

TWO KINDS OF FRUIT

John 15:1–11; Luke 13:6–9; Galatians 5:19–23.

LESSON 92 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4).

A Visit to the Vineyard

Our lesson today takes us to a hillside covered with row upon row of grapevines. This is called a vineyard. In the land of Palestine, where Jesus lived when He was upon earth, there are many vineyards. In some parts of our own land we find large vineyards.

Shall we walk between the long, long rows of vines and see what we can learn about the vineyard? The roots of the vines draw the strength from the soil and produce lovely, juicy grapes. On both sides of us we see huge clusters of plump, ripe grapes.

As we walk along, we suddenly see a bunch of grapes, which are tiny, withered, and sour. We stop to see what the reason may be. What do you suppose we find? We discover that the branch on which this bunch of grapes is growing, has been cut off from the vine. It is just hanging there. From this we learn that a branch cannot have nice, big, juicy grapes on it unless it is fastened to the main vine.

Perhaps as we walk a little farther, we find a branch, which has no fruit on it at all. What do you suppose the man who takes care of the vineyard will do with this branch? He will have to cut it off and burn it, because he wants only the branches, which will bear fruit. We also learn from the caretaker that after the grapes are harvested, the vines must be "pruned." This means that all the dead branches are cut away and then gathered up and burned. Jesus said that the branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine. A branch that has been cut off may sometimes have blossoms on it, but soon it withers, and cannot bear fruit.

Bearing Fruit

Now that we have, in our imagination, walked through the vineyard, perhaps we can better understand the lesson Jesus was teaching in John 15. When he says in the fifth verse, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," He means that those who are saved live very close to Jesus. And, like the branches that had the beautiful grapes on them because they draw life and strength from the vine, we draw life and strength from Jesus when we keep in touch with Him. Then we can learn from Him and be good and do what He wants us to do. That is the way to "bear fruit" for Jesus.

Some "fruits" of a Christian are: love, joy, peace, goodness, faith. When we see a child who is kind and good, we believe that he is a Christian. But when we see a child who is mean, hateful, and quarrelsome, we know that he is not a Christian. He is like the branch that had the bad fruit on it. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." This means that you can tell at once, by the kind of life people live, who is a Christian and who is a sinner.

The Useless Fig Tree

One day Jesus told a story about a man who had a fig tree that did not have any fruit on it at all. The owner came to the tree for three years looking for fruit, but found no figs on it. He told the man who took care of the vineyard to cut it down. The caretaker begged the man to give it one more chance. He wanted to dig around it and see if it would not then bear figs.

Just as this man was displeased at the fig tree for not having fruit, so Jesus is displeased when we do not have any "fruit" in our life. If we never help those who are in need of help; if we never say a kind word; never try to bring someone to Sunday School; never tell someone about Jesus, then we are not bearing good fruit.

Helping the Helpless

At another time Jesus told the people that when they made a dinner or a supper they should call in the poor and the sick people instead of their rich neighbours. He said that the rich people can also prepare a fine dinner and invite them, but the poor and the sick ones cannot do that. There is a greater blessing in inviting those who cannot return the invitation (Luke 14:12–14). It is well for us to keep this in mind today.

Unselfish Abraham

Another kind of “good fruit” is unselfishness. For an example of this let us turn back to the Old Testament and review the story of Abraham, a man who loved God very much. He had “good fruit” in his life. Abraham’s nephew, Lot, lived with him. They both had a great number of cattle, flocks, and herds. Soon the herdsmen began quarrelling; so Abraham and Lot decided to move far apart.

We love to picture these two men as they stood together, making their plans. There before them lay the plain of Jordan – plenty of water and grass for the cattle. Abraham was the first to speak. But he did not say, “I will have first choice. I want the best place for myself and my cattle, and you must be satisfied with what is left.” He told Lot to take first choice: the land on the left hand or the land on the right hand. Abraham was willing to take either. The plain of Jordan would be a perfect place for my cattle, thought Lot. So he chose that land for his future home. He moved his family, his cattle, and all that he had there, and pitched his tent toward the city of Sodom. Do we remember the sad story of what happened to him while living there? (See Genesis 13.) Lot was selfish when he took the best for himself and did not seem to care how Abraham would get along. But he paid dearly for his mistake.

To the Children

Children should be taught to give the best to others and try to be unselfish when playing with other children. Before people are saved they usually want the best for themselves, but after they are saved they would rather give the best of everything to others, and be satisfied with what is left. God gave His best to us – He gave His only Son to come to earth and suffer and die for us.

One kind of bad fruit is jealousy. Perhaps the little boy next door has a shiny, new tricycle. Your tricycle may be old and worn out, and you want a new one very much. It makes you feel bad to see your little friend with his new one. Another friend may go places and have more fun than you have. Can’t you rejoice and be happy with them? Why not be happy when they are happy? If you feel jealous toward them, that is like bearing bad fruit.

Let us remember that others are watching our life, and Jesus sees us all the time. He even knows what we are thinking and what we are planning to do. As long as we pray every day and keep saved, we will be like the branch that bore the good fruit. We, too, will bring forth good fruit for Jesus, and cause others to wish they could be saved and be happy.

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the true vine? John 15:1.
2. What kind of branch brings forth much fruit? John 15:5.
3. Tell what happened to the barren fig tree. Luke 13:6–9.
4. Name three kinds of “good fruit,” Galatians 5:22.
5. What kind of “fruit” is hatred? Galatians 5:20.