

The True Vine

John 15:1-8

Jesus wants his followers to understand that they can participate in the divine indwelling as they remain in Jesus.

vs. 1, I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

I am the bread of life (6:35).

I am the light of the world (8:12).

I am the gate for the sheep (10:7).

I am the good shepherd (10:11).

I am the resurrection and the life (11:25).

I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6).

Question: How are you internalizing and embracing these realities concerning your relationship with Jesus?

Psalms 80:8-19 You dug up a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. **9** You cleared a place for it; it took root and filled the land. **10** The mountains were covered by its shade, and the mighty cedars with its branches. **11** It sent out sprouts toward the Sea and shoots toward the River. **12** Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its fruit? **13** Boars from the forest tear at it and creatures of the field feed on it. **14** Return, God of Armies. Look down from heaven and see; take care of this vine, **15** the root your right hand planted, the son that you made strong for yourself. **16** It was cut down and burned; they perish at the rebuke of your countenance. **17** Let your hand be with the man at your right hand, with the son of man you have made strong for yourself. **18** Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. **19** Restore us, Lord, God of Armies; make your face shine on us, so that we may be saved.

Jesus now declares, "I am the true vine". Jesus is the one on whom God's purposes are resting.

Isaiah 5:1-7 I will sing about the one I love, a song about my loved one's vineyard: The one I love had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. **2** He broke up the soil, cleared it of stones, and planted it with the finest vines. He built a tower in the middle of it and even dug out a winepress there. He expected it to yield good grapes, but it yielded worthless grapes. **3** So now, residents of Jerusalem and men of Judah, please judge between me and my vineyard. **4** What more could I have done for my vineyard than I did? Why, when I expected a yield of good grapes, did it yield worthless grapes? **5** Now I will tell you what I am about to do to my vineyard: I will remove its hedge, and it will be consumed; I will tear down its wall, and it will be trampled. **6** I will make it a wasteland. It will not be pruned or weeded; thorns and briars will grow up. I will also give orders to the clouds that rain should not fall on it. **7** For the vineyard of the Lord of Armies is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah, the plant he delighted in. He expected justice but saw injustice; he expected righteousness but heard cries of despair.

vs. 2, Removes & Prunes

God created humanity to flourish.

God has set the boundaries and as creator defines the meaning of flourishing.

- He is the master gardener!
- The messiah is the seed. The messiah is the vine, the force of life that will move through each branch connected to the vine.

8:31-32 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples.

32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Perseverance is what distinguishes the movement from belief to enduring faith.

Continue in the word of Jesus...truth will be internalized and that truth will set you free!

All vine dressers understand that pruning is essential. It provides long-range, healthy fruit.

vs. 3, Clean

Notice: 13:10-11 “One who has bathed,” Jesus told him, “doesn’t need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you.” 11 For he knew who would betray him. This is why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

Jesus is continuing to speak of this reality.
The disciples have already been made clean through the word of Jesus.
They have taken hold of the truth of Jesus.
The teaching of Jesus (14:23).
The actions of Jesus (he is the word incarnate, 1:1, 14).

vs. 4, Remain in me, and I in you.

- Continue to be in fellowship (communion) with Jesus.
- Continue to be faithful (dependent, devoted, aligned, obedient) concerning the person and identity of Jesus.

To follow Jesus is to embrace the necessity of pruning!
Jesus knows best.
We are humble and open to the precision of the pruner’s knife.

Our lives will take shape in one direction or another.
• Those who remain in Jesus will bear fruit and their prayer lives will be affected.
• Those who do not remain in Jesus will be thrown out.

Question: Are we watching and experiencing our priorities, goals, dreams, etc. change? How will the fruit continue to get better and better and better.

The quality of your spiritual life can get better and better and better!

Pruning is the active agent which prevents the vine from self sabotage.

It allows the plant to become its true (genuine) self.

vs. 5, The point is repeated. You are either a fruit bearing branch or you are thrown aside.

John wants his readers to take hold of Jesus metanoia.

Duty or human effort, apart from the power of the Spirit is worthless. It produces nothing!

Good fruit -> takes place through a relationship with Jesus.

vs. 6,

“Branches that decide to ‘go it alone’, to try living without the life of the vine, soon discover their mistake. They wither and die, and are good for nothing but the fire (verse 6). But branches that remain in the vine, and submit to the pruner’s knife when necessary, live and bear fruit. That is the prospect that Jesus holds out to his followers, to all of us.” ~ NT Wright

Our desires are ultimately for Jesus’ agenda.

Fruit bearing (perseverance) is dependent on abiding.

1 John 2:6 The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked.

1 John 3:24 The one who keeps his commands remains in him, and he in him. And the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he has given us.

1 John 4:13 This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

Abiding / Dwelling / Depending / Remaining

- To know Jesus is to begin to reflect the fruit of his character, especially love.
- It is because of Jesus that we are able to dwell in God's love.
- All pruning is done to maximize the health and fruitfulness of the branch and ultimately the community.

Dwell

Vine and Branch

The word of Jesus and the Disciples

Jesus and the Father's love

Disciples and Jesus

The Disciples and Jesus love

The enduring quality of the fruit.

The narrow path follower of Jesus learns to love as Jesus loves.

The work of the Spirit is shaping us to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

As we remain in the vine (Jesus) we participate in the revelation of eternal life.

Question: What adjustments need to be made in your life to more deeply depend (remain) in Jesus?

Is your abiding influencing others to abide? How are you participating in the health of the community? Are you engaged to maximize the health and fruitfulness of the branch?

What is your life revealing?