

Gospel of John XXII Passover Night

(John 15)
Fred R. Coulter

Here is a very important and encouraging chapter taken right from the Passover night. Keep in mind the thoughts that must have been going through Jesus' mind. He knew that He was going out to be arrested. He knew that at midnight Judas would come and betray Him with a kiss. He's trying to really encourage and instill in the disciples' minds how important that being faithful, loving and doing the work of God really is.

John 15:1: "I am the true vine..." I've heard churches say that they were the true vine. Even one church we all know, where they said that they were *the one, the only* church on earth. One day I got a directory of Sabbath-keepers and, lo and behold, there are over 400 different churches that keep the Sabbath. It's kind of like it was with Elijah: 'I'm the only one,' and God said, 'No, Elijah, there's 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal.

No church can say that you must be in *this one and only* church, otherwise you're not with Christ. Out of the 400 that are Sabbath-keepers, a good number that I know of claim that. I even met some people who started coming to the congregation with us and they went to a church where the apostle wasn't *an apostle* or *the apostle*, he was called 'the chief apostle.' Well, we've heard these stories over and over again.

Christ said, "I am the true vine..." So, how do you know you're in Christ? What if you're not in one of those churches that preaches that 'only this church is the only one and there is none other, and if you belong to any other you don't have a ghost of a chance.' I will show you exactly how we know that we are *in* Christ.

1-John 3:24: "And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him..." Do you keep the commandments of Christ? Do you keep the commandments of God? *Yes, you do! Sure you do!* Didn't we just read in John 14 that if you love God you keep His commandments. And if you're loving Jesus Christ and keeping His words, the Father will be with you? *Here's the test:* "...the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him..."

You, who are keeping the commandments, are dwelling in Christ. Isn't that what John told us in John 14? 'I in you and you in Me, and the Father in Me'?

"...and He in him; and **by this we know...**" (v 24). Something that you *know*; there's no doubt, you don't have to be in doubt. Don't let anyone put you in doubt.

"...that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us" (v 24). Do you know that you have the Spirit of Christ? *If you know that you have the Spirit of Christ and are keeping His commandments, you are dwelling in Him! You are remaining in Christ!*

John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit; but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit. **You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you**" (vs 1-3). You are clean *through the words of Christ!* Not because of the Church, not because of an organization. There needs to be churches and organizations, but the time has come that we all need to quit kidding ourselves that we can beckon to God and make Him do what we want to do.

In other words, if I, or anyone, stands up and says, 'This is the only church...' I know a small group up in Northern California with only eight in the church. The minister has told them that they are just like Noah and his family, and we're the only eight that are going to escape the Tribulation, and everybody else is wrong. **No!** That is not exactly right! When are we going to come to the point that we:

- believe God
- understand God
- love God
- and accept His Word for what it is

Do you think that I or anyone else can say, 'This is the Church of God and there is none else'? **No!** We can't because then we would be going to God and saying that 'we are the only ones of God, and you must honor what we say.' God isn't going to back up we say that way when it isn't true! It has to be *in* Christ, and you are clean through His words. You're not clean through what some church has done for you.

Verse 4: "Dwell in Me..."—remain and be living *in* Me. You see how John just beautifully comes together with all of these things. That's why I

love the book of John so much. It's just so full and rich, and everything just keeps coming right back to the same thing.

"...and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can you bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me" (v 4). That's why we have to know that we're in Christ, and we can by the fact that we have His Spirit and by the fact that we keep His commandments, *and no one can take that from us!*

Remember what Jesus said, 'Let no one deceive you by any means.' If we're in Christ no one can take us from Him.

Verse 5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches..." The same as what Jesus told the disciples when He did the foot-washing: 'I am the Lord, Master and Teacher and you say well, for so I am.' Then He went on showing that they were to be servants. Here is the same analogy.

"...The one who is dwelling in Me... [remaining and living] ...and I in him, bears much fruit..."

