



Word Notes: Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Friends of God: Rooted in Christ

**Key Text: John 15:1-17**

At the Last Supper, Jesus is preparing his disciples for what is to come – his death and resurrection and for them: life filled with the Holy Spirit. He highlights a clear shift in their relationship in John 15:15, no longer will he call them servants, now he calls them friends.

Jesus uses an analogy of a vine and its branches to illustrate the close and dependent relationship they should have with him. The grafting together of fruit-bearing branches onto drought and pest resistant rootstock is a practice continued to this day for full vigour of a range of such plants. Jesus is the rootstock into whom we must be grafted, joined as closely as one can possibly imagine, in order to receive all we need to thrive and be fruitful (verses 4-7). As for us, the branches, we have been hand-picked as a grower would choose exactly which variety to graft in for the best possible yield (verse 16) and we have been made ready to produce good fruit (verse 3).

**Small Group discussion**

- 1) What does the image of a vine and its branches say to you about your relationship with Jesus?
- 2) What other rootstocks might people be grafted into that keep them away from a relationship with Jesus?
- 3) A grower will deliberately choose which variety to graft in. Jesus clearly states he has chosen the disciples not the other way around. In what ways can you identify with being “chosen”? Do you have a testimony to share on this? (*Maybe hear just one or two*).
- 4) In modern practice one rootstock can have more than one kind of fruit grafted on – different branches can bear different fruits. How does this reflect the relationship between Jesus and the church?
- 5) In verses 3 to 7 Jesus speaks about remaining “in me” to bear fruit. What does that mean to you and what steps do you take to “remain” in Jesus?
- 6) In verse 2 Jesus talks about cutting and pruning. What is the difference between these actions and what implications do they have for a Christian? How is one desirable while also painful?

**Prayer**

If any have shared struggles with keeping rooted or are going through “pruning” times, ie refining or being made ready to bear fruit, pray for them. Pray also for NCC fellowship as we look to bear fruit in new ways and old – through outreach events over Christmas and new projects such as Make Lunch, revitalised CAP Money and other areas.