

# JOHN

## Chapter 15

*I Am the true Vine*

**“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.**

**15:1-8** We don't know whether this text was spoken in the upper room or on the way to Gethsemane. (Buls)

Fahling: Just what the occasion was that prompted the Lord to continue His discourse by presenting Himself as the true Vine, whether it was the fruit of the vine in the paschal meal or a vine growing in the courtyard or the symbol of the vine on one of the Temple gates, we do not know. (Buls)

But when negative critics make the claim that John has used the figure of Vine and Branches to replace the words of institution, found in the Synoptics, that is something else. Furthermore, Reformed theology is known for its denial of the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. For example, Hendriksen: (Buls)

Jesus now bids these men to look away from the symbols of merely physical bread and wine and to see in Him the reality, the fulfillment, the great Antitype. . . Not the wine from which the communion-wine had been derived, nor even Israel, but Christ himself, present with the disciples that memorable night, was the REAL vine. (Buls)

Hendriksen is trying his best to make the words of institution figurative. And, in trying to do so, he makes the figurative language of John 15:1-8 literal. In this way Reformed theology falls

victim to what negative critics have said, though conservative Reformed theologians do not want to be identified with form and redaction critics. (Buls)

The 26th edition of Nestle Greek text, unlike the 25th, makes verses 9-17 a major paragraph. The 25th edition makes all of John 15 a major paragraph, with subparagraphs at verses 18 and 26. (Buls)

Jesus' discourses are teleological. He knows where his thought is going, and he goes by a direct route. Too much preaching, like human thinking and man-made religion, is cyclic. We go around in circles. How many sermons have you heard or preached which had less than three minutes of content in a 20-minute delivery? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Many commentaries devote themselves to the contention or rebuttal that this is John's presentation of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but that is not the point of the text. Neither is it a comment on the architecture or infrastructure of the grape plant. Jesus' horticulture is correct, but enhancing viticulture is not his goal. Nor is this a veiled rebuttal of the temperance movement. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus' point is that as we remain in him, we branches glorify the Father by bearing much fruit. His presentation in this "object lesson" keeps his purpose foremost. We preachers will be most effective when we focus more on the "lesson" than on the "object." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

This text includes both Law and Gospel. Those who do not remain in Christ therefore are unfruitful and finally are burned. The Gospel message for those in Christ covers both justification and sanctification. The fruit is everything that results from the love of God in Christ. By justifying faith we remain in Christ, the true and genuine vine. The juice provided by the vine yields the fruit of good works done in faith. The Gardener Father evaluates us by whether the vine's juice produces fruit on us branches. He has a simple rule: either bear fruit, or burn. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Only the true and genuine Word empowers true and genuine stewardship. True stewardship begins with Jesus' initiative in us. The setting in the upper room is significant not only because of the Passover meal, but because the Paschal Lamb is speaking within hours of his sacrificial cross and conquered tomb. His concern at this central point of human history is that we be empowered to give glory to his Father, even as he is about to do (Jn 17:1, 4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus spells out the methods through which he empowers us to bear God-pleasing fruit. His methods are abiding, pruning, and cleansing. Possible outlines for preaching come directly from the Lord's mouth. Near the end of the Easter season, anticipating Ascension and Pentecost, this is a welcome, comforting, and powerful Word for us and the people we serve. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek text introduced for the first time a major paragraph division at the beginning of v 9. Those modern translations that use this division help us toward a more logical reading. The Series B Gospel readings for this and next week reflect this structure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus refers to himself, often emphatically, 14 times in this text with forms of *egō*. Likewise, Jesus refers to his disciples (including us), often emphatically, 14 times in this text with forms of *humeis*. Thus we have one of the strongest “I-you” passages in the gospel of John. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

One of Jesus’ many sayings in John are his “I AM” passages. In these our Lord describes not only himself, but us. Jesus, by saying “I AM,” is giving us a vivid description of his role in our lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

As the saying goes, repetition is the mother of all learning. In these verses, there is much repetition, for the sake of learning and for emphasis. For example, Jesus refers to himself sixteen times in these verses. He also refers to “you” twelve times. This repetition shows that Christians, “the branches,” live in Christ, “the vine.” Another key word, repeated six times, is *ho karpos*, “fruit.” Of course, the fruit cannot be spoken of apart from Christ, so he uses another key word, *menō*, “to remain,” seven times in these verses. Such repetition serves to emphasize the personal union with Christ of all who are baptized into him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

It is the evening of Holy Thursday. This second farewell discourse takes place just before Jesus and his disciples go to the Garden of Gethsemane. Martin Franzmann notes that this discourse includes a “new emphasis on the fullness and strength of the disciples’ union and communion with Jesus” (*Concordia Self-Study Commentary* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979], 99). To be a branch of the vine is to have life. Jesus invites the disciples to abide in him so that they will be comforted in the difficult hours to come. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

**15:1** *I am*. Note emphatic “I am,” right at the beginning. Forms of emphatic “I am” occur again in verse 4, twice in verse 5. In addition to the other obvious references, Christ refers to Himself no less than 14 times. Likewise, notice the obvious references to “you,” a total of fourteen. It’s one of the very personal “I-you” passages in the Gospel of John. (Buls)

*the true vine*. The vine is frequently used in the OT as a symbol of Israel (e.g., Ps 80:8–16; Isa 5:1–7; Jer 2:21). When this imagery is used, Israel is often shown as lacking in some way. Jesus, however, is “the true vine.” (CSB)

As opposed to unbelieving Israel, the false vine (cf Is 5:1–7; Ezk 19:10–14). (TLSB)

*egō eimi hē ampelos hē alēthinē*, “I am the true vine.” Our text begins with Jesus’ emphatic “I am” statement. He is the true vine that gives life, as opposed to the spirit of the antichrist (1 Jn 4:1–3), which brings death by separating the branches from the vine. Such branches are burned in the fire. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

a[mpelo]—vine, one who carries life to the branches.ajlhqinov”—true or genuine. There is NO substitute or replacement. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The point of *alēthinē*, “true,” is uniqueness. Only Jesus is the true vine who can provide to us branches the empowering juice, which is the truth of his Word (vv 3, 7).

Jesus is the “true vine” and his Father is the “vinedresser.” Our first instinct is to think that John is using the example of a vine to teach us something about Jesus. John takes a different approach,

however. We don't look at the world in order to learn about Jesus. John invites us to see Jesus as the "true vine." By looking at Jesus we learn what it truly is to be a vine. For two other clear examples of John running the comparison in this way, see 1:9 and 6:55. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

*my Father* – In this context, it is appropriate that Jesus refers only to "my Father," never to "our Father." His uniqueness is in His divine relationship to His Father. We, in turn, are His branches. We have access to the Father only through Jesus – His life, death and resurrection for us. In Baptism we are adopted as children of the heavenly Father, while Jesus is His true Son from eternity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Back to verse 1: "true" means "genuine, unique." It is used figuratively, of course, but the point is that Christ is our sole source of spiritual sustenance. Jesus always refers to the Father as MY Father, not OUR Father. His Father is the "gardener," the vine-dresser. What is meant by this becomes clear in verse 2. (Buls)

*ho patēr mou ho geōrgos estin*, "My Father is the vinedresser." What is meant by Jesus' designation of his Father as the vinedresser is clearly seen in the next verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

**15:2 does not bear fruit** – Not just holy deeds, but love and witness leading to new disciples. (TLSB)

*pan klēma en emoi*, literally, "every branch in me." V 5 identifies the branches as those who abide in Christ (by faith). In this verse, however, there is an inconsistency between "every branch in me" and *mē pheron karpon*, "not bearing fruit." With regard to *karpon*, "fruit," be sure to read Gal 5:22–23; Eph 5:9; Heb 12:11 to see how "the fruit of the Spirit" is intimately tied to the atonement of Jesus Christ. This inconsistency is addressed in the remainder of the verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

The word "fruit" occurs 3 times in this verse, once in verses 4, 5, and 8 each. A key word in this pericope. This verse reminds one immediately of Galatians 5:22.23; Ephesians 5:9; Hebrews 12:11, which ought be read. In Galatians 5 the term "the fruit of the Spirit" implies the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the genuine vine. Likewise with Ephesians 5:9 and Hebrews 12:11. (Buls)

The words "bears no fruit" do not mean that some Christians are actually fruitless, but indicates the deluded person who thinks he can be a Christian but produces no fruit. (Buls)

*takes away*. A reference to judgment. (CSB)

*airei auto*, "he takes it away." The Father is the one who takes the fruitless branch away. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*prunes*. Pruning produces fruitfulness. In the NT the figure of good fruit represents the product of a godly life (see Mt 3:8; 7:16–20) or virtues of character (see Gal 5:22–23; Eph 5:9; Php 1:11). (CSB)