- What does it mean to bring forth fruit?
- What are the fruits of the Spirit?
- Are the fruits of the Spirit just going out and:
 - ✓ building buildings?
 - ✓ creating churches?
 - ✓ making colleges?
 - ✓ printing booklets?
 - ✓ mailing magazines out all over the world?
- How could a person have fruit before those things were invented?
- What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Galatians 5 shows us what the fruit of the Spirit is, and this is what we're to be producing in our own lives. Here's how to bring forth much fruit; how we change, grow and overcome, this is all producing fruit for Christ.

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23). This is how we remain in Christ and bring forth fruit. These are the things in our own lives.

As far as going out and adding numbers and getting a great, huge following that's another whole story; that's completely different from what it means in bringing forth fruit in relationship to our own Christian growth.

We are to go out into the world, we are to produce, we are to do those things. But unless we get our lives straightened and producing these things in our lives now, how can we go out to the world and say, 'World, here's all about Christ'? Then end up like so many that they don't represent Christ at all. They have their own religion, their own way, their own thing.

John 15:5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing." I think one of the important things that we've been able to learn is that we are at a point—and I am just so thankful for it—that God is blessing us and we are growing in grace and in knowledge, and in understanding. It seems like almost every week that comes along we learn something new out of God's Word. That's bringing forth fruit!

We couldn't do that without Jesus Christ. It isn't that we haven't been studying; it isn't that we didn't know of God's Word; *we did!* But it's all a matter of growing. This is the fruit that we are having produced right now.

Verse 6: "If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up..." I've seen that happen to people, they just wither up and go on off into the world, and that's just about it. They get bitter, mad and angry because they haven't really stuck with what God wants. If they don't remain living in Christ, they're:

"...cast out as a branch, and is dried up, and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned" (v 6). That's the ultimate that's going to happen for those who reject salvation, going into the Lake of Fire. I don't want to go there and I know you don't want to go there, so we do what Jesus says here to avoid that.

Verse 7: "If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..." See how that ties in with John 14? Not only do we have to be living the words of God, not only do we have to be loving Christ, but His Word has to be *living and remaining* in us. That's the whole purpose of the New Covenant that Jesus was to *write in their heart and mind the laws and commandments of God.*

- Do you have those written in your heart and mind?
- Do you know the Word of God?
- Do the words of Jesus Christ remain and live in you?

If they do, you're going to be remaining and living in Christ.

I saw one of these success things, and there's a fellow who gets up and says, 'The way that you can train your mind is that you listen to these tapes and on these you tell yourself over and over again....' Something like self-hypnosis. Once you do that, then you're convinced of it.

There is a point of truth that has been perverted by Satan's way. Jesus doesn't want us to be self-hypnotized, but He does want His Word to be living *in* us. In other words, as we think and act in our daily lives, are we motivated by the Word of God and the Spirit of Christ so that these things are *in* us. The Bible says that 'as a man thinks, so he is.' It also says that 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.'

- What is it that is inside of you?
- What is it that's inside of me?
- Is it the words of God living in us?
- The words of Christ uplifting us?
- The words of Christ guiding and directing us?

Jesus said that 'if you abide in Me and My words abide in you,' here's another promise, "...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7).

Now you see all the keys to answered prayer that we've covered here today just in these few verses. Jesus said:

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments." And right before that, He said:

Verse 13: "And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*" (vs 13-14).

Then He reiterates the promise over here in John 15:7: "...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you." That's a tremendous promise!

I look back on healing and anointing and the whole thing that I have done as a minister. There are people I have laid hands on and prayed for that were in a condition leading up to death, and they died. Everybody got all excited and said, 'If you had faith, Fred, they would have lived.'

