

INTERNATIONAL UNIFORM LESSONS

Lesson Treatment Prepared by Rev. Titus Lehmann

Lesson 5

February 1, 1925

THE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES

Lesson Text: John 15: 1-11.

Reference Material: John 15: 1-27; Galatians 5: 16-25.

Golden Text: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, John 15: 5.

Teaching Hints

A beautiful illustration is used here by our Master to make clear a deep and vital truth. It's a familiar picture that is brought before us. The teacher might, if at all possible, get a branch of the grape vine and bring it to class. Even though this is winter time, this branch can be gotten, in fact the illustration will be more effective, just because the branch looks so lifeless. It is lifeless, because the sap of the vine is not coursing through it. Use this branch as an object lesson.

I. THE VINE-DRESSER

Naturally the first things one would speak about would be the Oriental vineyard. Read Isaiah, chapter five for a detailed description of how such a vineyard must be taken care of. It must be fenced, the choicest plants obtained and well taken care of. No weeds must be permitted to grow. The wine-press, the watch-tower all formed part of the equipment. Enormous grape-clusters were raised by these people. It took a very careful and informed vine-dresser to produce the best fruit. He had to know just what branches to cut away, to prune, so as to produce the best stock. The branches that are dry are cut away altogether, for they are in the way.

Jesus calls the Father in heaven the husbandman or vine-dresser. He is the one that takes care of the vineyard of the human life, or the individual human soul. He knows what is to be done to produce the very best fruits in the lives of men. There is no room for the useless life in this world, it is taken away.

II. CONDITIONS OF FRUITFULNESS

The first condition for a fruit-bearing life is the *pruning*. YE must be cleansed. Useless branches are removed, and from the fruit-bearing branches the superflu-

ous leaves (suckers) are removed so that no sap may be wasted. Christ's disciples in that upper room, where He was telling them this incident, were somewhat discouraged by the message of his death. He tries to show them that that which was happening was to their well-being. They had been cleansed by the teaching of Jesus. They were to be cleansed by this fiery trial. We must also apply the pruning knife to our own lives. The second condition mentioned by Jesus is that of having *vital union with him*. As the same sap runs through the vine and the branches, so the same spirit must be found in us that is in Christ Jesus. He is the Vine and he sends the life-giving spirit into our hearts and lives. The third condition which Jesus mentions is that of "*abiding*" in him. We are to stay with Christ, to settle down with the Lord, to rest in him, to abide in him, to make him our eternal dwelling place. The everlasting union of Christ and his believers in spirit is necessary to bring much fruit in his service.

III. THE FRUITS

"Ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done to you." That's the first fruit of union with Christ. The greatest undeveloped resource is man's relation to Christ and its possible results. Life, fruitfulness in prayer depends upon our relationship to Christ.

"Bear fruit", "more fruit", "much fruit". Let us note the progress. A Christian never "is" but always "is becoming" a Christian. We must grow, Friendship with Christ, discipleship, a sharing with Christ of the great spiritual blessings, these are the fruits which grow out of union with Christ. The Master desires to share his blessings with his disciples, his joy, his peace, his love. The more he shared, the more he possessed.

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Lesson 1

July 6, 1924

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Lesson Text: Luke 2: 7-20.

Reference Material: Luke, chapters 1 and 2; John 1: 1-14.

Golden Text: There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2: 11.

Teaching Hints

I. *Introductory.*

Recall again to your mind that we are following during these months of study an outline of the Bible. We have studied the Old Testament in this manner. For the next nine months, the Life of Christ is to be studied in outline form. It's a chronological study of the Life of Christ that we are entering into. The passages are taken in order as to time from the four gospels. In this manner we are given an opportunity to get the whole portrait of Jesus.

Just a few suggestions for the teacher, so as to get real value out of this course yourself. Nothing is more vital today, than a renewed entering into the life and spirit of Jesus. Be sure to read all four gospels again and again. They are not long. So as to get the gospel story from another angle, read Weymouth's "New Testament in Modern Speech" or some other newer translation.

II. *The Shepherds in the Fields.*

Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy of Jesus. Mark, Luke and John have brief introductions. Luke alone tells us of the appearing of the angel to Zacharias and to Mary, the visit of Mary to Elizabeth, and the birth of John the Baptist. It may seem peculiar to study the Christmas lesson at this time of the year, but it won't hurt at all to try to get into the atmosphere and spirit of it. When the time was fulfilled, when the Greek language was the recognized language, the Roman government had established peace and order, the Jews still clung to their idea of God, the world at large was at the end of its resources,

then came Jesus Christ. God grew likest God in being born. The registration or census, the inability to find room in the inn, the birth of the Christ child in the manger; these are all familiar.