The subject of "prunes" is "My Father." Hebrews 12:4-11 is an excellent parallel passage here. Just as a vine dresser prunes the branch to make it more productive, so the Father scourges every son whom He receives. The peaceable fruit of righteousness results. The source of the fruit is

Jesus alone. The cause of greater yield is the Father who cleanses fruitlessness from the branch. (Buls)

Before we proceed, it is good to mention Wm. Hendriksen and R.C.H. Lenski with reference to their commentaries on this passage. Hendriksen is Reformed. The underlying differences between Reformed and Lutheran theology are very apparent here. Hendriksen sets "sovereign grace" aside "human responsibility." He mixes and confuses justification and sanctification. And though he condemns Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism, the word "synergism" is conspicuous by its absence in what he says. (Buls)

*kathairei auto*, "he cleanses it." Often translated "he prunes" (ESV, NKJV, NASB), it literally means "he cleanses" (as it is normally translated in v 3). Notice the phonetic echo in *airei* and *kathairei*. Although they do not share the same stem, the hearer is drawn to make a connection between the two by the similar sounds of these words. The Father "takes away" the branch bearing no fruit, and he cleanses/prunes the branch that does bear fruit, *hina karpon pleiona pherēi*, "in order that it might bear much fruit." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*gewrgov*"—farmer or tiller of the soil. Refers in a specialized way to a vinedresser. Kretzman's *New Testament Commentary* says, "He [God] is actually concerned about the growth of the vine" (p 493). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The Father's standard is fruitfulness. The repeated use of *karpos*, "fruit," sends us to Gal 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9; and Heb. 12:11, where it also is always singular, "fruit," not "fruits." "In me" does not mean that some Christians are actually fruitless. Rather, this is reference to deluded people who think they are connected to Christ but bear no fruit. It would apply, for example, to people who belong to a church but are not connected to Christ Himself through faith. 1 John 2:19 also speaks of those who at first appeared to be part of the church but who did not truly belong, as shown by their remaining in the church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus is describing the work of his Father. The Father takes away the branches that do not bear fruit and "prunes," *kathairei*, the branches that do, so that they can bear more fruit. The purpose (*hina*) clause is key in understanding what comes first. It is the pruning that makes the branch continue to bear fruit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Literally, "cleanses" (cf. v. 3). Although Christians have already been cleansed by God's forgiveness, they are daily in need of repentance and spiritual growth. (TLSB)

Translations do not duplicate the similarity between *airō*, "cut off, remove" and *kathairō*, "prune, cleanse." See the parallel thought in Heb 12:4–11. The Father causes greater yield by cleansing away those things in our lives that are fruitless. As he prunes away our old nature, our old habits, and our pet sins, we may protest the pain, but the result is greater glory to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

**15:3** *clean*. "Already" clearly means "already," thus rendered by RSV, AAT and NASB. Note emphatic "you Christians." "Clean" is here a synonym for "justified." For "because" KJV has "through," RSV and NEB have "by," but NIV and NASB are best: "because." "The word" is plainly "the Gospel." The Gospel conveys the forgiveness of sins to the individual believers. On this thought cf. John 13:10 and 6:63. Also Acts 15:9. (Buls)

The point of the verse here is that the fruit, the good works, do not make a Christian better or cleaner. Christians are already clean, justified, pure because of the Gospel. Whenever Christians feel their sinfulness and sin they must flee to the Gospel which conveys to them the forgiveness of sin because of what Christ suffered on the cross. The good works which a Christian does, though necessary and given to him by God (Ephesians 2:9.10), do not make the Christian better. (Buls)

Lenski: In ascribing this cleansing to the Word, Jesus takes all the credit and glory to himself and leaves none to us. The cleansing by the Word through faith (justification) does not exclude the cleansing which follows throughout life in the putting away of all the defilements of the flesh (sanctification). (Buls)

Ylvisaker: It is the pure He purifies. (Buls)

But Hendriksen teaches progressive sanctification:

Those who bear good fruit are cleansed more and more. Having been justified, they now receive the grace of daily renewal, until finally, completely sanctified, they reach the shores of heaven. . . The responsibility is wholly theirs. (Buls)

These notes are not saying that sanctification is not important. But read Ephesians 2:1-10 and Philippians 3:4-14 to keep justification and sanctification in their proper perspective. They are beautifully combined in Galatians 2:20. Read Article IV, Good Works, in the *Formula of Concord*. Good works are not optional but neither are they the cause of our salvation. Good works will surely follow from true faith as the fruits of a good tree. (Buls)

καθαροῖν—cleanse. Here the implication is pruning or cutting back that which seems to suck the needed nutrients from the branch. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

ἔδῃ, “already.” *humeis*, “you,” is emphatic. *katharoi*, “clean”; a synonym for being justified. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*the word*. Sums up the message of Jesus. (CSB)

Jesus is the “Word,” *logos*, that has been given to us. Those who have received Jesus are “clean,” *katharoi*. “Clean” and “prune” are parallel and must be taken together. Acts 15:8–9 indicates that we receive this “cleansing,” *katharisas*, by faith when the Holy Spirit is received (Acts 2:38ff). Faith receives the Word, Jesus, and all that he has done for us on the cross. This cleansing gives us a pure mind (Titus 1:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The means through which the cleansing takes place, since the Word’s content is Christ. (TLSB)

The best translation of *dia* is “because” (so NIV). The Word (*logos*) has already cleansed the disciples. In anticipation of what Jesus is about to do on the cross, justification is an accomplished fact. The eleven disciples will look back on this night and remember their fruitlessness and lack of faith. They also will remember that Jesus loved them in washing their feet, in hosting the Sacrament, and in speaking of his death and resurrection. They could remember no worthiness in themselves, because there was none. Yet they would remember that Jesus had pronounced their forgiveness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

We too remember our sinfulness but rejoice that our forgiveness is not dependent on anything in us. We are justified for Jesus' sake, and due to his grace alone, we bear fruit. Review Article IV, Good Works, in the Formula of Concord. Fruitfulness is not the cause of salvation, but neither is it optional. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*dia ton logon hon lelalēka*, “because of the word that I have spoken.” *dia* with the accusative is causal. They are clean *because* of the word that Jesus has spoken. The point of this verse is that the fruit (good works) does not make a Christian better or cleaner. “Already you are clean” is emphasized, and the cause of their justification is clearly Christ and his Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

**15:4** *abide in me*. The believer has no fruitfulness apart from his union and fellowship with Christ. A branch out of contact with the vine is lifeless. (CSB)

"Remain" is another key word in this pericope. It occurs three times in this verse, once in 5, once in 6 and twice in 7, for a total of seven. Here "remain" is imperative. A person remains in Christ by faith. "And I will remain" means "and thus I will remain in you." Christ is telling us to remain in Him but He is not telling Himself to remain in us. He is assuring the individual believer that so long as he trusts in Christ he is cleansed and forgiven. That's always the starting point. (Buls)

Here we have an axiomatic illustration, understandable even to a child. Everyone will readily admit that a detached branch cannot bear fruit. Nor is Jesus saying that a branch can bear fruit solely because of its attachment to the vine. Jesus is stressing the utter necessity of daily repentance and faith. When a Christian examines himself he should not be surprised to find much sin in his life because in his flesh there dwells no good thing. But by faith he clings to the many promises of God in Christ which inform him that by virtue of His suffering and death Christ has atoned for the sins of all men and therefore also of the individual. That's what it means to remain in Christ. (Buls)

*meinate en emoi*, “remain in me.” To remain in Jesus is imperative. A person remains in Christ by faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Note from TLSB 6:56... This is a major theme in John, defining the relationship not only of persons in the Trinity (1:32-33; 14:10; 15:10), but also between believers and Christ (5:38; 8:31; 15:7, 9-10). St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “I wish to follow with all my strength the lowly Jesus; I wish Him, who loved me and gave Himself for me, to embrace me with the arms of His love, which suffered in my stead; but I must also feed on the Paschal Lamb, for unless I eat His flesh and drink His blood I have no life in me. It is one thing to follow Jesus, another to hold Him, another to feed on Him. To follow Him is a life-giving purpose; to hold and embrace Him a solemn joy; to feed on Him a blissful life” (SLSB, pp. 292-293).

