

Monday - Week Forty-four

John - Lesson Twenty-five: Vine and Branches (15:1-17)

1. Jesus calls Himself a vine because He nourishes us. If we were cut off from the vine we would quickly wither and die. Jesus says He is The true Vine. What other (bad) vines are there?

How do these vines affect us?

2. The Father cuts off the fruitless branches. Are these fruitless branches hypocrites or former Christians? Explain your answer.
3. The Father also prunes the good branches. God sometimes allows troubles to come into our lives to hake us up. God does this so that we will be more fruitful. How do troubles make us more fruitful Christians?
4. In verse 5 Jesus tells us that without Him we cannot serve Him. That makes a tremendous difference in how we work with our fellow Christians. How can you apply these words from Pastor Wenzel? "When the good works of Christians are lagging at times, it is theologically wrong to scold them about it and demand more works. The proper thing to do is to bring them closer to Christ and thus to increase their faith, their union with Christ. This of itself will increase the fruit. Too many pastors become impatient when the members of their flock fail to bear adequate fruit in their opinion. But let these pastors first examine themselves whether or not the trouble lies in themselves and their preaching." (p 679)
5. "Obeying Jesus' commands" is not only doing a bunch of things, it is an attitude (the Greek word translated "obey" really means "to guard, to hold fast to." Jesus is talking about faith. What does Jesus mean?

Read: Psalm 45; Proverbs 6

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to bear much fruit for You. Amen.

Tuesday - Week Forty-four

John - Lesson Twenty-six: The World Hates Us (15:18-16:4)

1. The first verses of our section tell us that the world hates Christians. Comment on this quote: "If some Christian notices very little of this hatred, he may be sure that this is caused by his own lack of positive Christianity."
2. It's easy for us to say "The world hates Christians." What exactly do we mean when we say "the world"?
3. Why is it so comforting, encouraging and fortifying that the world hated Christ before it hates us? (v 15)
4. Jesus says that the world hates us because we don't belong to it. We are not of the world. Why does the world care so much about us that it persecutes us? (after all, why bother with us?)
5. How does verse 26 prove that Jesus is true God?
6. Why did the disciples need to hear about these persecutions before they happened? Couldn't Jesus have just kept quiet about them and let the disciples discover them for themselves?

Read: Psalm 46; Proverbs 7.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, when I face persecution for the sake of Your name give me courage to stand up to the persecution and even use it as an opportunity to proclaim Your law and gospel. In Jesus' name; Amen.

Wednesday - Week Forty-four

Catechism Review

Read Questions 334-336

1. Why is God your Father? (2 reasons)

2. When we remember that God is our Father we can pray boldly and confidently. We are God's children. We can be sure that He will answer us in loving ways. What are the characteristics of bold and confident prayers?

3. What is the significance of the word "our" in the address of the Lord's Prayer? Why didn't Jesus teach us to pray, "My Father"?

4. God is in heaven waiting for us. Very soon we will be in heaven as well. How will that impact our prayer life?

How will that impact our life in general?

Read: Psalm 47; Proverbs 8.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, in the Lord's Prayer You direct me to pray for other people. Never let me neglect that important job. More has been done through prayer than through anything else! Make me disciplined to take note of people and situations I want to pray about. If need be, let me write them down throughout the day. I ask this in Your Son's name; Amen.

Thursday - Week Forty-four

John - Lesson Twenty-seven: Work of the Spirit (16:5-16)

1. The antidote to grief is the truth of God. The truth Jesus related to the disciples was that unless He went to the Father, the Spirit would not come to them. How could that be true - hadn't the Holy Spirit come to them to work faith in their hearts already? [Hint: could Jesus have been talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit as given on Pentecost?]

Explain: Without the Holy Spirit the Bible would be useless.

2. Why is the Holy Spirit called the Counselor? (Hint: look back at John 14:16),
3. The Holy Spirit convicts "in regard to sin, because men do not believe in Jesus." One job the Holy Spirit has is to show people their sin. What is the greatest sin of all?

Does the Holy Spirit convict us of sin? (we do believe in Jesus).

4. The Holy Spirit convicts "in regard to judgement, because the prince of the world now stands condemned." When Jesus died and rose, how was the devil "condemned?"
5. The Catholic church teaches that church traditions are as true and valid as the Bible. They use John 16:12 as a proof passage. How would you respond?
6. The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. The word "guide" means to "introduce a traveler into an unknown country." Apply that definition to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Read: Psalm 48; Proverbs 9.

Prayer: Dear Father, send the Spirit into my heart in greater measure. Amen.

Friday - Week Forty-four

John - Lesson twenty-eight: Grief into Joy (16:16-32)

1. What characteristic of Jesus comes out in verse 19?

How does Jesus still act that way with us today?
2. Describe the analogy Jesus draws in verses 21-22.
3. Jesus told the disciples that no one would take away their joy (v 22). These disciples would face extremely difficult situations in the coming years. How could their joy still be so permanent?
4. Up to that point when the disciples needed something they went to Jesus. After the resurrection they would go directly to the Father. Jesus tells them to ask in His name. The Greek word here translated "ask" means a humble request by one who is inferior to one who is superior. Why is the attitude of our prayers important?
5. Almost always when the Bible tells us that God loves us it uses the Greek word "agape" ("agape" means loves because of a commitment). Here (v 27) we find that God loves (phileo-the love of a friend) us. Comment on this quote from Pastor Wenzel: "So completely has Christ redeemed us that the wrath and anger of God is appeased and He now learns to love us with the love and friendly affection as the natural love of friend to friend."
6. The Father did not abandon Jesus (v 32) in that garden. Yet the next day the Father did turn away from the Son. Explain: "Since Christ has been alone, no Christian is ever alone."

Read: Psalm 49; Proverbs 10.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to love You more every day. Amen.