

# Fulton County Gospel News

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## The Vine and The Branches

By Harold Turner

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me, I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:1-8.)

This is a beautiful picture of the closeness of the relationship between Christ and his disciples, but a picture presenting several requirements and responsibilities for one to sustain this relationship.

In order to understand the significance of this analogy, we must determine just what the branches are. There are many who suggest that the branches represent the various different churches, that is, that each branch represents a distinctive denominational church.

In the first place, when Jesus spoke this, there were no denominational churches. In fact, there were none for about fifteen hundred years after this was spoken. To interpret the branches as different churches is to suggest that this teaching actually had no application for some fifteen hundred years.

A study of the context will clearly show that the branches represent individual Christians. To his disciples Jesus said, "I am the vine, YE are the branches." Too, He said, "If a MAN abide not in me, HE is cast forth as a BRANCH." Thus, each individual Christian is a branch in the vine.

There are several things we need to consider in a study of this analogy. The first thing we might consider is that to be a branch one must be in Christ. No matter what good one may do outside

Christ, it is of no avail to the glory of God. We must be in Christ to be saved (Acts 4:12), and to serve God acceptably (John 15:4, 8).

But how does one get into Christ? There are several things necessary to reaching this relationship. The first step in this direction begins with the gospel. In Rom. 1:16 Paul said it is the "Power of God unto salvation." And Jesus made it clear in John 6:45 that no person could come to him until he had heard and learned of the Father. The gospel provides the basis for the next action to be taken in bringing our life into harmony with Christ. It is the basis for our faith in Christ (Rom. 10:17). This faith is likewise toward salvation, as Paul shows in Rom. 10:10, saying: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." He also shows in this same verse, "and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Also, Paul said in Acts 11:18 that "Repentance is unto life." I'm sure that we understand that "UNTO" means in the direction of, or the approach to something, rather than having reached the destination. Coming unto something is not the same as coming into it. We are not just to come unto Christ, but into Him. The gospel, faith, confession, and repentance are all unto, that is, they are all essential things that must be done before one enters into Christ. However, if one stops at this point he is still outside Christ. There are two Scriptures that show clearly the action that brings us into Christ. In Rom. 6:3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized INTO Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" And in Gal. 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ." It is at this point that we become a branch in the true Vine.

The second point that we should consider about this analogy is that not only must we be in Christ, but we must abide in him. Jesus appeals to us to "Abide in me." And he said, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This shows that because we have been saved from past sins, does not assure us that we will be

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## 3,000 Conversions On One Sunday

By Hugo McCord

Are weakness and instability shown when people change churches? Sometimes. But if you answer "Always", you are overlooking the day of Pentecost. Are people ungrateful and inconsiderate of mothers if they turn from mother's church? The second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles tells of 3,000 people who were willing to leave the religion of mother and dad, of grandmother and grandfather, in order in God's sight to be right in religion.

On a Sunday morning, probably in May, A.D. 29, in Jerusalem in Palestine multitudes of Jews were milling about in fellowship, greeting new friends and old. Religious and devout these Jews were, having come from every nation, hundreds of miles in sacred pilgrimage in order to be faithful to their "church". To thousands of the faithful in Moses' church an exponent of another religion, of another church, arose to speak. He was a plain fisherman, the apostle Peter, now an official spokesman for Jesus Christ.

Many a modern preacher would have been embarrassed to do as did Peter that morning. Some modern ministers would have said, "Peter, these Jews are religious, and are in a timehonored and respected church. Don't bother them. One church is as good as another. You should not condemn their religion. Only a bigot would think that just Christ's way is right. Go ahead, Peter, and worship as you please in the church of Jesus, but attempt no proselyting.

But Peter believed with all his heart that no matter how respected and popular the church of Moses was, it was wrong. He believed that unless the Jews quit the church of their ancestors and came into the church or kingdom of the Lord they would be lost. Accordingly he unhesitatingly preached that the only right authority in religion is Jesus; "... know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ..." If Christ, then he is God's anointed; if Lord, then he is your master. Moses must give way; all other religious leaders must

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**FULTON COUNTY  
GOSPEL NEWS**

... is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name be SURE to include the Zip Code Number. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know of its financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and Harold Turner

**Three Thousand Conversions (Cont.)**

surrender. And you must surrender your heart and your all to the one with all authority in heaven and in earth.

