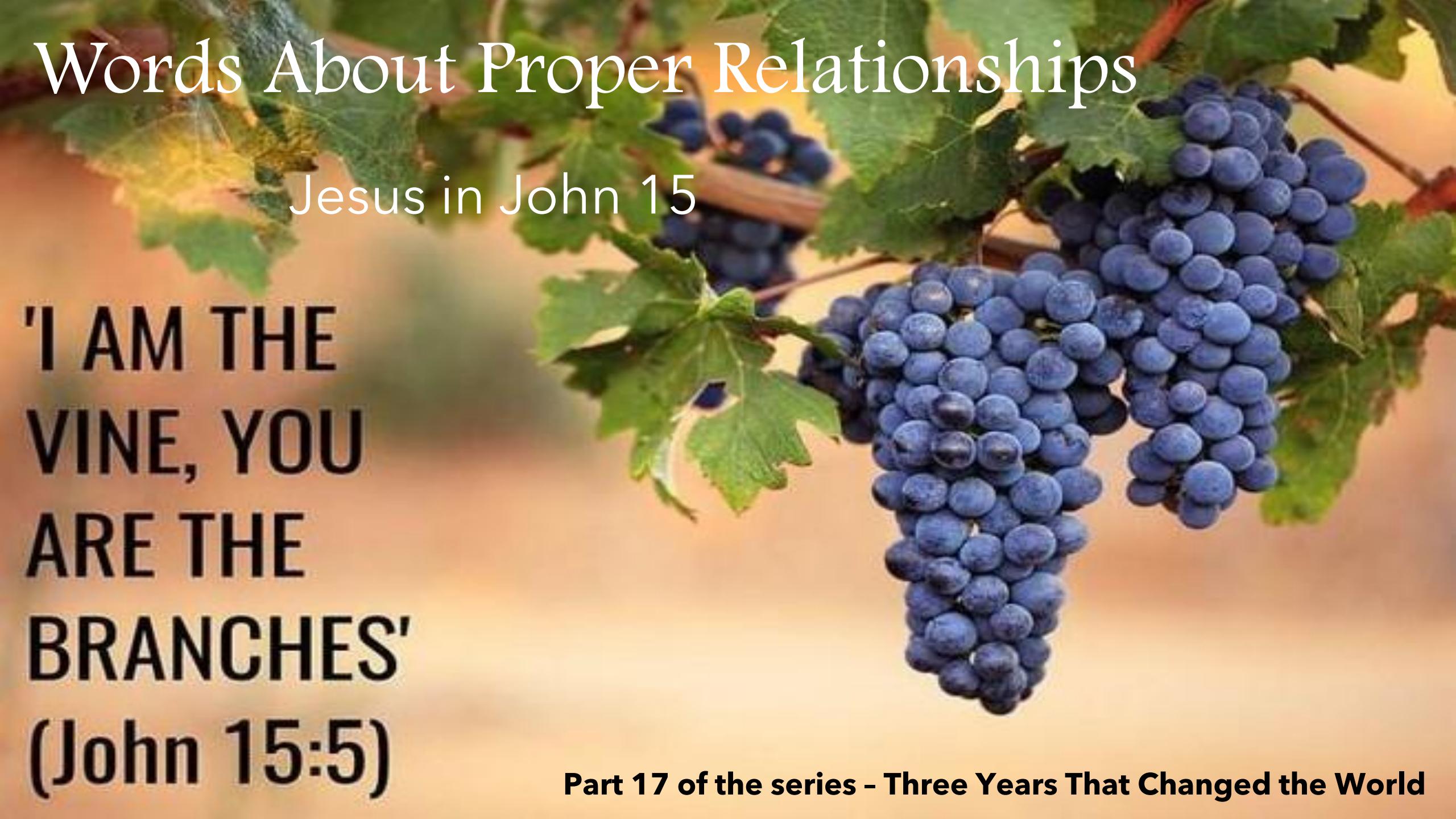


Words About Proper Relationships

Jesus in John 15

**'I AM THE
VINE, YOU
ARE THE
BRANCHES'
(John 15:5)**

Part 17 of the series - Three Years That Changed the World



Maintaining a Proper Relationship with God

John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He 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. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain 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. (John 15:1-4)

✓ This is the 7th of the seven “I Am” statements (**deity claims of Jesus**) in John’s Gospel

1. “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35)
2. “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12)
3. “I am the door/gate” (John 10:7)
4. “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11)
5. “I am the resurrection and the Life” (John 11:25)
6. “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6)
7. **“I am the true vine”** (John 15:1-5)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He 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. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain 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.” (John 15:1-4)

- ✓ Jesus is the “True Vine” – the One in whom we must abide/remain in
- ✓ God is the Gardener (Vinedresser) – the one who cultivates and protects the vine
- ✓ The “non abiding” branches that do not produce fruit are false disciples of which Judas Iscariot was identified with.
- ✓ The other 11 disciples and those true disciples that follow are a part of the “abiding” branches that do produce fruit.