*Menō*, “remain,” is used seven times in vv 4–7. In Baptism we are grafted into Christ. Our firm connection to him through Word and Sacrament must remain throughout life for us to keep bearing fruit. *Meinate*, “remain,” is imperative; the juice must keep flowing into us! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*bear much fruit – aph' heautou* is adverbial, “by itself” or “spontaneously.” It is obvious to everyone that a branch separated from the vine cannot bear fruit spontaneously. Neither can a branch attached to the vine bear fruit from itself. A branch bears fruit because of its attachment to the vine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*neither – houtōs*, “thus.” In the same way, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in the vine. This is how the branch lives, in repentance and faith, united to Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

No branch can survive unless it is in the vine. The vine is not dependent on the branch. Jesus is the place to be. Only in him do we bear fruit. Being in the vine also means that the vine is in us. The life Jesus gave for us on the cross flows into his branches so that they might bear fruit. To be in Jesus is to be in the place where his voice is heard. We learned this in last week’s Gospel (10:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

**15:5** *I am the vine.* The repetition gives emphasis. (CSB)

*you are – humeis ta klēmata.* Jesus begins this verse with the plural *humeis*, “you,” but then goes on to address the individual (the one who remains in me). With such grammar, Jesus applies his promises to the hearer personally. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*abides in me and I in him.* A living union with Christ is absolutely necessary; without it there is nothing. (CSB)

meivnate—to remain, to be a part of. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

**BEAR MUCH FRUIT** – This is a general assurance. But in the next sentence Jesus individualizes: “The one who remains in Me and thus I in him.” This is a personal assurance and open invitation to every repentant sinner. “If a man” is a demonstrative pronoun pointing back to the individual repentant sinner who believes in Christ. (Buls)

Jesus does not say “some fruit” but “much fruit.” This is a very comforting word because Christians very often, in their dissatisfaction with themselves, say to themselves as did Paul: “the good which I’d like to do, I do not and the evil which I don’t want to do, I do.” Read on at Romans 7:20ff. Then Paul cries: “Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this sinful body? Thanks be to God though our Lord Jesus Christ.” Such an individual is clinging to Christ, the Vine. And such a person should be assured that he is bearing *much* fruit, though he is often not aware of it. Then follows a causal clause: “Because apart from Me you (plural again) can be doing absolutely nothing.” (Buls)

The Christian attributes everything, both his justification and his sanctification, to his gracious Savior Who died for him and Who now lives in Him by faith. (Buls)

Jesus commands us to remain in him and promises that he will remain in us. The “lesson” that goes with Jesus’ “object” is driven home. A detached branch cannot bear fruit. Even an attached branch does not bear fruit by itself. Occasional or intermittent attachment also is not sufficient for a steady yield of fruit. We need daily repentance and renewal of faith. The world, surrounds us daily. We need Christ in us continually. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus goes from “you” (plural in Greek) to “a man” (singular), and then back to “you” plural). Here is a good example for the preacher. The people need to hear comforting and encouraging words as the church gathered around Word and Sacrament, and also individually. In particular, the individual needs to be assured that, by virtue of faith, he is bearing much fruit. Especially when we join Paul’s lament in Rom. 7:14-24, we need to hear that we are bearing much fruit in

the kingdom. The double negative *ou...ouden* is emphatic, literally, “you are not able to do nothing.” We attribute all, justification and sanctification, to our gracious Savior. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

*apart from me* – “We cannot keep the Law without Christ’s aid....So, before we keep the Law, our hearts must be born again through faith” (Ap V 194). “Without faith human nature does not call upon God, nor expect anything from Him, nor bear the cross (Mt. 16:24). Instead, human nature seeks and trusts in human help. So when there is no faith and trust in God, all kinds of lusts and human intentions rule in the heart (Gen. 6:5)” (AC XX 37-38). (TLSB)

*ou . . . ouden*, “not . . . nothing.” A double negative is used here for emphasis. The Christian attributes everything, his justification and sanctification, to Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Jesus says plainly here what he has been implying so far. We are the branches. The last clause of this verse makes it clear that Jesus is discussing the fruit of faith. While we may, apart from Christ, do works that will be regarded well in the world, these are not pleasing in God’s sight. Apart from Jesus, we, literally and emphatically in the Greek, “cannot do nothing,” *ou dunasthe poiein ouden*, that is good in the sight of God. Attached to the vine, all that we produce is “fruit.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

**15:6** *if anyone does not* – Now comes the opposite side of the coin. Jesus is speaking of the individual who refuses or ceases to acknowledge Jesus for what He is. We again have illustration. What do people do with branches that fall from a vine or tree? Everybody knows. They carry them away from the vine or tree, let them become completely dry, pile them up and burn them. The verbs are examples of what is called the gnomic aorist, that which customarily happens. Look at the verbs found at James 1:11, good examples of the gnomic aorist. John 15:6 is starkest law picturing the fruitless person who has fallen from Christ. (Buls)

*thrown into the fire and burned.* Judged. In light of such passages as 6:39; 10:27–28, these branches probably do not represent true believers. Genuine salvation is evidenced by a life of fruitfulness. (CSB)

*ejxhrawnqh*—to dry out; *kaivetai*—to burn. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

*eblēthē*, “to be thrown,” and *exēranthē*, “to be dried out, withered” are gnomic aorists, signifying that which normally happens. Along with *kaietai*, “to be burned,” this verse is the preaching of the Law to its fullest. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

The “object” is directly applied to the “lesson.” (The gnomic aorists describe that which customarily happens.) The stark law of this verse reminds us that Jesus, more than any other biblical personality, speaks of hell. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus here uses the same “withering” imagery, *exēranthē*, as in the parable of the sower (Mt 13:6) and the cursing of the fig tree (Mt 21:18–21; Mk 11:20–24). A branch that does not bear fruit is not receiving life from the vine. It is good for nothing except to serve as kindling. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Fire is the symbol of judgment and destruction (cf. Ezk 15:18; Mt. 3:10). (TLSB)

**15:7** *my words remain in you.* It is impossible to pray correctly apart from knowing and believing the teachings of Christ. (CSB)

Jesus has used the verb "remain" three times in verse 4, once in verse 5 and once in verse 6. Now He uses it again but amplifies its meaning. "If" is epexegetical, meaning "namely." Remaining in Christ and having His words remain in us are not two individual things but the same thing. John 8:31 and 32 is an excellent parallel passage here. Christ is where His Word is. Where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is. (Buls)

Now follows a command. Implicit in the command is the fact that Christ is our Savior. "Whatever you wish" means "no matter what." Christ is closer to the believer than is husband, wife, child, parent or friend. Our inmost thoughts are known to Him and He wants us to bring Him our most personal requests. "And it shall be to you," is a grand promise. (Buls)

It hardly need be said that Christ is not including ridiculous or godless requests. Faith does not make such requests. Furthermore, faith is always saying, as did He "Not my will but Thine be done." The point of verse 7 is the same made by Paul at Romans 8:31,32. In view of the fact that Christ has already vicariously supplied me with the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, won't He now give me all needed good for this life? Of course He will. (Buls)

*kai ta hrēmata mou en humin meinēi*, "and [if] my words remain in you." To remain in Christ is to have his Word remain in you. Remember, Christ is the Word (Jn 1:1, 14) who remains in you (Gal 2:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*ask whatever you wish.* The first *kai* is epexegetical; we could translate it as "namely." It is one and the same thing for us to remain in Christ and for his words to remain in us. See Jn 8:31–32. Implicit in our asking is acknowledgment that Jesus is our Savior. Ridiculous or godless requests—which faith, relying on his words, would not make anyway—are not included in the promise. cf. Rom 8:31–32. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Jesus makes a promise to us about the prayer offered in faith: "Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." The one who is in Christ wants only those things that Christ wants. This is the result of his words abiding in us. In the case of a branch who is in Christ, to ask "whatever you wish" means to pray, "Thy will be done." Jesus' words here are again similar to his discourse regarding the withered fig tree in Mk 11:22–24. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

*aitēsasthe*, "[you yourself,] ask." This imperative denotes the request of an inferior to a superior. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

**15:8** *Father is glorified.* The Father is glorified in the work of the Son (13:31–32), and he is also glorified in the fruit-bearing of disciples (see Mt 7:20; Lk 6:43–45). (CSB)

This verse reminds us immediately of Matthew 5:16. Note that Jesus says *MY* Father, which denotes His personal relationship to the Father Who sent Jesus to redeem all men. Those who believe this, bear much fruit. (Note again that it's not merely *some* but *much*.) (Buls)

The good works of the Christian, caused by the fact that Jesus alone is the Vine, the Source, are pleasing to the heavenly Father and clothe Him in the splendor due Him. People should see these good works in us to glorify the Father, not ourselves. (Buls)

The last phrase could begin "and thus," if we read the Greek according to Nestle 25th edition. In this case we translate "prove to be." However, the 26th reads an aorist subjunctive, not future indicative. In this case the clause means: "that you bear much fruit and are My disciples." In neither case can the form of "showing" mean "become." None of our translations understand it in the sense of "become." Christians do not become Christians by bearing much fruit. That would be contrary to all of Scripture. (Buls)

Apparently all our translations, including KJV, read as does the 25th edition and these notes consider that correct. RSV, AAT and NASB read: "and so prove to be my disciples." That is surely correct. The much fruit in the life of the Christian glorifies Jesus' Father and proves that he is Jesus' disciple. (Buls)

Is "disciple" a nominative plural adjective or a dative singular pronoun? These notes prefer the former. But, in any case it means that they belong to Jesus in the sense that they have been persuaded as to His teaching. They are of the same school of thought as is Jesus. (Buls)

