

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

BEARING FRUIT

BY THE

OVERFLOW

OF THE

INNER LIFE

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Living Stream Ministry

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Since the time I was saved and began to love the Lord and the Bible, I have been attracted to [John 15](#), where we have the illustration of the grapevine. For more than fifty years, this illustration has never been far away from my consideration.

BEING PARTS OF CHRIST

Christ is the vine, and we are the branches ([15:5](#)). The fact that Christ is the vine and we are the branches of this vine clearly indicates that we are part of Christ. What a great matter this is! [John 15](#) is not merely a parable; it is an illustration showing how we are now a part of Christ. We are not simply those who have been redeemed, forgiven, justified, reconciled, and saved. We are actually a part of Christ! If we view the illustration from this angle, we shall realize how profound it is. Christ is the very embodiment of God, and we are pitiful, corrupted, fallen, and even

devilish sinners. How could such sinners have become a part of Christ? Nevertheless, as profound as it may seem, we are truly a part of Him.

THE ORGANISM OF THE TRIUNE GOD IN THE DIVINE DISPENSATION

The vine with the branches is the organism of the Triune God in the divine dispensation. One day the Lord showed me clearly that this vine is the unique organism in the universe. The vine in [chapter fifteen](#) is not a small, local, individual organism; it is a great, corporate, universal organism, the organism of the Triune God.

THE TRIUNE GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

No other book in the Bible unveils the Trinity as fully as the Gospel of John does. This whole book concerns the Trinity. In no other book are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit revealed in such a practical way as They are here. The entire Gospel of John is a book on the Son with the Father and with the Spirit. Hence, the organism in [chapter fifteen](#) is not merely an organism of Christ, but of the Triune God.

In the opening word of this chapter the Lord Jesus, the Son, says, “I am the true vine, and My

Father is the husbandman.” You may wonder where the Spirit is in this chapter. The Spirit is the sap, the life juice, in the vine. Therefore, we see that the Trinity comprises this organism, which includes us. The organism of the vine is constituted not only with divinity, but also with humanity. Praise the Lord that this universal organism is composed of both the Triune God and us! In fact, we are the crucial part of this organism. This is a matter of great significance.

GOD AS LIFE GROWING IN AN ORGANIC BODY

The organism of the vine tree in [John 15](#) is the focus of the whole Bible. An organism is an organic body containing life and having organs. Many Christians think of [John 15](#) merely as a parable used by the Lord to describe our relationship with Him. But it is not merely a parable; it is a reality that reveals the focus of God’s intention. God is life, and life needs an organic body in which to grow and express itself. Even the life element within the seed of a flower needs an organic body. The seed is the organic body whereby the life within it can grow and be fully expressed. God desires to grow within an organic body and to have Himself expressed by means of

that body. This body is the organism of Christ and the church.

The focus of the Bible is God as life growing in an organic body. This means that God is the growing life and that the growing life needs an organism, an organic body, in which God can grow and through which He can express Himself. We have been told that God was our Creator, the object of our worship, and that we, the creatures, had to worship Him. Although this is not wrong, it is a very superficial understanding of the revelation in the Bible. It is definitely not the inner content of the focus of God's revelation.

The inner content of the divine focus is that God is not only our Creator and the object of our worship, but that He is life. Life does not require worship. How foolish it would be to put a carnation seed on the table and worship it! If you did this and the carnation seed could speak, it would say, "Stupid man! What are you doing? The more you worship me, the more I suffer. Instead of worshipping me, please sow me into the soil. If you do this, I will be happy." Ultimately, God is not the object of our worship; He is life and He desires to grow in an organic body so that He may be expressed.

GOD'S STEPS TO PRODUCE THE ORGANISM

God has taken a number of steps to produce this organic body. Through creation, He formed a spirit within man ([Zech. 12:1](#)). Because we have a spirit, we can receive God into us. God has also accomplished the work of redemption, and eventually, He became the life-giving Spirit ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). Now He is not only the Creator and Redeemer—He is the very *pneuma*, the life-giving Spirit, for us to contact Him. The moment we contact Him, He comes directly into our spirit. The entering of this Spirit into our spirit makes us part of this organic body. Now God is growing within us so that He may be expressed. This is the Lord's desire today.

If we see that we are part of this divine organism in which God is growing and through which He is being expressed, so many things will fade away. All our religious concepts regarding worship will disappear. God does not care for our concepts; He wants to be the life growing within us that He may be expressed through us. This is the organism revealed in [John 15](#).