With bated breath and quickened hearts, convinced of the futility of their church, convinced of the lordship of Jesus, thousands of Jews inquired, "... what shall we do?" The inspired preacher did not reply, "Since you believe in Jesus, you are saved and you ought to go and join the church of your choice." The inspired reply to the ones who believed was, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

At the risk of unpopularity and bodily harm from neighbors and kinsmen, as many as gladly received the word were baptized and there were added on that Sunday about 3,000 souls. Who were baptized? Those voted upon? No, all who gladly received the word. Babies? No, New Testament baptism has never been for babies, and besides they could not receive the word gladly. But as many who had honest and good hearts prompting them to crown Jesus king in their lives repented and the same Sunday were baptized. They did not wait till the next "Easter" or even for another day. Knowing they were lost until they obeyed the gospel of Christ they did not want to wait. And, after baptism, knowing they yet would be lost if they were slack and indifferent, they continued stedfastly in the study of God's word, in prayers, in the Lord's supper, in offerings of money, and in the fullness of joy. Let us do likewise in the 20th Century!

"The diamond cannot be polished without friction, nor can the man be perfected without trials."

"The school of affliction graduates rare scholars."

**YOUR MARRIAGE CAN BE A SUCCESS**

By Carl Spain

Make a success of your marriage! This is not mere human advice to be considered. It is a divine command to be obeyed. You will stand before God and give an account for the part you play in the success or failure of your home. The vows you made at the marriage altar are sacred. You cannot disregard them without being guilty of profaning the holy ordinance of God.

The following Scriptures show how imperative it is that we make our marriage work:

(1) "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous." (Hebrews 13:4.)

(2) "Likewise you husbands, live considerably with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered." (I Peter 3:7.)

(3) "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church...Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it...Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." (Ephesians 5:21-22, 25, 28.)

(4) "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity (fornication), makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Matthew 5:32; 19:3-9.)

(5) "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control." (I Corinthians 7: 3-5.)

On the sound basis of the above quotations from God's moral and spiritual law for us, we are impelled to make a few observations for your prayerful consideration.

**RESOLVE TO SUCCEED**

A cartoon in Collier's magazine gave the conversation of two worldly-wise maidens, in which one said to the other:

"If I divorce him he'd have to make a large settlement—but I can't get him to propose!"

This, though somewhat extreme, illustrates the irresolute attitude of many people who enter marriage weakened in heart and mind by an irreligious and immoral disposition. Marriage is not a mere sex license. It is a religious and moral contract that involves two souls, two minds, and two bodies. The only "honorable discharge" for either one is the death or unchastity of the other. The stability of our social order depends upon the basic institution of the home, and the stability of the home depends upon the moral and spiritual integrity of the husband and the wife.

**DEFRAUD NOT ONE ANOTHER**

If husband or wife refuses to fulfill the duties of married love, becoming indifferent and cold and even haughty in matters pertaining to the marital rights of the other, he or she is responsible in a great measure for acts of moral delinquency that may grow out of this maladjustment in their relationship. God will not countenance the Pharasaic self-righteousness of one who by such defrauding contributes to the delinquency of husband or wife, then under the cloak of purity and innocence cites the other's fornication as "grounds" for divorce. Only God can be the final judge of all the treacherous hidden facts involved in the break-up of a home.

**BELIEVE THE SAME THINGS**

From the scriptural viewpoint as well as from all that we have learned in recent years about the things that make for happy marriages, it is evident that any marriage is seriously handicapped when the husband and wife do not share the conviction of a common faith. Our faith is the mainspring of our conduct in all relationships. One's basic conviction on matters pertaining to moral and spiritual values is the most powerful factor that contributes to one's conduct in all practical relationships especially in the home. People who "believe the same things" have a much greater chance for success in marriage.

**CONFESS YOUR FAULTS  
ONE TO ANOTHER  
AND PRAY  
FOR ONE ANOTHER**

This will bring success. Failure results from always reminding your companion of his or her fault in a spirit of ill-temper,

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Your Marriage Can Be (Cont.)

with no will nor desire nor prayer that he or she may be healed.

Pray together, play together, and you can stay together. Love each other, and forgive each other, and you can live with each other. There is no nobility in living together in daily hell, torturing and tormenting each other, even if you can boast that you have managed to avoid separation.

Protracted hell, with daily torture and torment of mind and soul, is evil just as divorce without scriptural grounds is wrong. Your only noble alternative is heavenly success. The way to this heavenly success in marriage is through a strait gate and a narrow way. For those who seek it, and through seeking find it, there is a great treasure of happiness and peace of mind that passes understanding as a reward for this life, and eternal acceptance with God in the life to come.