Jesus and Jesus alone is the source of that which is truly good. Read John 10:11-18. His highest good comes to us through the fact that He laid down His life for us. He who believes this is one of Jesus' sheep, justified, cleansed, forgiven. Now read Ephesians 2:9.10: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has prepared before in order that we might walk in them." From God's point of view the entire life of the Christian, by virtue of the fact that he is attached to Jesus, the Vine, is a good work. No wonder Jesus uses the expression "MUCH fruit" twice in our pericope. It's either *MUCH* fruit or none. (Buls)

*The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works*, paragraph 14, reads:

It is evident that in discussing the question whether good works are necessary or free, both the *Augsburg Confession* and its *Apology* often employ formulas like these: 'Good works are necessary'; again, 'It is necessary to do good works because they necessarily follow faith and reconciliation' again: 'We should and must of necessity do good works that God has commanded.' Likewise, Holy Scripture itself uses words like 'necessity', 'necessary', 'needful', 'should', 'must' to indicate what we are bound to do because of God's ordinance, commandment, and will (Romans 13:5.6.9; 1 Corinthians 9:9; Acts 5:29; John 15:12; 1 John 4:11). (CC)

Likewise in *Article XI, Election*, paragraph 12 we read:

Furthermore, everything in the Word of God is written down for us, not for the purpose of thereby driving us to despair but in order that 'by steadfastness, by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope' (Romans 15:4). From this it is beyond all doubt that the true understanding or the right use of the teaching of God's eternal foreknowledge will in no way cause or support either impenitence or despair. So, too, Scripture presents this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the Word (Ephesians 1:13.14; 1 Corinthians 1:21.30.31), to admonish us to repent (2 Timothy 3:16), to urge us to godliness (Ephesians 1:15ff; John 15:16.17.3.4.10.12), to strengthen our faith and to assure us of our salvation (Ephesians 1:9.13.14; John 10:27-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15). (CC)

This reminds us of what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5:16. Our good works honor the Father because they are empowered by His unique Son. In the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nestle-Aland text, the aorist subjunctive *ganasthe*, "that you should become my disciples," replaces the future indicative of earlier editions, but the indicative is preferable, and is reflected in the NIV,

RSV, and KJV. We do not bear fruit in order to become disciples (works-righteousness); by bearing fruit we demonstrate that, by His grace, we are His disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

The Father is glorified when those whom he has pruned and cleansed bear fruit. To be “disciples,” *mathētai*, is to learn to say and do all that the master says and does. Those who are in the true vine receive their life and all things from Jesus, who nourishes them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

As Christ glorified the Father through His obedience, believers glorify God through their lives – and show that they are real disciples, attached to the vine. (TLSB)

*en toutōi*, “in this.” “In this my Father is glorified.” The direct reference to “this” is the branch bearing much fruit, but as has already been said, we cannot speak of the fruit apart from the vine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*my* – The meaning of *emoi*, “my” is the same whether it is a nominative plural adjective or a dative singular pronoun. Either way, Jesus’ disciples think as Jesus thinks. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

**15:9-17** What the people around Jesus were about to do to him makes this passage all the more remarkable. Judas was on his way to betray him. The other disciples were about to abandon him. Within hours, Gentiles and Jews each would have a part in unjustly arresting, abusing, and murdering him as a criminal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

You and I, and the people we serve, have a part in all this too. He suffered for our sins. We likely would have fled from him just as the apostles did. In spite of all this, Jesus speaks to us of love. Considering the context, Jesus’ quiet serenity in his farewell address in Jn 13:31–17:26 is amazing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

In Jn 15:1–8, Jesus spoke of the organic relationship he has with his disciples. He is as close to us as a vine is to its branches. Our very lives depend on our connectedness to him. In the next nine verses, Jesus expands on the first eight. He draws out the gardener-vine-branches analogy. He dwells on the relationships of the Father to his Son, the Son with his disciples, and the disciples with each other. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

This is an “in-house” passage. Jesus is speaking to present and future believers. The events he would face would overwhelm those who trust in him and derive their vital “juice” from him. Jesus’ atonement was and is universal, but his purpose here is to comfort the believers gathered around him—in person then, and around Word and Sacrament now. He uses the verb *agapaō*, “to love,” five times and the noun *agapē*, “love,” four times in our text, always applying them to the relationships between gardener, vine, and branches. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

This text’s urgency for us today is not because the time is short before Jesus will die, but because we branches are in danger of spiritual death. Jesus faced death with the confidence that he would conquer on the third day. We potentially could face eternal death. Disciples, then and now, tend to become lax in maintaining a closeness with him. We find it easier to depend on ourselves than on him. We may exercise what we call our “Christian liberty” instead of serving our Lord, our brothers in Christ, and our neighbor. We do not always do what Jesus says. We sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The greatest urgency is that we love each other as Jesus has loved us. Elements of such love are steadfastness, obedience, friendship, productivity, and prayer. If the preacher elects to use the whole Gospel as his text, he will touch on all five of these. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

May the Lord grant that each preacher senses Jesus' urgency as he prepares to speak to God's people, and that the Lord uses him to communicate that urgency. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The mood of this text is one of quiet expectancy. Possibly the disciples are already on the way to Gethsemane with Jesus. It's their last night together. Everyone can sense something is about to happen. Jesus continues to teach and to prepare them. The combination of reflection on his words and anticipation for what is to happen predominates. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

In Jn 15:1–8, Jesus teaches his disciples that they have life only because they are attached to him, the true vine (v 1). Apart from Jesus, a person can only wither and die (v 6). Just as a branch cannot survive unless it is attached to the vine, the vine cannot survive unless it is cared for by the vinedresser. Jesus identifies the Father as the vinedresser. In today's pericope, Jesus discusses the relationship between the vine and the vinedresser by saying that he loves because the Father has loved him (v 9) and that he has made known to the disciples what he has heard from his Father (v 15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Jesus' farewell address to the disciples, John 13:31-17:26, is one of the grandest and profoundest passages in the Gospels. In view of the fact that Judas was about to betray Him and the other disciples were about to abandon Him, plus the fact that He would be unjustly arrested as a criminal, the quiet serenity of this whole passage is remarkable. He had just said in verse 5: "Apart from Me you are able to do absolutely nothing." That proved to be true in the abandonment of Jesus by the disciples and the denial of Peter. (Buls)

In verses 1-8 Jesus had spoken about His relationship to His disciples. In verses 9-17 Jesus dwells on a threefold relationship: (Buls)

1. That of the Father for the incarnate Son;
2. That of the incarnate Son for the disciples; and,
3. That of the disciples for each other.

Bengel: He does not speak here of love for His enemies. (Buls)

True. It is a comforting sermon to believers. But this does in no way deny the universal atonement. (Buls)

Christians very easily become lax in their faith and life. They begin to depend on themselves rather than on Christ. Or they may begin to use Christian liberty as an occasion to sin or not to do what Christ says. There is a note of urgency in these verses: to remain in the love of Christ, to love one another, to realize that they have been chosen, to bear fruit, to pray. The text begins (verse 9) with a command to remain in Christ's love and ends (verse 17) with a command to mutual love for one another. (Buls)

**15:9** *so have I* – kago - Means “me also.” There is to be a responding reaction to an action (in this case to God’s love documented in verses 9-16). This is a thread that runs through this text. It is the love the Father has had for the Son from the beginning. It is the love that prompted the Father to send the Son (3:16) and prompted the Son to do His Father’s will. As the Father loved the Son, so the Son loved His disciples and has invited them to remain in His love. All, then, are His disciples who by faith remain in His love. (PBC)

As -- so have I" are correlative adverbs of manner, meaning "just as-so also." See John 3:35: the Father gave the incarnate Christ all things so that He might accomplish His work. See John 10:17: He loves Him because He lays down His life to take it again. And at 17: 23: "You (the Father) loved them just as you loved Me (Jesus)." There is nothing more certain than the love of the Father in Christ for believers. We so easily forget that. (Buls)

This verse has a pair of correlative adverbs of manner, *kathōs* and *kai* (compounded in *kagō*). The pair mean “just as—so also.” Jn 3:35 says the Father loved his Son by placing everything in his hands, so that the Son might do his work in this world. The Father loves him for laying down his life (Jn 10:17). Jesus returns to this theme in the High Priestly Prayer (In 17:23). The Father’s love for us is demonstrated in the love the Father showed for his Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The Father’s love for Jesus is self-giving. All that Jesus has, he has from the Father (16:15). Jesus’ statement that he loves us “just as,” *kathōs*, the Father loves him points forward to when Jesus will give himself to us on the cross. This is the manifestation of the Father’s love for us (3:16; 1 Jn 4:9–10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

*love* – agape - Love that acts without any expected return. Charity. It is this form of love that is mentioned 8 times.