AN ALL-INCLUSIVE PICTURE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

According to [John 15](#), the preaching of the gospel is the overflow of life for the bearing of fruit. However, this is not a simple matter; rather, it is very high and profound. It is much higher than what is commonly considered the Christian life. If we would gain any understanding of what it means to bear fruit by the overflow of life, we need to see an all-inclusive picture of John's Gospel.

This Gospel begins with the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." One day, the Word became flesh ([1:14](#)), and this flesh was the Lamb of God ([1:29](#)). When the Lord was crucified, He was not only the Lamb to accomplish redemption; He was also in the form of the serpent ([3:14](#)). He was lifted up on the cross that He might deal with Satan, the old serpent. In His death He was not only in the form of the Lamb and the serpent, but also in the form of a grain of wheat ([12:24](#)). As a grain of wheat, He died to produce the many grains, which include all of us. [John 1:4](#) says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." This life was the light of life ([8:12](#)).

When the Word became flesh, He was full of grace and reality, truth.

Thus far, we have ten significant words: the Word, God, flesh, Lamb, serpent, grain, life, light, grace, and truth. Christ was the Word, who was God, and who became flesh. This flesh was the Lamb who was crucified for our redemption. In His crucifixion Christ was in the form of the serpent to destroy the Devil, and in His death He fell into the ground as a grain of wheat to produce many grains. These many grains now have His life. This life has become their light. To them, this life is grace, and this light brings them reality.

CHRIST'S INDWELLING MAKING US A PART OF THE ORGANISM OF THE TRIUNE GOD

After the Lord Jesus died, resurrected, and secretly ascended to the Father, He came back on the same day and, with a physical body, entered a closed room in a mysterious way (20:19). No scientist or scholar can explain how Christ was able to enter into that room. According to 20:22, “He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.” Apparently, this is the conclusion of the Gospel of John; actually, this

Gospel has not yet been completed. The Lord's breathing into His disciples indicates that this mysterious One, the all-inclusive One, had come into them. In [John chapter twenty](#) there is no record that the Lord left the disciples. He came, but He did not go away. After breathing into them, He did not say, "Good-bye. I will visit you again another day." When I read this chapter as a young man, I was troubled by the fact that there is no record here telling us that the Lord went away from the disciples. Later I realized that when the Lord breathed into them, He came into them. He was no longer outside the disciples; He was within them.

In the beginning, that is, in eternity past, Christ was far away in both space and time. He existed as the Word, as God's expression. But by the end of the Gospel of John, He has come into us in a mysterious way. Just as no one can define or explain how One with a physical body that could be touched and seen could enter into a closed room, so no one can explain how Christ indwells us. The principle is the same in each case. Christ's indwelling is mysterious. At the beginning of this book, Christ was far away from us, but now He is within us. As far as space and time are concerned, there is no longer any

distance between Him and us. He and we are one. Furthermore, Christ has made us a part of Himself. This oneness is the organism illustrated by the grapevine, the organism of the Triune God with humanity in the divine dispensation. Today we are in this organism. We all need a clear vision of this.

THE ENTRANCE INTO THE ORGANISM

You may be wondering how you can experience this organism. This living organism is like a building with an entrance. In this Gospel we have both the gate through which we can enter the organism and the way to experience this organism. The gate is in [3:3](#) and [5](#). The Lord Jesus said to a sinner named Nicodemus, “Unless a man is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and, “Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” The organism is the kingdom, and the kingdom is the organism. The Lord was telling Nicodemus that he had to be born of the Spirit. We enter this kingdom, this organism, by being born in our spirit of the divine Spirit. Thus, the new birth is the entrance into the organism of the Triune God.

THE WAY TO EXPERIENCE THE ORGANISM

The way begins in [chapter four](#). In [verse 24](#) the Lord said, “God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and reality.” To worship God is to contact God, to enjoy God, and to partake of all He is. Worshipping God is a matter of taking God into us. It is not merely objective, but also subjective. This is proved by the fact that on the one hand, in this chapter the Lord speaks about worship and, on the other hand, about drinking the living water ([v. 14](#)). If we put [verses 14](#) and [24](#) together, we shall see that to drink of the living water is to worship God. Moreover, worshipping God by our spirit and in our spirit is the real drinking of the living water, which is God Himself. God Himself is the Spirit, and this Spirit is the living water. We drink this living water by worshipping God. Hence, drinking of God and worshipping Him are synonymous. We all must drink the very God who is the living water, the Spirit.

