

Sermon John 15:9-17

The Vine

Introduction

From fruit bearing to prevailing prayer. One commentator (Tenney) says this chapter is all about relationship, first us to Jesus (verses 1-11) then us to one another (verses 12-17), then to the world (verses 18-27)

Signs/miracles/wonders

A "sign" a "wonder"! In the gospels different words are used to describe what we commonly call a miracle. It seems the different words are used when a different aspect of the wonder is to be emphasised. John usually uses the term "sign" as he seems to be pointing out that the miracles were sign-posts pointing to Jesus and his true identity.

According to Barclay the bible scholar, in any miracle there are three things.

- There is the wonder which leaves people dazzled, astonished, aghast.
- There is the power which is effective, which can deal with and mend a broken body, an unhinged mind, a bruised heart, a power which can do things.
- There is the sign which tells us of the love in the heart of God who does such wonderful things for us.

1) Love

v9 He has been outlining their obligations/his expectations of them. Now he inspires them with his love. His love is like the Father's love. They are to continue in his love.

"I have loved you." Compare John 13:1

It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

v10 His love is always first. See 1 John 4:19 *We love because he first loved us.*
We prove our love by keeping his commandments (14:15) [see previous sermon].

This obedience is part of the abiding.

- His love goes before our love
- His love goes alongside our love
- His love follows our love

v12 Love is presented as laying down life, preferring one another. See the appeal to husbands in Ephesians 5:25. *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.*

2) Joy

v11 Joy! Used once earlier in John's gospel in 3:29, but 7 times in the upper room 16:20,21,22,24; 17:13.

3) Abiding/remaining

I prefer the use of "abide" rather than "remain". Abode = dwelling place, Abide = to dwell or stay - continual, permanent.

How can we "abide" in his love? What does that mean in practice?

- Constantly believe it.
- Constantly be aware of it.
- Constantly manifest it.

"Abiding" is to have his life. See 14:19 *Because I live, you also will live.* Resurrection is not an optional

doctrine, it is the great glory set before us. He has life, so for me there is life – all is well and will be well. This life is seen in two ways. Firstly, the future or our eternity. Secondly, the life of his spirit in us, and us in him - abiding

Abiding in his words. Does that include the OT? Some have difficulties coming to terms with the difference between the God of the New Testament and the God of the Old Testament. The mistake is to compare. There is no God of the New Testament, only the god of the whole scripture. We must abide in God's complete word.