CAUSES OF MARITAL DIFFICULTY

In the same issue of Collier's magazine, Judge Mildred Lillie is quoted as saying: "Most divorces are due simply to an inability of two people to sit down together and discuss their problems objectively. If you can just move them to do that, it is often the solution." We pray that we have been able to move you to do just that.

Judge Lillie gives the following list of major causes for trouble between husband and wife. Think them over.

WIFE: (1) Nagging; (2) Insufficient interest in the home; (3) Carelessness about personal attractiveness and physical relationships of marriage; (4) Carelessness with money; (5) Belittling husbands before others; (6) Excessive activities outside the home.

HUSBAND: (10) Excessive drinking; (2) Refusal to let wives handle funds; (3) Tyrannical attitude; (4) Refusal to assume home responsibilities; (5) Failure to confide in wives; (6) Spending too much time away from home.

The increase of divorce in our country is convincing proof of the fact that America is experiencing an increase in selfishness, which is the ugliest evidence of being a spoiled people.

Selfishness is destructive: love is constructive. Selfishness tears down; love builds up. What selfishness has destroyed, love can rebuild. Get on the side of God and love; and don't spend your energies on the side of Satan and hate!

"Stopping at third base adds no more to the score than striking out."

"Before you find fault with a house another has built, build a better one."

"If men can be found faithful in hard places they can be trusted in high places."

# Beware of Man's Formula for Unity

By Glynn V. Purdy

Unity is commanded and unity can be achieved. It was the Master's desire that all of His followers be one for a very good reason. In His prayer concerning this matter, after praying for His apostles, Jesus said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20-21)

To this the apostle Paul admonished: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3) He then listed God's formula for unity in three verses. The early church achieved this unity by this method. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42) This caused all believers to be of "One heart and of one soul." (Acts 4:32) They LOST this unity when they began to FOLLOW men, 1 Cor. 1:10-11. The only way we may again enjoy this unity is when we STOP following men!

Isn't it ironical that men caused the division by leaving God's word and now they tell us that we may redeem this unity by ignoring God's formula for unity! Yet that's just what the liberals in the church are prescribing for the remedy. They want all of us to begin taking their prescriptions at once. But let us examine the contents of these prescriptions first.

They begin with the wrong ingredient. They use Rom. 14 and Paul's teaching on the eating of meat as one ingredient. However, this, like circumcision (Gal. 5:6), has NOTHING to do with unity or salvation! It matters not whether we eat meat or not as concerning salvation, but if our eating meat offends a weak brother we should not eat it and cause him to stumble. BUT, how long should we accommodate the WEAK brother before we TEACH him and let him become STRONG also? That's the question that is not answered! And even if it were answered, we are still dealing with matters of opinion and not of doctrine.

The next ingredient is "Love", which to the modern promoter of unity "covers everything and spreads unity world wide." Not so! Love is KEEPING God's commandments, 1 John 5:3. When one "Walks in the light as He (God) is in the light, it is then and only then that, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

Those who gladly receive the word in Acts 2 were added to the church, and they were in fellowship. Those who did NOT obey the word were NOT in fellowship. Those who walk in the light with God are in fellowship today. Those who walk in darkness because their deeds are evil (John 3:19-21) are NOT in fellowship with God, regardless of what man says, and neither are they in fellowship with those walking in the light. You see, man cannot extend God's fellowship to anyone. If I obey God, I am in fellowship with him. If you obey God you are in fellowship with him. Thus, we are in fellowship with each other, BECAUSE we are BOTH in fellowship with God. But if you obey God and I do not, you can fellowship me, but you cannot extend God's fellowship to me. Also in turn, when you fellowship me in error, you are a partaker of my evil deeds and lose your fellowship with God, 2 John 9-10. We are to "Have no fellowship with God," 1 John 9-10. We are to "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11)

We have no choice. The faithful child of God cannot ignore the ones who have left the apostles' doctrine and cause "Divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have received and learned," but rather are to "avoid them." (Rom. 16:17) No, my friend, ignoring sin in the name of love to seek unity, is contrary to God's word, both in the Old and New Testaments. Those in error, causing division, should be "Restored in the spirit of meekness." (Gal. 6:1) Where

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## GOSPEL MEETING

The Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas will sponsor a gospel meeting July 24-30. Brother Charles Coil, president of the International Bible College, Florence, Alabama, will be the speaker. The meeting will begin each evening at 7:30 p.m., Monday thru Saturday, and at 10:45 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Sunday. We invite all who can to be with us during this week.