Another aspect of the way is unveiled in [chapter six](#). In [verse 48](#) the Lord said, “I am the bread of life,” and in [verse 57](#) He said, “He who eats Me shall also live because of Me.” The way

is not only to drink God as the living water, but also to eat Christ, the embodiment of God, as the living bread. The Lord's word about eating Him was offensive to the religious people, and they could not bear it (v. 60). In [verse 63](#) the Lord said to His disciples, "It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." The Lord seemed to be saying, "I am the bread of life. But I can only be dispensed into you as your life supply through the living Word. This living Word is the Spirit." Thus, we must not contact the living Word as the black and white letters; we must contact the living Word as the living Spirit by exercising our spirit. Thus, the way to experience the organism is to contact the very God, who is the Spirit, and to eat and drink of Him.

THE OVERFLOW

If we truly contact the Lord and eat and drink of Him, we shall have the overflow spoken of in [7:37 and 38](#). On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living

water.” What an overflow! Whoever believes in Him will have an overflow of rivers of living water. The water the believers take in of Christ will become overflowing rivers. This is the overflow we are talking about in this booklet.

The overflow of life is in [chapter seven](#), not in [chapter fifteen](#). But the overflow in [chapter seven](#) is for the fruit-bearing in [chapter fifteen](#). By contacting God and eating and drinking of Him, we have such an overflow. This overflow is nothing less than the Triune God, who is the constituent of the organism and who is living Himself out of us. Therefore, the overflow of life is the Triune God living Himself out of us.

THE OVERFLOW OF LIFE BEING OUR FRUIT-BEARING

Now we can understand what it means to bear fruit by the overflow of life. We need to see this vision. If we do, we shall say, “I am part of the organism of the Triune God. Daily I contact my God, drink of Him, eat of Him, and live by Him. Now, spontaneously, this very God is flowing out of me.” This overflow of life is our fruit-bearing. Our fruit-bearing is God being lived out of us. As we are with our relatives, neighbors, colleagues, and friends, we must have this

kind of living and be this kind of person. Recently a sister shared about meeting a woman in an airport and spontaneously testifying to her of her rich supply in Christ. That woman surely must have been impressed by our sister's testimony. Coming out of the mouth of our sister was not simply preaching; it was the Triune God being lived out of her. If we have such a testimony with our relatives and friends, they will be impressed with the overflow of life, and this flow will certainly get into some of them. They will be infused with the flow and become a fruit born by this organism. This is fruit-bearing by the overflow of the inner life.

If you have such an overflow, could you help but love the Lord? Could you still live in sin and continue to love the world? This would be impossible. There is no need to strive to overcome sin and the world. There is not even any need to try to love the Lord. In fact, there is no need for us to do anything. Because we realize that we are part of this organism, that the Triune God has been wrought into our being, and that we have been constituted with His riches and have become parts of Him, something naturally and spontaneously will flow out of us.

We are the branches of the divine vine; we

are part of the organism of the Triune God. In life, in nature, and in position we are the same as He. Hallelujah! Daily we are contacting our God. He is not simply the object of our worship, but the Spirit within us as the living water. As we drink of Him and eat of Him, we have the overflow of life. This overflow is our fruit-bearing in our daily living. Whether or not the ones we contact will receive this flow is a matter of God's choice. But we can be assured that the chosen ones will receive it and become fruit born by the divine organism. This is the way to increase the organism, and to spread the kingdom of God. This is what it means to bear fruit by the overflow of the inner life.

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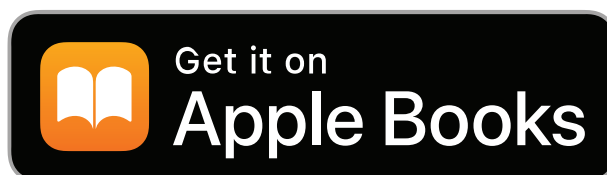
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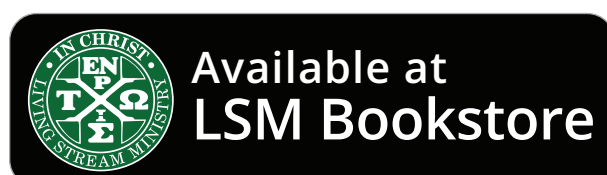
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