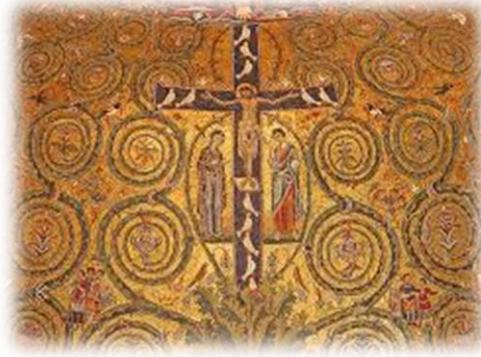


## **Background Information on Jn 15**



Jesus says plenty of things throughout the gospels that leave the honest person feeling amazed and afraid. Contrary to the common behavior of the contemporary person, He evidently does not much care what a one's reaction is to His words. He speaks truth regardless of whether a person wants to hear it or not. When a person reads "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you," it necessarily leaves him or her unsettled (Jn 15:18). The best way for a Christian to come to grips with this fact is to accept the law of the cross.

This logic of the law of the cross is described quite clearly in this scene. All of those who willingly abide in Christ, will be pruned (see Jn 15:3). This pruning is a way of growing out of self-love and moving into selflessness. This is the way of the cross, it is the way of true sacrificial love. Those who accept the cross will bear much spiritual fruit and "by this the Father is glorified" (Jn 15:8). To say that without Jesus "you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5) is to say that without Him one cannot glorify the Father, which is the only thing that actually counts as something. How is the Father glorified? He is glorified "if you keep my commandments," because those who do this are the ones who "abide in my love" says Christ (Jn 15:10). The glorification of the Father is the meaning of life, and those who accept their identity in Christ know that this can only be done if he or she is willing to uphold the law of the cross.

There is no way to overstate the irrelevancy of the world's perception of any person. You may have heard it said before that God's ways are not man's ways. I have heard it said that if you are not hated by some people then you definitely are not living a virtuous life. Virtue leaves many people uncomfortable because it often arouses guilt within the soul. The reaction of others to your faith and virtue is irrelevant. A Christian need not be discouraged or ashamed for his or her own personal faith and virtue. On the contrary, The Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of truth" (Jn 15:26) is given to those who abide in Christ and it is given precisely to further convict and encourage those who abide in Him to have the grace-filled power to persevere in faith, hope, and charity through all of the trials that will inevitably come for their following of God's commandments.