To the shepherds out on the field came the message in the striking and strange way, through the angels. God was moving among the humble folk. The heavens were dropping low and singing their gladness into the hearts of common men working about the stables and sheepfolds. "The angels went away from them into heaven," but the new life in the manger stayed on the earth with men. It had come to stay until it should shape the common life of all the world into something like itself. The glory of the Lord, the good tidings, of the Savior born, the hymn of the heavenly host with its idea of peace, of goodwill and glory to God will ever remain vital to all who study its deeper meanings.

III. *Shepherds at the Manger.*

The vision of the angels fade. The shepherds do not doubt. They GO. Note here the utmost simplicity of real religion. These shepherds take the word of the heavenly messenger at its full value. As they go about their daily tasks the revelation comes to them. In the simplicity of heart, we find real religion. When they come to the manger they see, and without a moment's hesitation, they worship. Religion consists in simple trust. They cannot but follow the impulse and go and tell the good news and experience which has come to them to others. It's the real enthusiasm of religion, that we find here. However after that the shepherds "returned," they went back to their daily and appointed tasks.

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Illustrations collected by Rev. H. J. Hahn

Lesson X

September 2, 1923

PAUL THE APOSTLE

Lesson Text: Acts 2: 3, 6-10; Phil. 3: 7-14.

Reference Material: Acts 7: 54-8: 3; 9: 1-31; 11: 25-30; Phil. 3: 4-14.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 6: 1-8.

Golden Text: "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3: 14.

Lesson Fundamentals

It is wise, so as to have the pupil get at all facts in connected form, to give a telescopic or general view of the life of the apostle Paul.

OUTLINE OF THE LIFE OF PAUL

I. APOSTLE PAUL PREPARED. Born in Tarsus at the time of Christ's birth of Jewish parentage, owing to the Roman citizenship, he received his education in the main at the feet of Gamaliel, the great rabbi at Jerusalem. He became a very strict Pharisee, one who was very zealous and bigoted. He was present at the stoning of Stephen. He persecuted the Christians.

II. CHOSEN FOR THE TASK. On the journey of persecution to Damascus, he was converted and accepted Christ. He was changed from a proud to a humble man, from intolerance to broad-mindedness. In the University of Silence in Arabia, he had time to think and to plan.

III. BEARING WITNESS FOR CHRIST. This messenger was first introduced at Jerusalem, then went to Tarsus, owing to persecutions and at last was asked to take up work in Antioch, where he did excellent work. He witnessed to Jews, Gentiles and kings. He undertook three missionary journeys, the second one leading to Europe. Epistles were written at various times. His fourth missionary journey as a prisoner to Rome was eventful. He died as a martyr in Rome.

OUTLINE OF LESSON

I. THE HIGH CALLING. The teacher will relate the incidents as the apostle tells them of his conversion, before that mob at Jerusalem, that threatens to kill him. It was God's call to the apostle. God calls in various ways. Are we listen-

ing to his voice as He calls us to tasks for him and for our fellowmen?

II. THE GIVING UP. "I count all things to be loss for Christ." This is the essence of the apostle's epistle to the Philippians. It is the answer of Paul to the great call that has come to him. As we read that third chapter of Philippians through we note that he mentions seven things he gladly gives up. He is glad to lose the advantages of circumcision; the pride of being of the blue blood of the stock of Israel; the exclusiveness of being a Pharisee; the wrong zealotness; the cheap righteousness of the law. What advantages would we give up?

III. THE GAINS OF HIS HIGH CALLING. As we read further, we note that he mentions seven gains: 1. To gain Christ (verse 8). The object of his life was to "win" Christ. 2. "Be found in Him" (verse 9a), to be found in Christ's fellowship. 3. "Not having a righteousness of my own" (verse 9b), but being saved through faith in Christ Jesus. 4. "That I may know Him" (verse 10a), means not so much mental knowledge, but actual experience of Christ. 5. "The power of his resurrection" (verse 10b) or to experience the power of resurrection in my own life—resurrection to a new life. 6. "The fellowship of his suffering" (verse 10c), go with Christ through the garden of Gethsemane. 7. "Conformed to his death" (verse 10d), referring to the willingness to sacrifice and to endure death for Christ. What a list of gain! The most precious things in life have no value compared to Christ.

IV. CARRYING ON. All these gains are merely ideals that the apostle is striving for. He forgets his past failures, and presses on.—Are we pressing on?