

Believe

JOHN

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Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John 15:1-8 (9-17)

Community Group Material for week of December 17th, 2023

Believe: Remaining & Fruiting

Ask one person to pray at the beginning of your meeting.

Check-in

Check in with each other about how everyone is doing.

Bible Reading: John 15:1-8 (9-17)

Sermon Summary:

John 15 gives us the vine & branches metaphor where Jesus describes how he & all his disciples, at that time & from then forward, are organically connected to each other. Throughout the metaphor, Jesus' command for all disciples was simple: *"Remain in me!"* This begins when we believe in Jesus. *"Remain in me,"* goes further to mean to continue believing, to stay open to him, & to draw all we need to live for him. As a result, we bear fruit just like a fruit tree does. What is this fruit in the Christian life? Some point to new people coming to faith in Jesus. Others point to the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). But in the context of John 15, Jesus says disciples are to love one another as he loved us, & that he would lay down his life for us to express his love (vv. 12-13). This means we willingly go

without something for the good of others. This sacrificial love is what Jesus displayed & now he calls us, in union with him, to display it to others.

Discussion:

1. What fruit did God expect from Israel (the OT vine)? See Isa. 5:1-7, Mic. 6:8. We should not be surprised that Jesus expects fruit from us.
2. What's the main thought about us 'remaining' in Jesus, the vine? When does it begin? What does it look like going forward from there?
3. In 15:4-5, Jesus makes it clear that unless we remain in him we can't do anything to please God. Which ways are helpful to you to remain connected to Jesus?
4. In 15:4, Jesus says, "Remain in me" & then in 15:9 he says, "Remain in my love." True Christians love as Jesus loved. Consider & discuss this quote together: "*An apple tree bears apples, a peach tree bears peaches, & a follower of Jesus Christ loves [like Jesus loved]...*"
5. The vine & branches image gives us a new way to see what a church can look like & how it can function. Read & discuss what Gail O'Day says about this:
"The vine metaphor suggests a radically non-hierarchical model for the church. There is neither status nor rank among the branches. No branch has pride of place; no one branch can claim precedence or privilege over any other. Hierarchy among the branches of the vine is precluded, because all members grow out of the one central vine."
6. What does sacrificial love look like in your personal life? What impact can 'each one of us loving others as Jesus loved' have on people coming to CIT?

End with Prayer.

- Pray for our daily, vital connection with Jesus.
- Pray for one another.