

Small Group Notes

Sunday 25th March

Title: I am the true vine

Scripture: John 15:1-17

Scripture summary:

There are three revelations of identity in this passage. Jesus is the vine, the Father is the vinedresser and the disciples (all disciples) are the branches. Jesus tells the disciples that he no longer calls them servants but he calls them friends. As he has loved them they are to love one another.

There are two things happening in this passage. The first is a statement of contrast between the true vine and the false and corrupt vine. The disciples would have recognised and understood the allusion Jesus was making in reference to the vine. The metaphor of the vine was used in the OT to describe the relationship between God and His people Israel. God was the vinedresser and Israel was the vine.

The second aspect present in the passage is the relationship between the vine and the branches. Jesus warns that the branches that do not bear fruit will be cut off and burned and those that do bear fruit will be pruned. Our fruitfulness as a Christians is directly related to how close we are to Christ. Christ's followers are called to obedience. But not in the form of a servant to a master but in the context of friendship and the commission of love.

Did you know?

- This is the last, chronologically, of Jesus' 'I am' sayings
- The word 'abide' occurs 9 times in the first 11 verses of John 15.
- The picture of Israel as a vine / vineyard is found in a number of places in the Bible. For example Psalm 80 and Isaiah 5 in the OT and Matthew 21:33-45 in the parable of the tenants.

Questions for discussion

1. What most impacts you about the picture of the vine and the branches?
2. What encourages you most from this passage? What challenges you most?
3. Read verse 13-15. Do you think of yourself primarily as Jesus' friend or as His servant?
4. In what areas of your life, both internal and external, would you like to bear more fruit?

Digging deeper

What does it look like to 'abide' in Jesus on a day to day basis? What is the relationship between abiding in Christ and Christian community?

Recommended resources

Who is this man? *John Ortberg*

The Jesus I never knew, *Philip Yancey*

Listen: Abide with me, Audrey Assad, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84YASWe3_2Q