

## Are the Various Denominations Branches of the True Vine?

By *House to House Heart to Heart*, Bob Prichard

Jesus identified Himself as the vine: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1). He explained the work of branches was bearing fruit, warning that, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes” (15:2).

Some suggest that this parable is a picture of the contemporary church, with all the various denominations forming the Lord’s church. It is sometimes shown in the form of a tree, with various branches depicting how different religious groups have grown out of one another. The text reveals, however, that the branches are not the different religious sects of “Christendom,” but instead are individual Christians.

In John 15, Jesus is speaking to the apostles as individuals, not religious groups. The emphasis is on what the individual disciple must do. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (15:5–8).

The disciples “are the branches.” Branches are people, not churches (“If anyone does not abide in Me”).

The branches must bear fruit for the farmer. Fruitfulness is the product of a Christian life and comes only from abiding in Christ. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, “for without Me you can do nothing” (15:4–5).

What we can do in Christ, however, is unlimited. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). The key is to be in Christ, abiding in Him. Paul said, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Christ did not want His followers to divide into various religious groups and denominations. As He prepared for the cross, He prayed, “I do not pray for these alone [the apostles], but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20–21).

He wanted all who believe the testimony of the apostles to be united.

## Prayers and Concerns

- ◆ Joe Walrath had shoulder surgery this week.
- ◆ Don Luna will begin his chemo treatments for bladder cancer on Wednesday.
- ◆ Please send cards of encouragement to Aleta Collins. Her address is 581 CR 310, Gainesville, MO 65655. She used to make cards for everyone’s birthday and anniversary.
- ◆ Remember those with health issues—Tinker Langston, Sue Hamblton, Barbara White, Larry Butler, Don Luna, Faye Flaughers, Ruth Strain, Norma Jones, Steve Siebels, Aleta Collins, Annette Chisam Tilley.
- ◆ All those battling cancer—Harold Reynolds, Elaine Hunter (Larry’s sister), Dawn (Chris Lemburg’s sister), Lionel Daugherty, Jana Crisp, Richard Blackburn, Cindy Gibson, Leroy Collins.
- ◆ Those in GHCC: Bonnie Ebrite, Delphia Holmes. Bonnie Luna at Ava. Clifford Lansdown at River Lodge, Mtn. Home; Jack Moyers Southern Meadows. Wilbern Uchtman, Brook Haven in West Plains.

Let’s commit ourselves to being  
true disciples of Jesus Christ.  
Not mere fair-weather followers,  
but disciples.

Jesus said...  
If you *abide* in my word,  
you are truly my disciples,  
and you will *know* the truth,  
and the *truth*  
will set you *free*.

**JOHN 13:35**

**EVERYONE  
WILL KNOW  
THAT YOU ARE  
MY DISCIPLES  
BECAUSE OF  
YOUR LOVE  
FOR EACH OTHER.**

Birthdays		Anniversaries	
3-6	Melinda Abraham	3-8	Doyle & Peggy Johnson
3-6	Tinker Langston	3-27	Trey & Merle Scott
3-8	Norma Jones	3-31	Dana & Marsha Crisp
3-11	Lauren Hillhouse	Birthdays	
3-18	Karen Langston	3-29	Rene Blackburn
3-19	D. E. Pleasant	3-29	Richard Blackburn
3-22	Renee Hambelton		

Melinda will be serving baked ziti with meat sauce, salad, garlic bread, and dessert for Wednesday night fellowship supper before classes.

Date	Event	Details
Sat., Mar. 30, 11:30 a.m.	Community Easter Egg Hunt	Need lots of help.
Fri-Sat-Sun April 12-14	Gospel Meeting Here	Devin Swindle, Speaker
April 14-17	Gospel Meeting Thayer	"Godly Habits" Speaker Scott Cain
Sat., Apr. 20, 10 a.m.	Ladies' Prayer Brunch	WE HOST!
Sat., June 1st	Vacation Bible School	Here

*We are a community of redeemed sinners who are following Jesus Christ, proclaiming the gospel of grace, loving our Lord and one another.*

### March Worship Assignments

#### Welcome & Shepherd's Prayer      Communion & Closing Prayer

3-17	Mark Lane	Spencer Wade
3-24	David Stevens	Titus Smith
3-31	Don Luna	Larry Butler

**Song Leader: John Abraham**  
**Greeters: Dana and Marsha Crisp**

## The Family News

March 17, 2024

### Gainesville Church of Christ

PO Box 7, 23550 US Hwy. 160, Gainesville, MO 65655

[www.gainesvillechurchofchrist.org](http://www.gainesvillechurchofchrist.org)

### A Place to Call Home

*We welcome you and are so glad you could worship with us today.*

### Schedule of Services

#### Sunday

9:30 a.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

10:30 a.m. Worship Service, *Jesus Wants True and Wise Disciples*

#### Wednesday

6 p.m. Fellowship Supper

7 p.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

#### Sunday Worship Outline

Welcome and Shepherd's Prayer

Kids Singing up Front

Song Service

Communion Service

Song before the sermon

Scripture Reading by Dylan Abraham, Matthew 7:15, 21, 24

Sermon and Invitation

Invitation Song

Closing Song and Prayer

Offering baskets are located at the back.

#### **Elders**

Mark Lane	417-679-4835
Don Luna	417-712-1945
David Stevens	417-679-4700
John Abraham	870-421-5632

#### **Deacons**

Larry Butler	817-504-1604
Dana Crisp	417-331-5090
James Langston	870-315-4355
<b>Preacher</b>	
Halbert Smith	417-257-3880

**Ministers:** Every Member—Each One of Us