

“Gospel of John: Being Part of the True Vine”

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Scripture

John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.”

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.”

"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, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.”

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

Last Week

We talked about peace

We live in a world looking for peace

Do you have peace in your life?

This Week

We start a new chapter, John 15

Jesus ended the last chapter with “Let us go from here”

The group is on the move, perhaps leaving the city for a while -> **John 18:1** -> East toward the Kidron valley
Jesus will have to come back into the city for His trial after Judas comes to Him in the Garden with the guard

Vineyard Analogies

Jesus and the disciples are most likely walking past a vineyard

Very common in the Bible to hear agricultural imagery

For example:

Isaiah 5:1-7

“Let me sing now for my well-beloved; a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it and also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones.

3"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard.

4"**What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones?** "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. "I will lay it waste; it will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it."

7For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress."

Tours of San Francisco Vineyards

There's always a main vine in a vineyard -> a "Walk in the Clouds"

Something they keep under watch and splice new shoots of it to plant in other places

It is the template vine – the model that is replicated across the vineyard to produce the good grapes

Interesting, isn't it?

To our passage today, then

Jesus is that main vine:

The True Vine

John 15:1

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."

Just like the passage in Isaiah 5

He calls Himself "the true vine" -> Jesus says He is the main vine of the vineyard – "true" -> "real or genuine"

Jesus is the model, the template for all believers

The vinedresser in a vineyard -> "Vinedressers are agricultural specialists who oversee the propagation, planting, pruning and tending of grape vines in a vineyard. **Their goal is to optimize the quality and abundance of grapes used in wine and food products**"

"The Father is the vinedresser" -> He is the One that planted Jesus in His vineyard

He is the One that is pleased with His true vine

He often said, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" -> Jesus's transfiguration & baptism

The Father set the plan for the world and “tends” Jesus as a part of His Master plan – He is the divine Follower

The Father’s goal is to produce good grapes in His vineyard -> That is all believers who are “The Gift”

Back to Isaiah 5, Israel was the initial vineyard but not the only one -> Gentile vineyards as well

The Good and Bad Branches

John 15:2

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and **every branch that bears fruit**, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.”

Bearing fruit is the key

Without bearing fruit, branches will be removed and taken away

What is bearing fruit? -> the Holy Spirit produces it

The fruit of the Spirit is step one:

Galatians 5:22-23

“But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Step #1 in bearing fruit -> reflecting the character of the Spirit, personally

Step #2 in bearing fruit -> impacting others as Jesus said:

Matthew 7:15-20

“**Beware of the false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **"You will know them by their fruits.** Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? "So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. **"A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.** "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "So then, you will know them by their fruits.”

If the people that see your lifestyle, and follow it, what fruit are they showing?

Jesus said that some would “look like” believers -> but they wouldn’t BE actual believers

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away”

The vinedresser tends the vines in the vineyard

Some branches do not produce fruit and will never produce fruit

The Father will “take away” some individuals that are in churches

This is not a condition of a believer deciding to “leave the faith”

This is a condition of the Father “purposely removing” some from His vineyard

How does that happen?

He will allow some individuals to be discouraged

He will allow some individuals to be courted by the world:

2 Timothy 4:9-10

“Make every effort to come to me soon; **for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.**”

Demas looked like a believer to Paul, but the world and the adversary won in Demas’s case

On the other hand:

“**every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.**”

Pruning is a task of the vinedresser

In Napa Valley vineyards, vinedressers are the tour guides and always carry a pruning knife with them

If a branch only has a few grapes on it near the root, the vinedresser will pare back the end of the branch

How do you think the plant “feels” through pruning?

Do plants have feelings?

No, but how do we feel about being pruned?

Anyone ever felt the Lord’s pruning touch

What might the Lord’s pruning look like to us?

- It could be that some activities we chose to engage in are no longer possible for us
- It could be that an addiction is simply taken away
- It could be that some of our friends will no longer want to be around us
- It could be that a spouse “chooses to leave”
- It could be that He moves you to another State or Country

The goal of the vinedresser is more and producing better quality grapes -> “the Father is the vinedresser”

Anything that achieves that result is possible

What about the Disciples?

The Disciples’ Status

John 15:3

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

Jesus simply reassures them that they are clean

They cannot and will not lose their salvation -> they have the Word within them

They cannot fall away from the faith

John 13:10 (talking to Peter about washing his feet)

“Jesus said to him, ‘He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and **you are clean, but not all of you.**’”

The Disciples were chosen; they were ordained to be clean -> not Judas -> He was planned to be the devil's

The Disciples only need to abide:

Being Part of the True Vine

John 15:4

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.”

What does it mean to abide?

Abide is the Greek word *menó* which means “to remain”

Abiding is not a mystical term like some think

It is simple -> remain faithful to Jesus -> stay in church; keep reading the Bible; keep studying and praying

Just Simply Stay Connected!

“the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine” -> tree trunks deliver water to the branches

Sapwood continues to grow in outer rings of the trunk to continue to deliver nutrients to the branches

Without the trunk, no nutrients are delivered

“so neither can you unless you abide in Me” -> the same is true about believers with the Lord

Jesus continues:

John 15:5

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, **he bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Jesus applies the analogy, personally, to the Disciples

They must realize that they cannot perform ministry on their own -> they need the trunk, they need the water

Neither can we:

Psalms 127:1

“**Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;** Unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.”

Look at the guarantee Jesus gives:

“he who abides in Me and I in him, **he bears much fruit**”

You stay close to the Lord, you are guaranteed to produce fruit

The Greek word for “much” is *polus* which means “plenteous”

It's not the Greek word *mega* which means a “great amount”

We don't have to all be Billy Graham, but we will produce much fruit if we abide in Jesus

Some are not part of the True Vine, although they might look like they are

John 15:6

“If anyone does not abide in Me, **he is thrown away as a branch and dries up**; and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

Some went out of the fellowship to prove they were not part of the Church:

1 John 2:19

“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for **if they had been of us, they would have remained with us**; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”

“remained with us” -> that is the same Greek word as for “abide”

“**he is thrown away as a branch and dries up**” -> unfruitful branches are cut off and they dry up

Without the lifeblood of the Savior, they might look alive but they are not

They are dead men walking

“they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned” -> eternal fire is their ultimate destiny

But those who continue to abide have benefits

The Benefits of Being Part of the True Vine

John 15:7

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

If you are continually faithful to the Lord, your prayer life will come alive

Jesus taught this:

Matthew 21:21-22 (when looking at a fig tree)

“Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen. **“And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”**”

When you pray, as in the Lord’s prayer -> “Thy will be done” -> The Lord’s will becomes your will -> alignment

The Test of Discipleship

John 15:8

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

The Father is glorified when we produce fruit for Him -> we prove to ourselves that we are the good branches

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Prayer

Benediction