I've anointed people who have had terminal cancer. There was a woman in Salt Lake that had cancer of the breast and her cancer was so horrible that my wife said that she saw it and her breasts were just like a lump of black coal! When I went up to anoint her I just laid it in God's hands and said,

'God, You know! Whether she lives or dies, God, *You know!* If it's Your will to heal her, *heal her.*' She was healed! In about a month she was up and completely whole and well and walking around. So, I know that these promises are true. That whatsoever we ask, ***He will do it!*** Not because we command God what to do, but because we do it according to His will, and therefore, He will follow though and do what we ask.

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples." Here's kind of a reverse thing: 'If you're not bearing fruit you're really not the disciple of Christ. If you are bearing fruit, the ones that we've shown, you are a disciple of Christ. Here again is this self-proving that keeps coming back in almost a circular or cyclical fashion. If you do one thing then the other thing is true. If you do the other thing the reverse is true.

Let's see what Jesus told some of the disciples about believing in Him and so forth; John 8:31: "Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him..." Notice that their belief was not kind of belief that it should be.

"...***If...*** [conditional] ...you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples. And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.' They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to anyone. What do You mean by saying, "You shall become free"?' Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, **everyone who practices sin is a servant of sin**'" (vs 31-34).

We don't want to be serving sin. If you are serving sin then you are not serving Jesus Christ, and the things that we need to know and understand with His Word we won't be able to. "**...everyone who practices sin is a servant of sin.**" We are not to be the servants of sin, we are to be ***the servants of righteousness.***

Romans 6:12: "Therefore, **do not let sin rule** in your mortal body..." We're not to have it rule and reign over us, control us and make us subservient to it. We know that we're going to sin; we know that we can't be perfect; but we also know that that lack of perfection is compensated for by Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. But we don't let sin ***rule*** in our lives, in our hearts and minds.

- Are we committing adultery? *No!*
- Are we stealing? *No!*
- Are we blaspheming God? *No!*
- Are we coveting anything of our neighbor's? *No!*
- Are we keeping the Sabbath? *Yes!*

- Are we committing idolatry? *No!*
- Are we taking God's name in vain? *No!*
- Are we worshiping the true God? *Yes!*

Sin is not ruling! It's not reigning! It doesn't have that iron grip on us.

Verse 12: "Therefore, **do not let sin rule** in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God" (vs 12-13).

This is what Jesus means in John 15, showing how we are to live and remain in Christ, how we are to continue doing the things of God. Many times, if we just stop and think and just really meditate on this, what a tremendous thing that was at Jesus' last Passover and Jesus giving all these instructions. Just think what we would be missing if John were not inspired of God to record all these things for us. That's really a tremendous, wonderful and encouraging thing to have this.

John 15:8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples."

- not the disciples of sin
- not the servants of sin
- not the slaves of sin

but:

- to be the disciples of Christ
- to be the servants of God
- to be of the Family of God

Verse 9: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love." Over and over again! It's exactly the same thing that happens to people who know that they're going to die. What do you say?

- you tell people to be good
- you tell them to love each other
- you tell them to do the right thing

That's what Christ was doing here.

Verse 10: "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love..." Abide and remain in and live in 'My love.' Let's just remember the things we covered in 1-John, how that ties right in with it.

"...just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love" (v 10). That's just absolutely magnificent the way that God loves us—the Father and Christ loves us—and we're to love each other. That's why we have the Passover every year, so we can heal the breach, so that we can

overcome and put away those things that put us down, and to build up the love of God within us, between us: for us and to God and to each other. **"If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love."**

I don't think we really grasp it. We can say it over and over again, but I don't think we really understand that the *great* God, Who is the greatest Being in the universe, *loves you!* **Think about that for a minute!** The great God, the Father, Who is greater than Jesus Christ—and Jesus **made and created everything that there is—loves you!**

- Now can you see why it's so important that you love God?
- Now can you see why it's so important that you remain in the love of God?
- Now can you see why it's so important that you remain in the love Christ?
- *Sure you do!*

Verse 11: "These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full." I don't know about you, but it makes me feel really glad, happy and joyful inside, mentally peaceful. *It comes from God!*

Verse 12: "This is **My commandment**: that you **love one another**, as I have loved you." That's quite a commandment! Think about how many problems that could be solved between Christians if they really did what this verse said. Not some sort of gushy thing, but real deep profound love for each other in a way that's going to result in peace, joy and happiness.