Love is defined and demonstrated by God. It is self-giving for the unworthy. God’s love comes from himself and is demonstrated on the cross (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8). It is a creative love, evoking in his followers the same kind of unselfish, sacrificial love. Hence, self-love short-circuits the dynamic of God’s love in us. Yet in this text, the tension is not between God’s love and our self-love. It is the contrast between God’s/Christian love and the world’s hatred (vv 18–19). The malady comes primarily from the rejection of Christ’s love and his followers by the unbelieving world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

John 3:35, “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.”

John 10:17, “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.”

John 17:23, “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

REMAIN – meno - Continue to be a part of something. For the disciples and us this means holding fast to the faith God have given us as exhorted in Revelation 2:10. The way to do this is to use God’s Word and Sacraments to continue to grow in our faith life.

Now Jesus gives a command: "Remain in My very own love." This means the love which Christ has for us, not the love we have for Him. His love for us is a fact. Just don't abandon it. (Buls)

Remaining is difficult to define. To say it is a mutual indwelling or that Christ is in us keeps this spiritual state vague and abstract. Helpful is to retain the Vine and branch imagery from the verses before the text. This is a picture of the remaining Jesus calls for. Then, when you place the joining of Vine and branch under a theological microscope, you see Baptism, Lord's Supper, and Word as the means of remaining. Love and obedience are fruit, and they are necessary to remain on the Vine. But such love and obedience come through our remaining on the Vine by being joined to Christ in Word and Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The Father loves the Son, who fulfills the mission. The Son loves those for whom the mission is fulfilled. The love is the same. To remain in Jesus is to remain in his love. *meinate*, "abide," aorist imperative. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

**15:10** *if* - The difficult word is *if* (vv 10, 14). To our ears, *if* is a law word. *If* you do something, then you will receive some reward or punishment. It is nearly impossible for a congregation to hear the word in any other way. Of course, the text does not imply any such legalism. The Vine/branch imagery (v 5), being called friends (v 15), and Jesus choosing his disciples (v 16) all prevent any such works-righteousness. Instead, Jesus weaves together his love, sacrifice, and friendship with remaining in him, human obedience and love in such a way that none can be neglected. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*commandments* – Jesus' obedience to His Father, a central theme of Jn. Cf 8:29. (TLSB)

Note that "commands" or "injunctions" is in the plural. "Commands" is far more than the ten commandments. It includes all His words to His disciples. In the first part of this verse, Jesus is stressing the fact that the proper attitude toward His Word in general assures one of the fact that he is of the true faith, remaining in His love for that person. Now comes "obey" again. Common to both parts of the verse are the verbs "remain" and "obey" and the nouns "commands" and "love." Implicit in this verse are the two natures in Christ. He speaks of the Father as *MY* Father in a very special way. And yet it is very plain that He speaks as a true human. He confides in the love of the Father for Christ. The Christian is a reflection of Christ in what he does and in what he trusts. (Buls)

All of Jesus' Gospel words to his disciples, not just the Ten Commandments, are included in "commands." We may be sure we will remain in the true faith when we remain in the true Word. The "just as" phrase in v 10 is parallel to the one in v 9. Note the implication of the dual natures of Christ in this verse. As true man, he is our model for observing God's commands and remaining in God's love. As true God, he fulfilled God's commands perfectly on our behalf, and by his obedience he gained God's love for us despite our disobedience. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

The Nestle-Aland Greek text begins a subparagraph at v 11. The antecedent of "these things" (NIV: "this") is all of vv 1–10. Jesus told them for the purpose (*hina*) that we might share in his joy. Jesus' joy stems from completing the work of redemption and returning to his Father. Jesus' joy is in obedience to his Father's will ("he will delight in the fear of the Lord," Is 11:3), not simply for his own benefit, but so that his joy might be in us too. Note that *plērōthēi*, "be fulfilled" (NIV: "be complete") is passive; Christian joy comes from outside ourselves. Here is joy more lasting than the joy of good weather, or the joy between friends, between parents and children, or even between spouses. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*keep...as I have kept.* Again the importance of obedience (cf. 14:15, 21, 23), and again the example of Christ (cf. 14:31). (CSB)

The key is proper relationship. Our obedience does not bring Christ's love, but it is the evidence that we are remaining in his friendship. Christ's choosing us does not depend on our love, but remaining in Christ's love and doing what he commands go hand in hand. We love because he first loved us—and loving each other is how Christ's disciples will be known in the world. We are called to be Christ's friends—and to be obedient. Both are emphasized by Jesus, and we can neither play one against the other nor omit one to focus solely on the other. What Jesus has joined together so masterfully, we must not separate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

How do we remain in Jesus' love? The same way that Jesus remains in the Father's love—by obeying his commands (*entolas mou tērēsēte*). To remain in the love of the Son is to remain in the love of the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Whenever we keep Jesus' commandments, we are bearing fruit (15:8). This fruit demonstrates that we are still attached to the vine (15:5). This is not, however, a matter of simple obedience. To "keep" something, *tērēsēte*, is to hold fast to it and cherish it. Jesus' commandments, *tas entolas*, encompass all that God's Word teaches (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Pet 2:21; Mt 28:18–20) but are chiefly fulfilled in love (v 12). The "just as," *kathōs*, shows us that Jesus is applying what he has said of himself in v 9 to us in v 10. Narrowly speaking, Jesus identifies love as the greatest fruit of faith. More broadly, however, keeping the commandments speaks of a love for all that God has spoken (Psalm 1). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Some meanings are: To be prevented from escaping like in a fortress; to hold fast without letting go like being detained in the custody of the law.

*Just as* – *katao* - Even so. Has similar meaning as the "so have" in verse 9.

Our Savior gives us His own example of what it means to remain in His love. It means keeping God's commandment as a show of that love at work in our lives, just as Jesus kept all of the Father's commands. The fruits of our faith will demonstrate the faith in our hearts. (PBC)

*my love ... his love.* See vv. 12, 14. Obedience and love go together (see 1Jn 2:5; 5:2–3). (CSB)

**15:11** *joy.* Mentioned previously in this Gospel only in 3:29, but one of the characteristic notes of the upper room discourse (16:20–22, 24; 17:13). The Christian way is never dreary, for Jesus desires his disciples' joy to be complete. (CSB)

Note that the Nestle Greek text begins a subparagraph at this point. The pronoun "this" is quite frequent in these chapters. For example, in 16:1–4 it occurs four times! One must always determine its antecedent. Here in verse 11, likely the antecedent is verses 1–10. "So that" denotes purpose. "My joy" means "my very own joy." What joy? The joy of going to the Father, to complete His work of redemption and to return to the Father. Jesus found joy in doing the Father's will. But not for Himself. He spoke so that His very own joy might be in them, might be their very own by faith. (Buls)

That becomes clear in the remainder of the verse. "Your joy" means that it becomes theirs. "May be complete" is very strong, "might be fulfilled," "completely realized." The Christian's true joy always comes from the outside, from Christ. The joys of this life, if in keeping with the ten commandments, are not wrong. There's the joy of the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, between friends, the joy of good weather, etc. But, sooner or later, we must realize that the only lasting joy is that of remaining in Jesus' love and keeping His commandments. (Buls)

Jesus' joy stems from completing the work of redemption and returning to His Father. Jesus' joy is in obedience to His Father' will (He will delight in the fear of the Lord," Is. 11:3), not simply for His own benefit, but so that His joy might be in us too. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

*hina . . . hē chara humōn plērōthēi*, "that your joy may be full." The disciples are to enjoy Jesus' love for them. That is his purpose in speaking (the *hina* clause). Jesus' commands are not intended to be burdensome, and they are not; they bring nothing but happiness. The purpose of God's commands is to bring people to Jesus. Their joy will eventually be made full. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Jesus delivers his gifts to us with words. His Word takes what is his and bestows it on the hearer. Here, the gift is joy. When we have Jesus' joy, we have the fullness of joy (our joy "may be full," *plērōthēi*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Not the ephemeral happiness that worldly pleasures bring, but deep and abiding joy of being loved by God through Jesus Christ. (TLSB)

*full* – Meaning to be fully supplied; perfect. Christ has done it all, there is nothing for us to do but respond. This could be compared to a cup that is filled to overflowing.

Note that *plarotha*, "be fulfilled" or "be complete" is passive; Christian joy comes from outside ourselves. Here is joy, more lasting than the joy of good weather, or the joy between friends, between parents and children, or even between spouses. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

**15:12-13** The Father has bestowed his self-giving love on Jesus (v 9). Now Jesus commands that we love one another in the same way. Jesus loves us by laying down his life (v 13) for us. "For," *huper*, indicates substitution. Jesus dies in our place. Jesus' commandment is that we love one another in the same sort of sacrificial way (Eph 5:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

**15:12** COMMAND – *entellomai* To charge someone with doing a task. While this is not new, it is the first time that this kind of love is perfectly modeled by Christ. It also appears in verses 14 and 17.

