

John 15:1-17
(Isaiah 5:1-7; Galatians 5:22-25)
“By This My Father Is Glorified”

Introduction

On this Labor Day weekend, it is good to ask the question, What is the purpose of all my labor? What is the meaning of my life? All that I do could be done by another. I'll work hard all my days and be forgotten soon after I die. What's it all about?

In these verses, Jesus invites us – no matter what our work, our age, our talents – to take up the greatest vocation of all, the work for which this universe was created. He says, “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” (15:15). In other words, he is passing on his own ministry to his disciples, as each successive generation of God's people has passed it on to the next generation. It is for us the family business.

Jesus uses a metaphor employed frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures: the picture of a vine. The Hebrew prophets often referred to Israel as a vine planted and tended by the Lord. Sadly, the end of the story as told by the prophets usually depicted the Lord uprooting and destroying the vine because of its failure to bear fruit. But Jesus now gives a joyful ending to the story of God's vineyard, because at last the fruitful vine desired by God has been found: “I am the true vine,” he says, “and my Father is the vinedresser” (15:1). And through the use of this metaphor, he makes clear what is the great purpose of life, and he shows us how our lives take on ultimate meaning by being part of the life of the true vine.

Body

1. What is the purpose of your life and mine? It is to know the one true God who made us for intimate, loving relationship with him and with one another.
2. What is the mark of those who know God in this way? They desire to bring him glory.
3. How do we bring God glory? By “bearing much fruit,” in other words, by becoming increasingly like him and by reproducing this new life in others.
4. What are the necessary conditions for this new life? When Christ calls us we follow, and we abide in him, drawing our life from his life.

Conclusion

What will be your response? Have you yet heard the master call? Have you begun to follow? Are you abiding in him and bearing much fruit? Can you yet say, from the testimony of his new life flowing through you, “By grace, I am a friend of God”?

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