwelling within them in the form of a “new man”, a new nature that is from God and which is “born of God” through the action of the Word of the gospel on the spirit of the believer. (see <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/innrmn1.htm>) 1 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10

This new creation is born through the word of God and sustained through the word of God. This is reflected in the above verses:

“Now you are clean through the Word which I have spoken to you.”

“If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you.”

The four responses in this parable - no fruit, some fruit, much fruit, failing to abide are somewhat similar to the four responses in the parable of the four soils (none, shallow, fruitless and abundant) . Lets try and do a chart if email formatting permits:

VINE	GOD
No fruit	Corrective action
Some fruit	Pruning
Much fruit	Pruning
Does not abide	Taken away and burned

The last category are the “dry” and not even thirsty, shriveled up, lifeless pew-warmers, the dead wood of the church. Despite hearing the sermons and testimonies spiritual life has been unable to make any headway within them. They have cast aside the grace of God and in turn will be cast aside themselves.

The rest of us God is busy correcting and pruning and making productive. God wants His life within us to turn out productive in good works. As someone said “There are two parts to being a Christian, one part is believing it, the other part is behaving it.” If we have His life within us - we have at least started believing it. Now God wants us living it and behaving it as well. So God disciplines us as sons (Hebrews 12) and may even “break us” at our point of strength like he did with Jacob. He wants us humble and malleable and contrite and teachable.

Once this happens His Word can go to work within us - and then things get interesting! “If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you.”

If we become humble and teachable and fruitful - then we are abiding in Christ and His Words sink deeply into us and abide in us. Then we start praying from the word planted in our souls. Our spirit and God’s Spirit become “one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17) and what we ask for in prayer is heard on high! (1 John 5:14,15).

Our deepest fruitfulness comes from answered prayer. And answered prayer comes from abiding in Christ and having His Word abide in you! Therefore serious, deep soul-touching bible study on a daily basis is essential, not optional, nor just recommended, but essential! We have to love the Word and take it deep within us. Tonight someone commented to my wife “You married a concordance!” That is because I take the Word seriously. It is a feast to my soul. I say this not to boast but to say that all Christians should know their Bibles and love the Word and have it dwell within them for it is healing and life and fruitfulness and joy.

Above all it forms us into Christ and gives us the mind of Christ to think the thoughts of Christ and pray the prayers of Christ, the “whatever you ask for” prayers that move Heaven and earth. A couple of days ago I was praying about my ministry which involves establishing Internet cafes in unreached people groups and staffing them with local missionaries as outreach points. I needed 546 computers and had “no time” in which to find them. I also needed some funds for another project. As I had my quiet time that day God said for me to pray for the computers and to call them into being and to command them by faith. I did as God commanded and prayed, then sent out half a dozen emails, and prayed over those with Minda, then just five minutes afterwards the phone rang, and someone who had just got an email saw no problem with giving us the 546 computers. The money for the other project came in as well! I yelled Yeehah! Praise the Lord! And danced around the house. God is good, and when you pray according to His Word, for the things of the Kingdom - He surely answers!

Blessings,

John Edmiston johned@aibi.ph

To donate online go to: <http://aibi.gospelcom.net/aibi/donate.htm>

The Life And Ministry Of Jesus The Messiah : <http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/messiah/>

A step by step journey through the life and ministry of Jesus - 25 bible-teaching articles that examine His birth, childhood, temptation, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension and Return.

Visit the Eternity Daily Bible Study Archives -

<http://www.aibi.ph/eternity/>

Study at the Asian Internet Bible Institute- Free online non-formal, in-service, bible and ministry training: <http://www.aibi.ph>