The 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text introduces another subparagraph with v 12. Even though God's command to love each other is as old as Lev 19:18, Jesus' command is "new" (Jn 13:34). Its newness consists in its fulfillment in its highest sense by him. Never before had ultimate love for others been demonstrated. Christians especially are the "others" to be loved, and Christians, sadly, sorely need to be told to love one another. Often we are hardest on each other.

“As” implies that failure to love one another is a denial of Christ’s love for us. Note the Fifth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*love one another – hina agapate allēlous kathōs ēgapēsa humas*, “that you love one another as I have loved you.” This command is not to serve as a summary. This is to be a sample of what his precepts are like. We love just as Jesus loves us, which is very different from the love of the world. We love as we aid people in keeping the faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Here, unlike the 25th edition, the 26th makes a subparagraph. Paragraphing in the Gospel of John not always easy. At any rate, the meaning is: "This is my very own injunction." The divinity of Jesus is implicit in this statement. (Buls)

He doesn't say "that you *like* one another." Love is far greater than self-gratifying liking. This verse is made plain at John 13:34. It's a *new* commandment in the sense that He fulfilled it in its highest sense. (Buls)

"Each other" denotes Christians. Must Christians be told to love each other? They surely must! How often don't Christians detest each other! That should not be. If persisted in, it leads to a denial of what Christ did for the Christian, because Christ says "as I have." He loved me in all my misery. I must love fellow Christians in all their misery. His love covered all my sin. My love must cover the sins of fellow Christians. (Buls)

**15:13** Christ’s love was not only in words but also in his sacrificial death. (CSB)

Now Jesus explains how lofty this love is. This verse is an axiom, a generally accepted truth. People stand in awe of someone who will lay down his life in behalf of his friends. It is the greatest sacrifice which a human being can make. But, though such a sacrifice on the part of a mere human being can save no one's soul, Jesus is implicitly reminding us of what He has already said in John 10:11.15.17. It reminds us of 1 John 3:16. (Buls)

This verse does not deny the universal atonement. It does not deny that Jesus died for His enemies. But Jesus is using an axiom in verse 13 which involves friends and now He is about to apply this to the disciples specifically. (Buls)

*lay down* – Highest expression of love. (TLSB)

*tautēs*, “this.” This verse tells us how far our love ought to be able to go. Our love can still be like this, like his, without our laying down our physical lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*for his friends*. Gk *hyper*, “on behalf of”; giving one’s life as a sacrifice for a friend. (TLSB)

Real love will make the ultimate sacrifice for others, as Jesus was about to do the next day. (PBC)

This verse is a generally accepted truth, an axiom. By citing it, Jesus reminds us of the even stronger position he took in Jn 10:11,15, 17. Rather than denying the universal atonement, this verse reinforces it. Jesus laid down his life for his friends and his enemies. Remember 1 Jn 2:2; 3:16. Here, though, he wants to apply the axiom especially to his disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

**15:14-15** These verses are the only verses in which Jesus called his disciples his friends. The use of the word is very specialized. It is the usage of Ex 33:11 and James 2:23. Christ's friendship with his disciples is based on common faith in God's promises and obedience of God's commands. Our human friendships arise out of mutually shared interests. We are God's friends when we accept his unilaterally-declared friendship for us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

Do we sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" with an awareness of the higher sense in which Jesus has made us his friends? Jesus has more to say about "friends" in v 15. The slave does not expect an explanation from his master. As our friend, Jesus is eager to keep us fully informed of God's purposes. We need not be omniscient, but we do need to know the fullness of Jesus' commission and ours. See Lenski and Kretzmann on this verse, and cf. Jn 1:18. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

**15:14** *friends* – *philos* – It is like a brotherly love (Philadelphia) that goes deeper than that of any other friendship. He has brought us into full fellowship with him. Note that fellowship is – *koino* - a *partnership*, that involves *participation*. They are not just spectators from a distance but are full partners.

Here, in verses 14-15, is the only place in which Jesus called His disciples His friends, but in a very specific sense. Exodus 33:11 speaks of the friendly way in which God spoke to Moses. James 2:23 informs us that Abraham was called (and known as) God's friend because Abraham believed God. Here in John 15:14 Jesus states that His disciples are His friends because He lays down His life for them (verse 13) and rejoices in their doing what He, true God, commands them. How different this is from the meaning which we usually put into the word "friend!" For us this word usually means a person who pleases us. Jesus uses it in a much higher sense. (Buls)

Friendship here is more than a best-buddies, pal-around-together notion. A friend has the best interest of another in mind and will do what is necessary for that person's benefit. The relationship is close and intimate, sharing confidences. Today friendship is often reduced to those who are useful (what have you done for me lately?) or to those who bring good feelings. For Jesus it is far more noble, based on trust, love, sacrifice, and unselfishness. What a Friend we have in Jesus! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*philous*, "friends." The disciples were Jesus' friends in the deepest sense of the word. Whatever Jesus heard from the Father he passed on to them. The disciples were never to be slaves who blindly followed orders. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*if you do* - The "if" here and the "if" in v 10 are the same. *ean* indicates that if whatever follows it is true, then the second part of the sentence will generally be the case. Here, the order of the clauses is reversed. We could paraphrase the verse in this way: "If you do what I command you, it will generally be the case that you are my friends." In the context of the vine discourse,

Jesus is saying again that those who are attached to him—his friends—will “do what [he] commands” (bear fruit). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

We do not become Christ’s friends through our obedience, but we obey Him because we cherish our relationship with Him. (TLSB)

**15:15** *servants ... friends*. A servant is simply an agent, doing what his master commands and often not understanding his master’s purpose. But Jesus takes his friends into his confidence. (CSB)

But He is not yet finished with the word "friend" as applied to the disciples. "No longer do I call you slaves, because the slave does not know what his Master is doing." A slave is a mere instrument. He does what the Master says. That's all. The Master gives the slave no explanations. He merely expects obedience. (Buls)

By the way, the use of "know" is important. The word here means "to know on one's own." (Buls)

It seems presumptuous to think of being Jesus’ friends when we don’t even deserve to be His servants. Still, as His disciples, we serve Jesus and are rightly called His servants. Furthermore, He has taken us servants into His confidence as friends and revealed all the things He had heard from the Father. (PBC)

*I have made known to you*. From 16:12 we learn that though Jesus had let his disciples know as much as they were able to absorb of the Father’s plan, the revelation was not yet complete. The Spirit would make other things known in due course. (CSB)

He continues: "But you I have called friends because all things which I have heard from My Father, I have made known to you." Of course, Jesus does not mean that they are omniscient. But He does mean that He has plainly told them about His mission for their sake. He hides nothing.

Lenski: This embraces everything pertaining to his mission, that he was to be the light and the life of the world, to make the blind to see, to satisfy the hungry and the thirsty, to make the dead alive, that he is now giving his life for the world, is now returning to the Father, is coming again spiritually (Pentecost), and is returning at the last day to judge the world and to take his own to himself into the heavenly mansions.

Compare John 1:18. We can know God and His revelation only through the incarnate Christ. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The only name that will now fit them is that of friends, for the Master has revealed to them the secrets of the Father, His essence and especially His counsel of love for the salvation of mankind. (Buls)

Servants do what they are commanded out of duty and obligation only (Lk 17:7–10). They have no standing in their master’s household. Jesus, however, is the master’s son. All the words he has “heard” from his Father he has made known to us. Jesus’ words confer on us a similar status with

his Father because we have also heard the Father's words. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

To share in such a way as to certify the truthfulness of the information. A slave expects and gets no more information than just what is needed to do a job. We are fully informed concerning God's will and our role in carrying it out. Also, we are given all the resources needed to accomplish the task.