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- ✓ The use of the term “vine” was probably no accident and there is an interesting parallel to the Old Testament people of Israel who were to be the means through which God’s covenantal blessings would flow to the world:

“**You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.** You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. **Its branches reached as far as the Sea, its shoots as far as the River**” (Psalms 80:8-11)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He 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. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain 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.” (John 15:1-4)

✓ Unfortunately, the people of Israel and Judah turned from God, but Jesus now came as the “**true vine**” to bring all true believers (those who abide) back to God

“I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. **How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine?**” (Jeremiah 2:21)

“I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. **Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.**” (Isaiah 5:1-2)

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- ✓ Jesus expects that his followers (those who believe in him) to produce fruit which was precisely what was expected of the people of promise (The Israelites)
 - To love God
 - To obey God
 - To live rightly before God
 - To be just in our dealings with one another

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

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- ✓ Jesus describes the process that any gardener/vinedresser would do with branches that were non fruit bearing:
 - The branch or branches that didn’t bear fruit would be cut off because they were dead
 - The context of this chapter (probably a metaphor) seems to be comparing the dead branches to those who are not true followers
- ✓ One of the saddest examples of this would be Judas Iscariot (John 13:27, Luke 6:16, Matthew 26:14-16) who once followed Jesus **but walked away** from him.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He 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. **You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.** Remain 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.” (John 15:1-4)

- ✓ The 11 disciples had been cleansed by the words of Jesus because they embraced him as their Lord and Savior – they were truly “born again”

“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:3-7)

“He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” (John 13:6-8)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He 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.** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain 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.” (John 15:1-4)

- ✓ Jesus provides three distinct marks of the “true branches” – a probable analogy to a “true believer”:
 - They must bear fruit
 - They must remain/abide in Christ and his love
 - They must belong and remain with the original source (the vine) of life which is evidenced by obedience to his teachings (John 8:31, John 14:15, 21-24)
- ✓ At times, a true branch will need pruning to ensure it continues to bear fruit (Hebrews 12:7-11)

“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.** 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. **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** **This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**” (John 15:5-8)

- ✓ Jesus has already established the distinction between a “true believer” and a “false believer”
 - A true believer bears fruit
 - A false believer does not bear fruit and is removed from the vine
- ✓ A true believer recognizes they belong to the vine (Christ) and will choose to abide (remain) in Christ by following him and being obedient to his words. **This is the evidence of a genuine follower** (disciple of Christ) and results in the blessings found in God’s will (His glory).

What are some practical things you can do to ensure you are a “fruit bearing” branch

- ✓ Pray to the Father (Matthew 6:5-13)
- ✓ Seek the things of God (Matthew 6:33)
- ✓ Fellowship with other true believers - go to church (Hebrews 10:25)
- ✓ Read and study the scriptures (II Timothy 2:15)
- ✓ Love others (John 13:34-35)
- ✓ Forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15)
- ✓ Be kind and thoughtful (Ephesians 4:32)
- ✓ Trust in the Lord (Provers 3:5-6)
- ✓ Don't be selfish but give to others (Philippians 2:3-4)
- ✓ Live rightly (Micah 6:8)
- ✓ Avoid things that will distract you from being in the center of God's will (Romans 12:1-2)
- ✓ If you sin, confess it, ask God to forgive you and turn from it (I John 1:9)
- ✓ Share the gospel with unbelievers (Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20)
- ✓ Always be ready for his return (Titus 2:11-14)

Maintaining a Proper Relationship with One Another

John 15:9-17

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 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**. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.” (John 15:9-14)

- ✓ A follower of Christ should be motivated by love - for God is love

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for **love comes from God**. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. **Whoever does not love does not know God**, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but **if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.** (I John 4:7-12)

- ✓ One of our primary purposes is to remain in God’s love – “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **keep yourselves in God’s love** as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life” (Jude 1:20-21)

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.” (John 15:9-14)

- ✓ One of the primary marks of a Christ follower is shown by how we love one another
- ✓ Christian love is the church’s most powerful example to an unbelieving world
- ✓ It’s not optional – it is a command and love for one another is to be mutual

“**A new command** I give you: **Love one another.** As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another**” (John 13:34-35)

“**Owe no one anything except to love one another,** for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”
(Romans 13:8)

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.** You are my friends if you do what I command.” (John 15:9-14)

- ✓ When Jesus spoke these words, he was just hours away from what would become the supreme evidence of his love – his sacrificial death on the cross.
- ✓ Although the disciples may not have been fully aware, Jesus knew it was about to take place, and it makes this statement even more powerful; “***Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends***”, because his death will demonstrate the supreme evidence of his love.

