

INTRODUCTION:

Each time the earth revolves around the sun, we celebrate another year of life. We get nostalgic looking back at years past, and we make resolutions of what to do in the coming year. This year is particularly fun for preachers because we get make “2020 Vision” puns for an entire year. In all seriousness, God has graciously given me a vision for what He wants Sappony to be. Also, in order to give credit where credit is properly due, He gave me a way to frame this vision through the work of Robbie Symons, who is the pastor of Hope Bible Church in Oakville, ON. For the next few weeks as we discuss the “2020 Vision” for Sappony, the frame we will use “the 5G Life” is used by permission. I’m only using the frame; I’m not using Pastor Symons’ sermons. I am using the scriptures and writing sermons for Sappony, but with that said, some of his thoughts may be included.

Some of you know that the Lord has really been beating me over the head with “discipleship” lately. In researching, what I found is a simple way to frame what a disciple really does and how they do it. What a true disciple does, and what I envision the individual members of Sappony doing, are ABIDE, CONNECT, and SHARE. The 5 G’s of this, or the how, are GOD TIME, GATHER TIME, GROUP TIME, GIVE TIME, and GO TIME. As we discuss these over the next few weeks, I want you to think about something that has really stuck in my brain. If all forty of the people who normally attend each reach one person in 2020, this time next year we would have 80. In 2022, we would have 160. In 2023, we would have 320. In 2024, we would have 640. In 2025, 1280. In 2026, 2560. In 2027 we would have reached 5120. And in 2028, we would have reached 10,240 which is more than the 7658 lost people in Sussex County. In eight years, we could reach all of our neighbors if everyone reached one per year.

MAIN TEXT (John 15:1-8)

BACKGROUND:

The Apostle John tells us his purpose in writing his gospel in (20:31) “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” We will see from his record of the words of Christ that WE MUST ABIDE IN THE TRUE VINE, WITHOUT HIM WE CAN DO NOTHING, and WITHOUT US THE LORD DOES NOT PRODUCE FRUIT. We also see a warning within this text that we must heed.

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

1. WE MUST ABIDE IN THE TRUE VINE
 - a. (15:1) I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper.
 - i. Jesus is speaking, so He is the true vine
 - ii. His Father, God, is the vineyard keeper or the farmer.
 - iii. Who are we? (15:5)
 - b. (15:2a) Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes
 - i. “He” is the vineyard keeper or God
 - ii. What is this fruit?
 - iii. A branch does not produce fruit by its own effort. It produces fruit because it is nourished by the vine.
 - iv. Are you producing fruit?
 - c. (15:2b) He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit.
 - i. Are you going through a pruning season in your life?
 - ii. Is God removing things in your life that get in the way of your producing fruit?
 - d. (15:3) You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

- i. (Eph. 1:4-8) For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for himself, according to His favor and will to the praise of His glorious grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.
 - 1. This is positional sanctification, because we take on the position as God's children.
 - 2. Sanctified means "set apart".
 - ii. When we accept Christ, we are "positionally sanctified". As we abide and grow, we are "progressively sanctified." When we die or are raptured, we are "perfectly sanctified."
 - e. "Accepting Christ" is not a "one and done" thing. It is continually abiding in Him. The key requirement here is time. Our Lord deserves the first and best of our time, not our leftovers and scraps.
 - f. If Christ is the true vine, surely there are false vines.
 - i. Many people abide in "being a good person", or in baptism, or in church membership.
 - ii. These will not save you, nor will they cause you to produce fruit.
 - iii. Morality is a false vine that people have abode in for generations!
 - g. Once we commit to Christ, we must stay in Him. Otherwise, we will be like the seed scattered in the rocky soil, with no root. **WE MUST ABIDE IN HIM BECAUSE WITHOUT HIM WE CAN DO NOTHING.**
2. **WITHOUT HIM, WE CAN DO NOTHING**
- a. (15:4) Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains

on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.

- i. What happens when you cut a branch off?
It loses its source of nutrition and sustenance. It dries out and dies.
 - ii. Are you trying to produce fruit without the sustaining nourishment of the vine?
 - b. (15:5) I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.
 - i. (MacDonald) “Christ Himself is the vine; believers are vine branches. It is not a question of the branch living its life for the Vine, but simply of letting the life of the Vine flow out through the branches. Sometimes we pray, ‘Lord help me to live my life for You.’ It would be better to pray, ‘Lord Jesus, live out Your life through Me.’ Without Christ, we can do nothing. A vine branch has one great purpose—to bear fruit. It is useless for making furniture or for building homes. It does not even make good firewood. But it is good for fruit-bearing—as long as it abides in the vine.”¹
 - c. If we are not abiding in Christ, we CANNOT be fulfilling His great purpose in our lives. If we are not giving Him the first and best of our time, we are not abiding in Him. Without our abiding in Him, His purpose is hindered because WITHOUT US, THE LORD DOES NOT PRODUCE FRUIT.
3. WITHOUT US, THE LORD DOES NOT PRODUCE FRUIT
- a. (15:8) My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.

¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995). 1550.

- i. Note that what glorifies the Father is when we produce fruit.
 - ii. Note that it's not simply *claiming* to be disciples that proves we're disciples. Anyone can claim to be a disciple. It's the actual producing of fruit that proves that we are abiding in Christ!
 - b. God has not designed in nature for the vine to produce fruit. If you look at a picture of a grapevine, the fruit is on the branches, not on the vine.
 - c. The Lord, in His sovereignty, has chosen to use US to produce fruit for Him. Therefore, we have an obligation to do so. We also have a warning.
- 4. WE HAVE BEEN WARNED
 - a. (15:6) If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
 - i. If you (or I) are not abiding in Christ, we wither and die.
 - ii. Samson did not realize that God had left him until it was too late.
 - b. (2 Cor. 13:5) Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless you fail the test.
 - c. What do you see produced in your life? Remember, a branch doesn't make an effort to produce fruit, it simply does because it is fed by the vine.

CONCLUSION:

- i. What is your plan to abide in Christ in 2020?
 - a. First and best of your time?
- ii. Are you abiding in Christ?

iii. Do you know for sure?