**15:16** *I chose you ... bear fruit ... ask.* † Disciples normally chose the particular rabbi to whom they wanted to be attached, but it was not so with Jesus' disciples. He chose them, and for a purpose—the bearing of fruit. We usually desire a strong prayer life in order that we may be fruitful, but here it is the other way around. Jesus enables us to bear fruit as a result of faith, and then the Father will hear our prayers. (CSB)

Does this verse speak of eternal election? The *Formula of Concord, S.D., Article XI, Election*, paragraph 12 reads: (Buls)

It is beyond all doubt that the true understanding or the right use of the teaching of God's eternal foreknowledge will in no way cause or support either impenitence or despair. So, too, Scripture presents this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the Word (Ephesians 1:13.14; 1 Corinthians 1:21.30.31), to admonish us to repent (2 Timothy 3:16), to urge us to godliness (Ephesians 1:15ff; John 15:16.17.3.4.10.12), to strengthen our faith and to assure us of our salvation (Ephesians 1:9.13.14; John 10:27-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15). (Buls)

Evidently this passage means that election urges us to go, bear fruit and to pray. And, in verse 17, to love one another. (Buls)

Lenski: 'I did choose you' cannot refer to predestination but must refer to the choice of the disciples as the friends whom Jesus selected for himself. (Buls)

Bengel does not mention election here. However, Ylvisaker understands it differently: (Buls)

It is He who has made them what they now are as His friends. And this act in time points back to an election, which is represented in this passage, as well as generally in Scripture, as grounded upon the unmerited mercy of divine love for Christ's sake alone. . . All merit and worthiness (of man) are excluded. . . The Scriptural doctrine concerning election, which is as humiliating (he means 'humbling') as it is rich in comfort (Isaiah 43:21; Ephesians 1:4ff; Romans 8:28-30), is protected, as it were, in this similitude of the vine and the branches. . . We may not explain the salvation of those who remain as branches on the vine except in the free mercy of divine love, nor may we discover the cause of the rejection of the unfruitful branches except in their non-continuance upon the vine where they are exhorted to remain, because such continuance is rendered possible by virtue of the power that is graciously proffered. (Buls)

In other words, Ylvisaker sees election behind the whole chapter. (Buls)

Kretzmann: This choosing was done entirely by Christ. Everything that is done by the believers in faith is the result of the gracious election of Christ. (Buls)

The *Formula of Concord* does not deny that this passage speaks of election. Lenski does. Ylvisaker and Kretzmann plainly state that it does speak of election. If one agrees with Lenski he is forced to say that Jesus is speaking only of the disciples. That cannot be. He is surely speaking of Christians of all ages. Therefore, these *Notes* agree with the interpretation of Ylvisaker and Kretzmann. Everything that the Christian is and will do and be, originates not with himself but with His gracious Savior Who will bring to pass that which He wills. The Christian must lean heavily on that thought. Of ourselves we are totally inadequate. (Buls)

The fact that I am a Christian originates totally with Christ and He will see me through. Here Jesus introduces the items in the Christian's life of sanctification. He appointed and He will supply every need. In this verse Jesus calls attention to four items: (Buls)

1. Christians are chosen to go;
2. They are not inactive;
3. They bear fruit. Verses 1-5 remind us that Jesus is the cause of the fruit;
4. The fruit remains. It will continue even after the Christian dies.

See Revelation 14:13. Note that He calls it "your fruit" though He Himself supplies it. A high compliment and privilege. Christ has appointed the Christian to beseech the Father, concerning any need the Christian has, to grant such request in Jesus' name, which means by virtue of the fact that Jesus is the sole Mediator between the Father and the Christian. (Buls)

Review how the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI, Election, paragraph 12, refers to v 16. The commentators disagree on whether this verse speaks of a temporal appointment or eternal election. The Formula of Concord does not deny that our whole text deals with election. Our Textual Notes disagree with Lenski on this point. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

In the Greek, *humeis* and *egō* are emphatic, stressing Christ's choosing of us. The items of the Christian life of sanctification are introduced by "appointed." The use of *hina* in this verse is more like an infinitive rather than signaling purpose. Jesus emphasizes four items in our appointment: (1) that we go; (2) that we bear fruit; (3) that the fruit be lasting; and (4) that prayers in accord with Jesus' name will be answered. As our friend, Jesus pledges himself as Mediator in all this. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*egō exelexamēn humas*, "I chose you." This is emphatic! Jesus chose us; we did not choose him. This, however, is not simply a convenient (and proper) polemic against decision theology. It is a powerful Gospel statement. Anything to which we might presume is uncertain and burdensome, for what if we chose unwisely or chose something for which we were ill-equipped? But when Jesus chooses for a position or task or honor, we can be certain he will be our adequacy. Jesus not only chose the disciples, but he also appointed them. Again, the work of bearing the fruit (*karpon*) is not a burden. Bearing fruit is the mission of the Christian. This verse does not say that if you bear fruit, Jesus will give you whatever you ask. The Father will aid his children in fruit-bearing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

"Choose," *exelazamēn*, comes from the same Greek root as "elect," *eklektos*. Jesus has chosen us to be attached to him and to bear fruit. Though some will take this verse to mean that we can know our election on the basis of our works (fruit), Jesus intends to comfort us by these words. We are in him because he chose us. Because he has chosen us, we can be confident in prayer. All

that we ask in Jesus' name will be granted to us (see Ps 54:1; Ex 33:19; Num 6:23–27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

God called them as believers; they depended on divine initiative, not human choice. (TLSB)

Jesus chooses us with a purpose. He expects us to bear fruit and has appointed us to do so – fruit that will last. What fruit will last more than to share Jesus' love with others? What command of Jesus has more lasting results than His Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. (PBC)

*choose* – eklegomai To make an intentional choice and having various options to choose from. This puts the whole initiative on God. God comes to us, we don't find him and salvation.

*Appointed* – To place in a position to accomplish a pre-determined goal.

*Fruit* – karpos – Fruit that can be plucked. Where there is a faith there will also be evidence of that faith in the form of spiritual fruit. (James 2:14-19) See also Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; and Hebrews 12:11.

**15:17** Jesus focuses on love and self-sacrifice as the basis for this relationship among His disciples. (TLSB)

“These things” (NIV: “this”) goes back to v 12 and perhaps further. The repetition of v 17 emphasizes our need to be told again to love one another. How often we see that Jesus was right to be concerned that we keep loving each other. Jesus, the true vine, keeps loving us. When we branches remain connected to his “juice,” we can and shall remain in love for one another, and even learn to love our enemies, as Jesus did. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 2)

*entellomai*, “I command you.” This is what Jesus tells his disciples to do—a very common theme, indeed (Jn 13:1, 35; 15:4; Rom 12:9; 1 Jn 3:16–18): love for others is love for Jesus. Practice a love that does not desire but gives. Sacrifice is the high watermark of love. God loved: he sent his Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

"This" goes back at least to verse 12. "Love" again is infinitival. (Buls)

Once more Jesus stresses the necessity of mutual love among Christians. The very fact that He stresses this so often indicates that even Christians are in danger *not* loving each other. This implies that they have a sinful flesh. We need not worry about whether or not Jesus loves us. But we do need to be concerned that we love each other. That can be done because He is the Vine. Mutual love among Christians is the highest form of fruit-bearing. If Christians don't love each other, how can they love their enemies? (Buls)

Jesus intends for his words to bear the fruit of love. In this context, Jesus is speaking in particular about the love that is shared between those who are in him, fellow branches on the vine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

**15:1–17** Christ is the true vine, and His disciples are the branches, vitally connected to Him and spontaneously bearing fruit under His purifying care. Christians must love one another as friends, not regard one another as enemies. By grace, God has dwelt among us in His Son (1:14) and has

joined us together in a fellowship of self-giving love. • Hear the prayers of Your faithful people, who desire to do Your will, dear Lord. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Hatred of the World*

**18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’ 26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.**

**15:18–19** *world*. Here refers to the human system that opposes God’s purpose. (CSB)

**15:19** *you are not*. The believer’s essential being, his new life, comes specially from God, and therefore he is not the same as those who oppose God. (CSB)

Christians are born into fallen humanity (the world) and thus are chosen out of it; but as Christ’s followers they are no longer governed by it and hence are not of it. (TLSB)

**15:20** Jesus reapplies the words of 13:16 to the coming persecution. Persecution here is more than antagonism; persecution leading to death. (TLSB)

**15:21** *They will also persecute*. Because Christians do not belong to the world, persecution from the world is inevitable. The basic reason is the world’s ignorance and rejection of the Father (cf. 16:3). (CSB)

**15:22** *not have been guilty*. Of course, the world stood guilty of sin before Christ’s coming. But His message, which aroused fierce opposition, exposed the world’s rebellion against God. (TLSB)

*no excuse*. Privilege and responsibility go together. The Jews had had the great privilege of having the Son of God among them—in addition to having received God’s special revelation in the OT. Their rejection of Jesus left them totally guilty and without excuse. Had he not come to them they would still have been sinners, but they would not have been guilty of rejecting him directly (see v. 24). (CSB)

**15:23** You cannot truly love God if you reject Christ. (TLSB)

**15:24** This includes Jesus’ words and deeds, including His miracles. (TLSB)

**15:25** *word that is written...must fulfilled.* In the end God's purpose is always accomplished, despite the belief of sinful men that they have successfully opposed it. (CSB)

*Law.* This is the OT Scripture. (TLSB)

*hated me without a cause* - This is most likely from Ps. 69:4, a messianic psalm quoted often in the NT. (TLSB)

**16:26-27** "*Helper*" (NIV, RSV), "Comforter" (KJV), and "Advocate" (NRSV) all are attempts to translate *paraklētos*. Many scholars, e.g. R. C. H. Lenski and Raymond Brown, prefer to transliterate the Greek as Paraclete. "This old word . . . was used for legal assistant, pleader, advocate, one who pleads another's cause (Josephus, Philo, in illiterate papyrus), in N.T. only in John's writings" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the NT* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1932] 5:252). A paraclete assisted a person with legal matters. The exceptionally forensic nature of the Paraclete's depiction is apparent in vv 16:8–11. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

