

## I Am the True Vine

**John 15:1-8** "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit: <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Jesus is speaking to His disciples in the upper room just after celebrating Passover, but before the Garden of Gethsemane. This is one of the final teachings Jesus gives to His disciples.

## Jesus is the True Vine

- Jesus being the True Vine indicates that there is a false vine.
- This is a statement about Identity.
  - Under the Old Testament, being a part of Israel meant being a child of covenant. Circumcision was the mark of that covenant. Israel was the vine
  - **Isaiah 5:1-4** Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. <sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes. <sup>3</sup> "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes?

- In Acts the apostles still struggle with this, deciding whether or not believers need to be circumcised.
- Our identity is no longer in Israel. It is with Jesus.
- Our first identification should be in Jesus Christ Himself
- Not:
  - In our profession
  - Our family
  - Our church
  - Our hobbies
  - Our maladies
  - Anything besides Jesus

### God is the Vinedresser that cuts and prunes

- Branches not bearing fruit that are in Him He cuts away
  - Cuts away = airo (ah'-ee-ro) = to lift up or raise up.
  - Branches that lie on the ground in vineyards do not yield fruit usually because they get no sun. Vinedressers raise up those branches so they bear fruit.
- Branches that do bear fruit are pruned
  - **James 1:2-4** My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
- God is working in us to bear fruit. He tends us, cares for us and He cultivates and manages our lives to be the most fruitful we can be.
  - **2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.
  - **Philippians 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

## We are to Abide in Jesus and Jesus abides in us

- What does it mean to abide? I believe that the imagery of the branches on a vine is the best answer to that question.
  - The vine supplies water and nutrients from the soil to the branches.
  - Life flows from the vine into the branches.
  - When a branch is somehow separated from the vine, it withers and browns and stops bearing fruit.
  - Abiding means it is continually getting its life nourishment from the vine. We must get our life nourishment from Jesus.
- **John 15:9-11** "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. <sup>11</sup> "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.
- Keeping the commandments of Jesus keeps us abiding in His love.
- His commandments:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Love</li> <li>○ Forgive</li> <li>○ Have faith</li> <li>○ Be merciful</li> <li>○ Watch for Jesus' return</li> <li>○ Beware of false prophets</li> <li>○ Don't be greedy</li> <li>○ Deny your flesh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Don't be hypocritical</li> <li>○ Don't fear but trust in God</li> <li>○ Don't hinder the work of God</li> <li>○ Be generous</li> <li>○ Honor your parents</li> <li>○ Pray</li> <li>○ Rejoice</li> <li>○ Repent</li> </ul>
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- Keeping these commands is designed to bring us joy. Not condemnation or to keep us bound like the law. They actually bring freedom.
- It is a relationship – As we abide in Him, keeping connected to Him, fellowship with Him, praying, obeying, listening – His life flows into us giving us life, fruit, strength, etc...

**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

- Bearing fruit is not our responsibility.
- At the beginning, there is warning about not bearing fruit, and immediately after this there is a warning about not bearing fruit.
  - It is easy to then think that it is our ability to try to bear as much fruit as possible
  - We do this by trying to accomplish “holy” works.
- In reality, what Jesus is saying is that it is our responsibility to abide in Him.
- Abiding in Him is what produces fruit.
  - We cannot produce fruit any other way. Just like a branch cannot bear fruit on its own, we cannot create our own fruit.
- It isn't that they disciples (or we) could do no activity without Jesus. They could be active without Him, as were the enemies of Jesus and many others. Yet they and we could do nothing of real, eternal value without Jesus.

**John 15:6** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

- This is not a repeat of vs. 2 Where it says every branch in Him is...
- This is for those that do not abide and are not part of the vine. There are those that appear to be branches. Often working hard “for the Kingdom.” But they are not real branches.
  - This would be similar to the Pharisees. But also legalists that do not really have a relationship with Jesus. Remember – our righteousness is by faith. If you are working for it, that is not faith.
- Note that it is not he who does not bear fruit is cast out. This is about who is connected to the vine.

**When we abide we may ask and it will be given**

- **John 15:7** If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
- Abiding suggests prayer. When we are abiding, our prayers are answered.
- God can be confident to promise us whatever we ask for when we are abiding in Him, and He is abiding in us, for at the time, our desires are the same.

**All of this glorifies God, and this makes us His disciples.**

**This what it truly is to be a disciple of Jesus. Abiding in Him.**