## SPECIAL MEETING

The area churches of Christ are sponsoring an areawide gospel meeting.

HEART OF THE OZARKS  
CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST

Date: June 19-25, 1978

Time: 7:30 p.m. Each Evening

Speaker: V. P. Black

Singing Directed by Guy Rose

Place: Heart of the Ozarks Fairgrounds,  
West Plains, Missouri



The Vine and the Branches (Cont.)

saved in eternity. It is possible to fall from a saved relationship and be lost again.

In Gal. 1:6 Paul showed that some of these had fallen, saying, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." And in Gal. 5:4 he said of these, "Ye are fallen from grace." He warned those of Corinth, saying, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." He has just shown how Israel had fallen, and serves as an example to us. In Heb. 3:12 he warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." We can most surely be lost after once being saved if we fail to remain faithful to the Lord. In Rev. 2:10 Jesus said, "...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The third point to consider in this picture is that the branches are to bear fruit. Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." This shows that the very purpose for the branches is to be productive and fruitful. The unfruitful branches only draw sap from the vine and give nothing in return. This illustrates that there is no place for the person who only wants to receive all of heaven's blessings and do nothing in return. The Christian does not exist for himself alone, neither was he saved for himself alone. God has a purpose for each of us to fulfill.

A branch can be easily identified with the vine because it bears the characteristics of the vine. Likewise when Christ lives in the heart of the Christian, the characteristics of Christ will be seen within that person. In Gal. 5:22-23 Paul lists several of these characteristics which can be seen in the person who abides in Christ: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." By these we can be identified with Christ. The true Christian studies the life of Christ and seeks to become more like Him each day.

This analogy stresses the need and importance of our being in Christ, the need to abide within him, and the importance of bearing fruit, through which we glorify God our Father. When these three things are true in our relationship with Christ, we have the blessed assurance and hope of living with him in eternity, and without them there is no hope.

"Correcting faults is like tying a necktie, you can do it better on yourself than you can on anybody else."

# Redeeming the Time

By Melvin Wise

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16.)

What is time? Time is measured duration. Hours, days, weeks, months and years are just so many distinct portions of duration measured by periodical revolutions. Time is successive duration. Therefore, we speak of time past, time present, and time to come. Time is limited duration. There was a period when time was not, there was a point of duration when time began to be, and the period will arrive "When time shall be no more." Thus we see how time is distinguished from eternity. Time is limited duration, but eternity is unlimited and absolute duration. Hence time is a precious treasure, a sacred trust put into our hands. God holds us accountable for use of it, and he expects us to be faithful stewards of our time.

There is quite a bit of difference between time and money. A man may save some money to use at some future time, but time passes on and cannot be called back by mortal man. Once spent and it is gone forever.

What does it mean to "Redeem" time? The meaning is not to reclaim it when it is once gone. That cannot be done, neither can time be hoarded. But we are to properly use it when it is available. The phrase "Redeeming the time" in the marginal reference is rendered, "Buying up the opportunity." In the RSV it is rendered "Making the most of time."

So time is a thing of value, a gift from God, and it means opportunity for those who receive it. It is sinful not to use it, or to misuse it, or to waste it.

With this view of time we should pray to God in the words of David, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Psalm 90:12.)

they AGAIN will be in unity with God, and all the faithful of God.

We can not bind up the wounds and hurts of the past generations and not create new ones without the healing of the blood of Christ. And His blood binds only when we OBEY him, Heb. 5:8-9. There is no use to cry unity while we practice the very thing that causes divisions - the opinions and creeds of men. The religious world has been trying to "love people" into heaven for many years. It does seem to me that we should know better by now. Unity is IN Christ. We are baptized INTO him. Then if we continue to OBEY him, "An entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:1-11) Read it!

"Perhaps the best arguments for free speech is that you don't have to listen to it."

"From nothing, nothing can come."  
"Wild tongues run down more people than wild driving."

"Egotists are like ships in a fog - they keep blowing their horns."

"If you look like your passport photo, you aren't well enough to travel."

"Ignorance needs no introduction, it always makes itself known."

"A perfect example of minority rule is a baby in the house."

## CONTRIBUTIONS

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