“But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us**. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from wrath through Him**. (Romans 5:8-9)

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command.**” (John 15:9-14)

- ✓ It is easy to overlook this statement and possibly ignore its implication. Sometimes we think that obedience to God’s commands are optional or some type of “Old Testament” requirement/ritual. Nothing could be farther from the truth.
- ✓ While obedience doesn’t earn salvation because we are saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), it is certainly the result of it.

I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that **you bear much fruit**; so, **you will be My disciples**. (John 15:5-8)

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.” (John 15:15-17)

- ✓ The relationship between a servant and a master should not be misunderstood here
 - Several of the New Testament writers (Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John) indicate our total submission and dependence to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus is our master and we are required to be submissive to his will
- ✓ However, the relationship of the disciples (and all believers) to Jesus goes deeper than the relationship of a servant to his master – he also calls them/us friend.

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you **love one another.**” (John 15:15-17)

- ✓ Jesus chose them (this would apply to all believers) to be saved because they, in and of themselves could not earn God’s favor. They couldn’t work their way to salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- ✓ Jesus also chose or appointed them to service – “bear fruit” and later (after he was crucified and rose from the dead) just prior to his ascension to the right hand of the Father, Jesus said these words:

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” Matthew 28:18-20)

Maintaining a Proper Relationship with The World

John 15:18-27

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

- ✓ The term **world** (in this context) is referring to all things evil (the fallen world system) and comprised of those who reject God and reject his Son. This “world system” is controlled by Satan.

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (I John 5:19)

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were *by nature children of wrath***, just as the others.” (Ephesians 2:1-3)**

- ✓ Because Satan hates God, he hates the true people of God (I Peter 5:8)

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

- ✓ Why does the world resent or hate believers (Jesus followers)?
 - Perhaps it is because the godly lifestyle of a believer stands in condemnation of the evil works of the world.

“Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brothers were righteous” (1 John 3:12)

“Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them” (Romans 1:32)

- ✓ A true believer (Christ follower) has a completely different joy, hope, purpose and love. The path of a believer pursues the truth and no longer believes the lies of the evil one. This is why the world hates us and why the world rejected/hated Jesus

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. **Yet because you are not of the world**, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

- ✓ Since we are no longer of this world – what is our responsibility to it?

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **so that you may become blameless and pure**, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky” (Philippians 2:15)

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Live as children of light** (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them.” (Ephesians 5:8-11)

- ✓ We should **stand apart** from the world **so that we can reach the world** with the truth

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

- ✓ Our friendship with God means we must endure the world's hatred because we are no longer a part of it.

“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:3-4)

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14)

- ✓ We now belong to Christ and because the world hates him, they also hate us

“Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.**” (John 15:20-21)

- ✓ Note the contrast that Jesus makes:
 - **Persecution** will come from the unbelieving world **identifying them with Satan**
 - To Jesus resulting in his crucifixion on the cross
 - To the disciples (and subsequently those who believe) because they believe
 - **Obedience** (to Christ’s teachings) **identifies us with God**
- ✓ To choose not to obey the teachings of Jesus and subsequently the teaching of the apostles means they (the unbelieving world) do not know God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’” (John 15:22-25)

- ✓ Jesus came and exposed sin through his teachings – his mere words alone did that!
- ✓ Those that heard his words became responsible for how they responded to his teachings
- ✓ By rejecting Jesus, this brought guilt and judgment upon them
- ✓ Those that heard his words and subsequently the teachings of the disciples along with the ministry of the Holy Spirit makes it impossible for someone to be without excuse for their sin. (Romans 1:18-32)

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, **who suppress the truth by their wickedness**, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that **people are without excuse.”** (Romans 1:18-20)

“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile **to retain the knowledge of God**, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them”
(Romans 1:28-32)

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:26-27)

- ✓ The Advocate is the Holy Spirit and Jesus is reaffirming the promise he had already made regarding the Holy Spirit who would come:

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (John 14:15-23)

The Apostle Paul declared – “You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.” (Romans 8:9-11)

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:26-27)

- ✓ One of the primary ministries of the Holy Spirit is to testify about Jesus to a lost world until Jesus returns:

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:9-14)

“Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” (Acts 5:29-32)

- ✓ The apostles and subsequently all believers, are also an inseparable link in that chain of witness about Jesus to a lost world! (Acts 1:8)