The Paraclete is also called "the Spirit of truth" because his legal assistance is personified by truth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

The second relative clause of v 26, "who goes out from the Father," has played an important role in fourth century creedal formulas by its description of the third person of the Trinity's eternal procession from the Father. *Ekporeuetai*, "goes out, proceeds," is present tense and attempts to express in human language an act that is eternal, an event "that lies above and beyond all conception of time" (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943] 1071). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

These two verses reflect Jesus' dual concern for giving insight into the interior life of God and for the needs of the disciples in the world. First, Jesus reveals a glimpse of how the three persons of the Trinity interact. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Son and proceeds from the Father. Second, the Spirit of truth "will testify about me. And you also must testify." St. John the theologian gives a similar coordination in 1 Jn 4:13–14. We need the Counselor's aid in witnessing both in and to the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 5, Part 2)

The words of our text were spoken in the context of the Last Supper Jesus would have with his disciples before his betrayal, crucifixion, and death. He had previously announced to them that he would be rejected by men and killed. He also announces on the occasion of this Passover meal that he would soon be going away, but that they could not follow him to the place where he was going (Jn 13:33). The disciples become troubled by his announcement of leaving them. So Jesus takes the opportunity to comfort them by announcing that although he was leaving them and they could not follow, he would be sending another helper to them—"the Counselor, the Holy Spirit" (Jn 14:26). He then speaks of the special work that the Holy Spirit would be doing in and through them; and subsequently the work he would be doing among people of the world until Jesus would come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

"It is always a bit risky and a little suspicious to cut snippets out of the lectionary. What could it be . . . that they don't want us to hear?" (Norman Nagel, *Selected Sermons of Norman Nagel* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004], 217). The omitted verses from today's *Gospel* (16:1–4a) reveal that life wasn't going to be victorious-looking for the disciples. The suffering and cross to which Jesus was now going (speaking these words just before his arrest) would be their suffering and cross as well. The disciples (and we!) need the theology of glory kicked out of us.

But we also need to be reminded that we are not alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

Note that we have included 16:1-4a. These verses should not be excluded. In 15:18-24 Jesus made a sharp distinction between the unbelieving world and believers. Six times the word "hate" occurs. The world hates Christ and His believers. Christians must not delude themselves but be ready for and face this hatred of the world. In fact, it was prophesied, verse 25. (Buls)

In David's day, in Christ's day, in all generations, the world's irrational foundationless hatred for Christ is directed at Christians. These thoughts are repeated in 16:1-4. The Christian does not live in a world that is friendly toward, or even tolerant of, Christ and the Truth. Forewarned is forearmed. (Buls)

And that is precisely why Pentecost took place; to comfort God's children and to make them cheerful and courageous in a world which utterly loathes Christ and the Truth. (Buls)

**15:26 Helper.** Plainly refers to Pentecost and we are still living in it. (Buls)

"Counselor" can be translated "Comforter," "Advocate," "The one who comfortingly stands beside us at all things, giving us all that we need. Note that it is articular; He is THE Comforter. (Buls)

The work of the entire Trinity is referred to here. Jesus prayed the Father and the Father sent the Spirit. The Trinity is the saving God. Incomprehensible to us is the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. However, that is what the verse says. That the Spirit, from eternity, proceeds also from the Son, is taught in such passages as Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:19; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 4:6; Revelation 22:1, etc. (Buls)

The verse tells us what kind of Spirit He is. He gives us absolute, saving Truth. He alone. His whole work and endeavor is to witness to Christ. Any teaching about the Spirit which does not center in the Person, Word, and work of Jesus is not Truth but a delusion. (Buls)

paraklatos – One called to the side of another. Someone who pleads the cause of another. A paraclete assisted a person with legal matters. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 2)

οἱ παρακλήτοι" is translated as "the Counselor" in the NIV. The Greek word can be translated in various ways: "intercessor," "consoler," "comforter," "advocate," "helper." Each word carries a slightly different emphasis. It is a term rich with meaning. The word conveys a dramatic image of one who is summoned to the side of another to give counsel or consolation. The Holy Spirit as "Counselor" stands alongside us to give advice and help; as "Intercessor" to present our needs to the Father; as "Consoler" or "Comforter" to support us in the midst of our grief; as "Advocate" who, like a lawyer, pleads our defense; as "Helper," one who is present and active for every need we face day-to-day. The Spirit will be one who will stand alongside the disciples to bring them the help they need. He is τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ἀληθείας, "the Spirit of truth." There is no falsehood in him; he speaks the truth and will lead the disciples into all truth (Jn 16:13). He ἐκπορεύεται, "goes out" or "proceeds from the Father." His special word of truth will be about Jesus. His main work is to μαρτυρῆσαι, "testify" or "bear witness," to Jesus Christ, who he is and what he has done for our sinful human family. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

*ho paraklētos*, "the Paraclete." Translated as "advocate, helper, comforter, counselor." Perhaps best to take all of these into account, with the understanding of "one called to another's aid, called

to the side of.” Whereas Jesus is “going to him who sent me” (16:5), the Holy Spirit will come and remain present with the apostles and the Church. Jesus is not leaving them “as orphans” (14:18), but sending “another Helper [Paraclete]” (14:16) to be with them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

The paraclete’s influence and operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ. (Bauer)

In the OT there was the idea of an advocate. Paul is aware that as the believer wrestles in prayer for assurance of the consummation of salvation the Spirit comes to aid him in his weakness and represents him before God. (Romans 8:26)

*I will send.* This verse refers primarily to the Son’s sending of the Holy Spirit. That He is the Spirit of the Son (Rm 8:9; Gal 4:6; 1Pt 1:11) indicates that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son. Western Christians, therefore, rightly understand this passage to imply a double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. Nicene Creed: “who proceeds from the Father and the Son.” Augustine: “The Spirit came forth, not as born, but as given; and so He is not called a son, because He was neither born, as the Only-begotten [the Son], nor made, ... as we are” (NPNF 1 3:94). (TLSB)

*Spirit of truth – tēs alētheias*, “of the truth.” Important word for John. See also 16:7, 13. God’s Word is truth (17:17), mediated through Christ (1:17), the Word made flesh (1:1, 14), who is the truth (14:6). “The Spirit of truth” is therefore the Spirit of Christ, who leads to the one who is the truth, namely, Christ. Truth is no abstraction for John (like for Pilate, 18:38), but a definite truth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

He is called this because his assistance is personified by truth.

*Sent to you from the Father.* Probably refers to the Spirit’s being sent to do the Father’s work on earth rather than to his eternal relationship with the Father. (CSB)

This is to show that the Spirit like Jesus does not just act on his own but is a part of an eternal plan. Jesus is trying to give them some insight about the interior life of God for their comfort.

*Bear witness.* Anyone who knows Jesus and his work need to testify to it.

**15:27** *you also.* Emphatic. Believers bear their testimony to Christ in the power of the Spirit. But it is their testimony, and they are responsible for bearing it. (CSB)

In verse 26 the Spirit is emphatically stated. Here "you" is emphatically stated. "You will bear witness," might be a better translation. The Holy Spirit and the disciples are fellow-testifiers, the former by virtue of being sent, the latter by virtue of personal experience. Both tell the Truth about Jesus. That cannot be emphasized strongly enough in our day. Nothing more is needed. (Buls)

*will bear witness – martureite*, “bear witness, testify.” In v 26, it is used of the Spirit, who will bear witness concerning Christ. The Spirit of truth is no false witness, but faithfully proclaims what he hears (16:13–15). He is able to bear witness of all things concerning the Son from eternity (Gen 1:2; Jn 1:1). Now the apostles are (present tense) witnesses also, because they have been with the incarnate Christ since the beginning of his ministry as eyewitnesses, and because the Spirit will be with them. Yet these are not two different testimonies, but one and the

same. The work of the Spirit will be through the means of the apostolic preaching (Acts 2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

*from the beginning.* The apostles bore the definitive testimony, for they were uniquely chosen and taught by Christ and were eyewitnesses of his glory (see Lk 24:48; Ac 10:39, 41). (CSB)

In addition, the disciples who had been with Jesus “from the beginning,” ἀπὸ ἀρχῆς, would μαρτυρεῖτε, “testify” or “bear witness,” to Jesus with the aid and assistance of “the Spirit of truth.” (Excursus: The English word *martyr* is derived from the Greek word just cited. It has come to mean in our language “one who gives up his or her life for a cause.”) The apostles, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, would bear “eyewitness” testimony to what they had seen and heard in the ministry of the Messiah. Please note that the Spirit’s work is to bear witness to Jesus, not to himself, nor to the spiritual gifts he would bring. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

(Between these verses and the next part of the Gospel appointed (16:4-11), Jesus tells the disciples ahead of time of the persecution they will endure for his name’s sake so that when it happens they would not be offended. The people would give them such persecution because they did not know him or the Father.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)