



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

## The Resurrection: Are You Buying It?

### The Gospel of John

#### John 15:1–17

Tim Badal | April 17, 2022

We've been in a series titled simply "The Gospel of John." It's the story of the life, ministry, and miracles of Jesus, told by His best friend here on earth, the Apostle John. We come to John 15 and are going to look at this passage in a moment. My hope and prayer through this series has been that you will meet Jesus and learn from Jesus, so that whether this is your first time or thousandth time in church, you will believe and trust in Jesus as the risen Savior and Lord.



First, let's revisit the events of what we call Holy Week. Three days ago, on Friday, a Man was deserted by His friends. Friday a Man was arrested. Friday He was taken and charged for crimes He did not commit. Friday He experienced mocking and slander. Friday He was whipped, abused and scorned. His enemies circled around Him. On Friday, they reserved for Him the most gruesome and horrific way to die, death by crucifixion. After being beaten within an inch of His life, He was forced to carry a wooden cross up a hill to a place called Golgotha, where He, along with two criminals, was hung on a cross putting nails through His hands and feet. As He hung there in great agony and pain, He prayed, "Father, forgive them." He then said, "It is finished" and gave up His Spirit.

That brings us to Friday afternoon.

Then the rest of Friday, all day Saturday and into Sunday morning, He laid in a tomb, behind a stone. At some point early Sunday morning, the Gospel writers tell us that something happened. This Jesus, Who had been deserted, arrested and charged with crimes He did not commit, Who had been mocked, abused and beaten, Who had been hung on a cross and Who gave up His Spirit and Who was buried in a tomb—early Sunday morning, this Jesus walked out of that tomb.

The next question I'm going to ask may surprise you. Wherever you are, whether on campus here or online, here's what I want to ask you: "Do you believe in the resurrection? Do you buy it?" That idiom, "Do you buy it?" means, "Do you believe it to be true?" Jesus said, "I will die and I will rise again." His disciples tell us Jesus died and rose again. They even gave their lives because of this belief. For the last 2,000 years, Christians have proclaimed this to be true. But do you believe it?

It's an odd question for a pastor to ask a group of people who have come for the very purpose of praising the risen Savior. But what Jesus will tell us in John 15 is that it's not enough for us to simply say, "I believe," unless there is something behind those words. Instead of simply giving tacit approval to Jesus' claim of being the One Who has been resurrected from the grave, the deeper question is, "Is it impacting my life? Is it changing me?"

I follow many individuals on Twitter; one in particular is a guy named David Paul Tripp. He wrote, "The empty tomb is our doorway to everlasting hope. It's the guarantee of the final resurrection and the glories that follow." He then added, "Everything we believe rests on one event: the resurrection of Jesus. Without the resurrection, our faith is in vain." Moments later, he wrote, "The resurrection of Jesus changes everything."

That's a guy who buys it. That's a guy who believes it. The resurrection changes every aspect of his life, therefore he declares these simple truths. It's nothing deeply theological, but he says, "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the reason I get up in the morning. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is why I can sleep at night." He then wrote, "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is why I do what I do every day."

So let me ask you again: do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Before answering that, can we ask Jesus to challenge and evaluate whether or not we believe in the resurrection? To do this, we need to go back to Thursday. Jesus has just been betrayed by Judas; He's had the Passover meal with His disciples who are now in the garden of Gethsemane. It's here that He uses the metaphor of a vine and branches to teach them, so they were probably in a vineyard as they walked through the garden.

Jesus tied the idea of us connecting to His resurrection power to the way a branch connects to a vine. What we'll see is that if we truly believe and buy the truthfulness of the resurrection, three things will become evident in our lives.

## **Believing in the resurrection means longing for Christ.**

Do you want to know if you have resurrection power and resurrection faith in your life? Let me ask if you agree with Jesus in this one truth that is found in John 15:5, "*Apart from me you can do nothing*"? Jesus was speaking to His disciples, but He's also speaking to us today. You and I cannot accomplish a single thing without Jesus.

Knowing that Jesus is the resurrected Savior and Lord moves us to see how small we are and how great God is. As we step back and look at all that transpired on that weekend—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus—He becomes a Man not of this world. He wasn't from this world from the beginning. He is the second Person of the Trinity, God in human flesh.

The Bible says we esteemed Him not, yet we who say we believe in the resurrection now have to say, "Time out. If this is true, then I'm lost without Him. I can't live a moment of my life without Jesus. I'll never be made right with God without Jesus. I'll never have peace with my brothers and sisters in this world without Jesus. I will never find peace and joy in this life without Jesus."

The resurrection becomes real in us when we wake up every morning with this thought: "Jesus, You'd better show up or I'm lost. Jesus, I pray that You're with me, because I'm helpless without You." That humble realization tells the world and tells our God in heaven that we are one with Him.

Are you longing for Jesus? It isn't something you simply do Sunday to Sunday, or maybe Easter to Easter. It's something you do on a daily basis. So we have to ask ourselves this morning, "How much am I longing for Jesus?"

## **Believing in the resurrection means living like Christ.**

Number two, "Am I living for Jesus?" Notice what Jesus says in verses 10-11: "*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. These things I've spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*"

If we truly believe Jesus Christ is the Savior and Lord, if we truly believe that He has been resurrected from the grave, then we will reorder our lives and everything we are, not just for the simple fact that we're lost without Him, but that in Him there's something we cannot find on our own. Jesus speaks about this when He speaks about vines and branches. He says that to be a branch connected to a vine is necessary, because apart from that vine you'll wither and die.

