

RockPointe Small Groups

Kingdom Moments Sermon Series

Lesson 2: Faithful Stewards- Hearing God's Voice – Fall, 2019
John 15:1-5

MAIN POINT

Following Jesus means abiding in Him.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who is the best listener you know? What makes that person a good listener?

Do you think people in our culture are generally good or bad listeners? What makes you say that?

Do you think God still speaks today? If so, why do you think more people don't hear what He's saying?

While you may not have heard the audible voice of God, He is still speaking through His Word, His people, and through the Holy Spirit. The problem is that most of us aren't listening. But God desires a dynamic relationship with His people, one in which we are living in communion with Him. Following Jesus means abiding in Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

What image comes to mind when you think of the word "abide"? How would you define the word "abide" in the context of your relationship with Jesus?

The word "abide" conveys the idea of continual dwelling. It is often translated as "remain," which emphasizes continuation and perseverance. Our relationship with Christ is about dwelling in His presence regardless of our circumstances. This relationship is what Jesus talked about in John 15.

Have a volunteer read John 15:1-5.

What is Jesus referring to when He talks about spiritual fruit? Read Galatians 5:22-24 and 2 Peter 1:5-8 for some examples.

What did Jesus mean by trimming or pruning the branches and how does that relate to God's actions to believers?

In what specific ways do you think God prunes believers?

Describe a time in your life when God pruned you so you would grow closer to Him. Was it a good process? Why or why not? What was the result of the pruning?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in our pruning and fruit-bearing process?

Jesus compared believers with the vine's branches. He expected the disciples to bear fruit. In other words, those who are in a relationship with Christ show the evidence of that relationship. This is so important to Jesus that He will prune us to bear more and more spiritual fruit. But for that to happen, Christians have one important responsibility.

What one action must believers do to produce fruit (v. 4)?

What does it mean to “abide,” or remain, in Jesus? Why can we be fruitful only as we remain in Christ?

What does it mean for Jesus to remain in us?

Why are both remaining in Jesus and Jesus remaining in us necessary to produce fruit?

The Greek word translated remain or abide means “to dwell.” We abide in Christ by the daily choices we make. We can choose to pursue a growing relationship with Jesus, or we can just let it stagnate. If we want to hear God's voice, though, we must make it our practice to abide in Him.

What are some practical ways you can choose to abide in Christ?

How does choosing to do so affect the way you spend your time? How does it change the way you prioritize your calendar?

What are some of the obstacles in your life to abiding in Jesus?

No one accidentally abides in Christ. It happens only through a series of intentional choices. When we make room in our daily lives to spend time with God—in His Word, in prayer, and with His people—we are pursuing the kind of intimate relationship God wants with us. But even in those moments, we learn to not just talk, but also listen.

When was the last time you truly listened for the voice of God?

Why do you think we spend so much of our prayer time talking rather than listening?

What are some things in your life that make listening for God's voice difficult?

We live in a very noisy world. Messages bombard us from everywhere at every moment. If we want to listen to the voice of God, then we have to actively remove the noise. When we begin to truly listen and not just talk, we will be abiding in Jesus.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is one action you can take this week to more closely and consistently abide in Christ? How can we as a group intentionally help one another with this effort?

How will you remove some of the noise from your world to listen to the voice of God? Spend some time listening this week. Find a place outside that's quiet. Turn off your phone and remove other distractions. Then try and listen for the voice of God as best you can.

What kind of fruit do you think God wants to bear through His people at this church? Why is it imperative to listen to His voice as we are seeking after what He wants us to do in our community and the world?

What is one bold prayer you think God wants you to pray for yourself and our church during this season?

PRAYER

As you pray to close your group, ask the Lord to help you eliminate some of the noise in your life. Then spend at least a minute in silence listening to what the Lord has to say.

COMMENTARY

John 15:1-5

15:1-17 This allegory is at the heart of Jesus' farewell discourse to the disciples. The OT used the vineyard or vine as a symbol for Israel, God's covenant people, especially in two "vineyard songs" (Isa 5:1-7; 27:2-6). However, Israel's failure to produce fruit issued in divine judgment. Jesus, by contrast, is the true vine, and His followers are to remain in Him and produce much fruit for God.

15:1 I am the true vine is the last of Jesus' seven "I am" sayings in John's Gospel. "True" contrasts Jesus with OT Israel. Joseph was called a "fruitful vine" in Gen 49:22. The reference to the Father as the vineyard keeper harks back to Isaiah's first vineyard song, where God is depicted as tending His vineyard, only to be rewarded with sour grapes (Isa 5:1-7; cp. Ps 80:8-9).

15:2 To ensure maximal fruit production, the divine vineyard keeper removes dead branches and prunes all the others (Heb 6:7-8). In John's Gospel, Judas the betrayer is an example of the former scenario (Jn 13:10-11). Peter, who denied Jesus three times, is an example of the latter (18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19).

15:4 The in terminology harks back to OT covenant theology, including prophetic texts about a future new covenant (Ex 25:8; 29:45; Lv 26:11-12; Ezek 37:27-28; 43:9).

15:4, 5, 8 The repeated reference to fruit underscores that fruitfulness is God's primary creative (Gen 1:11-12, 22, 28) and redemptive purpose (Jn 15:8, 16). The OT prophets envisioned a time when God's people would "blossom and bloom and fill the whole world with fruit" (Isa 27:6; cp. Hos 14:4-8).