



SPORTS IN FOCUS

With Christ in the Garden

John 15:1-17:26

READY

- Who is one of the most faithful Christians you've ever known? What was her or his secret?
- What is one of your coaches or captains most memorable locker room pre-game talks?

SET

Context of John 15:1-17:26

In the hours before his arrest, trial, and execution, Jesus gathered His disciples in a private room in order to teach them some final lessons, remind them of some great truths, and encourage them to trust and obey through the difficult times just ahead. Jesus continues His teaching in chapter 15 with an extended metaphor from agricultural life about Christian living. In chapter 16 the disciples heard the reassuring words that the Spirit of God would come, not only the Helper and Comforter, but also as the Convictor of all who are antagonistic to the gospel. In the final moments before His arrest, Christ prayed for His followers (chapter 17). In many ways, the prayer is a summary of John's entire Gospel.

Keys to Text

Vine and Branches: Jesus is the vine, and His Father is the vinedresser, or gardener. The disciples are the branches. He was speaking of the eleven disciples who were still with Him. This analogy is for all Christians.

GO

Read John 15:1-17:26

1. In your own words, summarize the main ideas of what Christ taught in His metaphor of the vine and the branches.
2. What sobering words about the world's treatment of Christians did Jesus give His followers? Have you ever experienced this?
3. What revelation about the Holy Spirit did Jesus give His disciples in the upper room? Why would these statements have been reassuring?
4. Jesus called His disciples "friends" (15:14-15). What does this mean to you? Why is it significant?
5. What does the true "Lord's Prayer" (chapter 17) reveal about Jesus' goals and desires for His followers?
6. What does it mean to be "sent" into the world? How does Christ's call translate into your daily life?
7. What "fruit" has been most evident in your Christian experience over the last six months? Why? On what area(s) of growth do you need to focus?

SPORTS IN FOCUS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Christ prayed, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (17:3-4 NKJV). Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing His mission of providing eternal life to those who trust in Him, by reconciling lost men to the God they had forsaken. Jesus' supreme purpose on earth was "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). That is therefore also the supreme mission of Christ's church.

Every team has a mission to accomplish -- usually it's to win a game or conference championship. While there is nothing wrong with focusing on playing your best in sports, it's important to remember that the work of the church (and therefore it's members) is an extension of the work of her Lord. "As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (17:18). Pray for opportunities to share your faith with teammates this week.