John 13:34: "A **new commandment** I give to you: that you **love one another** in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another. By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another" (vs 34-35).

Too often the Church of God is noted for its fights, not its love. It's about time that we begin really loving God and then come back to each other and see how we ought to love each other. There has to be a time to overcome and put all these things behind us if it's at all possible.

John 15:12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you." Remember that Jesus gave His life for us. He was crucified for us. Then He says:

Verse 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends..." (vs 13-14). Jesus laid His life down for us. There's really no way we can fully appreciate

what Jesus did for us unless we completely commit ourselves to God. Then we do. I think *if* we also begin to understand the severity of sin, and *if* we really understand that our sins killed Christ, it's important to understand, comprehend and know that He *willingly* laid His life down and then turns around and calls us *friends!*

When Jesus was on the cross, just before He died, what did He say? He didn't say, 'Father, send down all the angels and get rid of these rats.' *NO!* He said, *Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing!* Could you do that if someone had:

- driven nails into your feet and hands?
- whipped you to a very inch of your life?
- put you on that crucifix and stuck that pole in the ground?
- lifted you up to hang in agony?

Could you say *Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing?* That's a deep and profound love that Jesus had. **"No one has greater love than this..."** *There can be no greater love!* That ties in with:

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life."

So, we have the same thing right here. Do you *believe* on Jesus Christ that way? *If you do, then you're going to be loving each other!* As Christ said, they were going to be loving Christ and God the Father, and they will be loving us.

John 15:13: "...that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends *if* you do whatever I command you" (v 14). It is continuous and it's conditional.

Verse 15: "No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father." That is absolutely amazing to realize, that we can call Jesus *our friend*. He calls us *His friend*. We are also called *the brethren* (Heb. 2)—He calls us *brothers!*

That term includes all women, too, because the word for *brother* in the Greek is '*adelphos*.' For *sister* it is '*adelphē*.' It's just the ending on the end of the word, the difference between brother and sister in that particular sense. So, when it says that we are called friends or brethren, that includes everyone.

Verse 16: "**You yourselves did not choose**

Me, but I have personally chosen you..." How many people choose Christ? They go to some campaign and say, 'Yea, I believe in the Lord and I choose Christ.' *You can't choose Christ, Christ has to choose you!* It has to be a distinct and direct calling from God.

"...and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (v 16). Look at the broad parameters of prayer, the promises of prayer that have been given to us. We can go to Christ and have that faith, trust, confidence, truth and assurance that God will hear us.

The next time you pray just keep that in mind. Maybe just start out your prayer by thanking God that He hears you, by thanking God that He's given His Son so all of this would be possible. You won't have much of problem keeping your mind on what to pray about if you approach God from that point of view. It'll change your prayer life a whole lot. It's not some magic little thing that you put a coin in here or light a candle or do laps around the beads. Those aren't going to answer your prayers or bring you closer to God.

- prayer is a matter of *faith* between you and God
- prayer is a matter of *love* between you and God

God says that He will answer because He loves you! You pray to God because you love Him!

Verse 17: "These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you" (vs 17-18).

There are times when you're going to feel that the world hates you. There are going to be times when you won't feel a part of anything around you that's in the world. I don't know if you've ever had that feeling. I know that I get that feeling every once in a while when I go some stores and they have rock music and banging around and see all the people dressed in weird ways and in an attitude of adultery, fornication, vanity and strife—all that going on.

I don't feel any part of that! I guess that's why I hate to go shopping. My wife doesn't like to take me shopping because I get what is called department store narcolepsy.' That is once I get in the department store and start looking around, in about 15 minutes I'm ready to go to sleep.