Some of you this morning are wondering why you're withering and dying. You're trying in your own strength and ability to fix this. Yet all the while Jesus is saying, "You need to connect with Me. I am the way to life and joy."

So how do we get there? Jesus uses a word we don't hear very often. It's the word "abide." In the entire passage in John 15, He uses the word "abide" which literally means staying close, following another's lead. It makes total sense regarding a branch to a vine, or a limb to a tree. They have to be connected to something else.

A branch has to connect to a vine, following its lead; that is, do the very same thing the vine is doing in order to live. Jesus says, "If you want to stay connected to Me, then you have to do what I do by following Me and obeying My commands. Then and only then will you gain the results you're looking for." There are two ways we abide in Jesus.

### **We abide by keeping the Father's commandments.**

In the Scriptures, God has laid forth in His Word how we ought to live. It's not a set of do's and don'ts, but rather a roadmap to where we can find joy and satisfaction. Our Creator, Who wrote this Book for us, knows us better than we know ourselves. I like what R. A. Torrey wrote about keeping the commands of God:

If we are to obtain from God all that we ask from Him, Christ's words must abide or continue in us. We must study His words, fairly devour His words. We need to let them sink into our thoughts and into our heart. We need to keep them in our memory, obeying them constantly in our lives, letting them shape and mold our daily life and our very acts. This is really the method of abiding in Christ.

### **We abide by persevering.**

If you want to have fullness and joy, it begins by knowing the Word. This word abide has a sense of persevering, remaining and continuing. In fact, those words may even be in your Bible translation instead of the word abide because abiding implies doing something on a regular and ongoing basis.

In December, my wife and I will have been married for 25 years. We've had a wonderful life and partnership. We've gone through great times and terrible times. We've had moments when we high-five one another and yes, there have been moments when we haven't talked to one another. But that practice of living day in and day out has brought us to a relationship that is so deep and so sweet. There is a communion between my wife and I that comes because we've lived life together. All we've done is abide with one another.

What Jesus is talking about is not religion; it's relationship. It means spending time with Jesus, walking and talking with Jesus, welcoming Him into the good, the bad, and yes, even the ugly in your life. It's being real with Jesus, being honest and allowing the real you to be seen by Jesus; allowing Jesus to then change and mold you into the person He wants you to be.

J.C. Ryle put it this way:

"Abide in me," says Jesus. "Cling to me. Stick fast to me. Live the life of close and intimate communion with me. Get nearer to me. Roll every burden on me. Cast your whole weight on me. Never let go your hold on me. Be, as it were, rooted and planted in me. Do this and I will never fail you. I will ever abide in you."

Do you live like Christ? Are you closely following after Christ? Jesus says this will become true: your joy will be full. Brothers and sisters, you will never find real joy, peace, contentment, happiness or blessing outside of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the empty tomb that was accomplished for you.

You can try to find these things in the pleasures and possessions of this world, even in the people of this world. But Jesus has created you and me for a relationship with Him, so be connected to Him. Stay connected to Him, then you will understand what resurrection living looks like in your life.

## **Believing in the resurrection means loving like Christ.**

Do you long for Jesus? Do you live like Jesus? Finally, we are given a command to love like Jesus. Jesus says in verses 12-13, *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*

Jesus is about to demonstrate for His friends the greatest gift of love by laying down His life as the Redeemer for His friends. Jesus demonstrated this love for us in that while we were sinners, He died for us (Romans 5:6-11). If we believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, it isn't enough for us just to say it or to sing it. Rather, we must symbolize that love by showing it to the lost, broken and needy world around us.

What does it look like to love Christ?

First, it demands sacrifice. Jesus laid down His life for His friends. Are you willing to lay down your life, to give up some of your prerogatives and preferences? Are you willing to give up some of your schedule, maybe even some of your money, to be a blessing to the world around you? Jesus expended Himself, literally and figuratively, to extend love to us. Are you willing to extend your hand to someone who needs it?

Jesus did this for His friends. Jesus did this for strangers. And yes, Jesus did this for His enemies. Because we believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, are we willing to extend love to a lost world around us? This is done in big ways and small ways. I like what John Stott wrote: "We are sent into the world, like Jesus, to serve, for this is the natural expression of our love to our neighbors. We love, we go, we serve."

Do you want to announce to the world that Jesus is no longer in the grave? Do you want to announce to the world that Jesus is the risen Savior and Lord? Do you want to announce to the world that Jesus is your King of kings and Lord of lords?

St. Francis of Assisi said, "Share some words, but also do it in action."

There's a lot we can share, however sometimes I think we can share too much, but we don't show the love. Jesus said, "This is the commandment I give you, that you love one another. The world will know that you are My followers through your love" (John 13:34-35).

So who on this Easter are you called to love? As we learned on Good Friday who are you called to forgive? If we want to show the world the Easter hope, we do this by extending hands of love, sacrifice and forgiveness to the world that needs it.

So let me ask you again this morning, in light of all that we've sung and all that we've heard, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" If so, then make it your commitment to long for Christ, to live like Christ, and, yes, even if it hurts at times, to love like Christ. In doing so, we will not only honor God, but we will glorify His Father in heaven, then we will tell the world what we believe and how much that burns within us.

Village Bible Church | 847 North State Route 47, Sugar Grove, IL 60554 | (630) 466-7198 | [www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove](http://www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove)

All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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