The world, you will know, will hate you! If you really tell them about Christ you will *know* that

it does. It will respond in that way. Remember, it hated Jesus before it hated you! Don't worry about the world, the world is going to pass away. The world is going to be gone. Don't worry about what people say, think or do. Just make sure that you love God the Father and Jesus Christ and the brethren. That's your total security. You're not of the world!

- don't try and join the world
- don't try to act like the world
- don't do the things that world does

Christ has chosen us out of the world (v 19), and He said: v 20: Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they kept My word, they will keep your *word* also." In other words, someone who is truly trying to find the will of God will follow the teachings and sayings of those that God has sent.

Verse 21: "But they will do all these things to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin..." (vs 21-22). The very fact of Jesus' ministry, to come and preach and teach to the Jews... I want to make something very, very clear: ***True Christianity did not come out of Judaism!*** There are a lot of people today trying to Judaize Christianity by saying that Christianity came out of Judaism. If you believe that Christianity came out of Judaism, then you don't understand the facts.

- Did Jesus join the Pharisees? *No!*
- Did Jesus preach as the Pharisees? *No!*
- Who were the Pharisees?
- Who were the scribes?
- *They were the keepers of Judaism!*
- What did the true New Testament Church come out of?
 1. Jesus Christ
 2. the Old Testament

Not Judaism!

Judaism is not to be equated with the Old Testament; though they have it, they don't use it. What did Jesus say to the scribes and Pharisees?

- He condemned them for their actions!
- He condemned them for their hypocrisies!
- He condemned them for their traditions!
- He condemned them for rejecting Christ!

Those are very important things to remember. ***The religion of Christ did not come out of Judaism!*** Judaism is one of the 'religions' of the world and that came out of Babylon. So, it's one of the Babylonian 'religions' just like Catholicism,

Hinduism, Buddhism. They do have the understanding of the right days, they do have the understanding of the commandments of God, but they don't keep them and they don't accept Christ.

If the people will keep the sayings of Jesus, remember that those are not the things of Judaism, but the commands from God the Father.

Verse 21: "But they will do all these things to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him Who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin, but now they have nothing to cover their sin" (vs 21-22).

In other words, if He didn't come and warn them, if He didn't come and teach them, *then* no sin would be accounted to the Jews—the scribes and Pharisees. But because He did, and He was there and walked the streets, He taught and preached, healed, raised the dead. They were convicted of their own sin by His witness. "...but now they have nothing to cover their sin."

I don't think we understand the severity of the condemnation that Jesus gave toward the 'religion' of Judaism.

Verse 23: "The one who hates Me hates My Father also." That's quite a saying—isn't it? I've had somewhat to do with Jews and I tell you one thing, they really don't care for the name of Jesus Christ. So, who are they hating? Me? *No!* Are they hating Jesus? *No!* They are hating *God the Father, Whom they say they're trying to worship!*

Verse 24: "If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law..." (vs 24-25). It's interesting, this is in *their* law. They say, 'Yes, the law, we have it, and it's written in *their* law.'

"...They hated Me without a cause" (v 25). Remember when Jesus looked around and said, 'Which one of you convicts Me of sin?' *No one could!*

Verse 26: "But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, which proceeds from the Father, that one shall bear witness of Me. Then you also shall bear witness, because you have been with Me from *the* beginning" (vs 26-27).

Quite a wonderful and powerful chapter in John 15. I'm sure there are many other Scriptures that I could bring to add to it, but this covers the heart and core and meat of it. So much of John 15

goes back and reiterates the teachings we find all through the book of John, and all through the books of 1st & 2nd John.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 15:1
- 2) 1 John 3:24
- 3) John 15:1-5
- 4) Galatians 5:22-23
- 5) John 15:5-7
- 6) John 14:15, 13-14
- 7) John 15:7-8
- 8) John 8:31-34
- 9) Romans 6:12-13
- 10) John 15:8-12
- 11) John 13:34-35
- 12) John 15:12-14
- 13) John 3:16
- 14) John 15:13-18, 27

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 2
- John 15:19

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