



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

Series: John 15 Sermon Notes

John 15:1-8

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

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.

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

4 Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

6 If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

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

Chapter 13 through chapter 16, we find ourselves on Thursday night of Passion Week, the last week of our Lord's ministry. Thursday night was an important night.

- He gathered with the 12 disciples to celebrate the Passover on that Thursday night when the Galilean Jews would celebrate it.
- They met together in a kind of secret place that we call upper room, and our Lord spent that night telling them many wonderful things, giving them many, many promises.
- As that night moved on, our Lord exposed Judas as the traitor, and dismissed him.
- Judas left to go meet the leaders of Israel to arrange for the arrest and subsequent crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.
- By the time we come to chapter 15, Judas is gone, and only the 11 are left, and they are true disciples.
- It is deep into the dark of night. But **chapter 14** ends with Jesus saying this: **"Get up; let us go from here."**
- Apparently at that time, they left the upper room, Jesus and the 11, and they began their walk-through Jerusalem, headed out the east side of the city to a garden where our Lord would pray in prayer so agonizing that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. While He was praying, they would fall asleep. And into that garden later would come Judas, and the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish leaders to arrest Him. And there, Judas would kiss him; the betrayal would take place; and the next day, He would be crucified.



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

- As they leave the upper room and walk through the darkness of Jerusalem, our Lord continues to speak to them, and what He says to them is recorded in chapters 15 and 16. Of all these things that He says, nothing is more definitive than the first eight verses of chapter 15.

Our Lord here gives an illustration. It's really a word picture, a metaphor, a simile.

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

It should be pretty obvious from that final sentence what the point of this analogy is. This is about a vine and branches and fruit-bearing that proves someone to be a true disciple. This then is about the nature of genuine salvation.

“Fruit” being, anything resulting from your obedience to Christ.

All outcomes, all consequences resulting from your obedience, is none of your business.

How does one know that one is a true disciple?

How does one know that one is genuinely headed to heaven?

How does one know that he or she will escape hell?

How do we know? Nothing is more important than this.

Nothing is more important than eternal life.

But before we look at the nature of salvation, we must look to the nature of Christ.

The divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ is here declared in **verse 1: "I am the true vine,"** He says. And in **verse 5** again: **"I am the vine."**

How is this a claim to deity? Because of the verb "I am."

Exodus 3:14 - And God said to Moses, **“I AM WHO I AM”**; and He said, **“This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’**

The tetragrammaton: the eternally existent one; the one of everlasting being; the always is, and always was, and always will be one.

Throughout His preaching, teaching, healing, discipling ministry, Jesus continually declared that He is God.

They were infuriated that He would make such a claim.

He said things - **John 5:17** - **"My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."**

John 8:54 - **“If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’;**

And again they were offended at such perceived blasphemy.



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

In **John chapter 10:30** - "I and the Father are one

In that same chapter, chapter 10 and verse 38, He said, "Though you do not believe Me, believe the works that you may know that the Father is in Me and I in the Father."

All through His life and ministry, He claimed that He is God. Every time Jesus said, "My Father," He was underscoring that He had the same nature as God.

And His Jewish audience did not miss the claim. They were not at all confused. In fact, **John 5:18** - For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

They understood that that is exactly what He was doing!

One of the ways Jesus did that was by taking to Himself the name of God "I Am" and applying it to Himself.

There's a series of those claims throughout the gospel of John:

1. "I am the Bread of Life.
2. I am the Light of the World.
3. I am the Door,
4. I am the Shepherd, the Good Shepherd.
5. I am the Resurrection and the Life.
6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."
7. John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

Jesus is none other than the great I Am, the eternal God in human flesh.

Is that important to believe? **John 8:24**, "Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins."

Can I say that another way? If you don't believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus, you'll go to hell, that simple.

- No matter how religious you are,
- how moral you are,
- how well your intensions might measure up with the best of humanity:
- If you believe He is a created being of any kind, no matter how noble or how elevated, you will go to hell.

You will die in your sins, which means you will die without forgiveness.

The penalty is eternal punishment.

The Jews understood exactly what He was saying.
It's a shocking devastating assault on Jewish theology.



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

Their theology had deviated from Scripture, the Old Testament. But it was a well-developed system.

And Jesus attacked that theology. He attacked their understanding of God, He attacked their understanding of the law, He attacked their understanding of righteousness, He attacked their perspective on works and faith and grace, He attacked all of the elements of their theology.

And then if that isn't bad enough, that caused them to hate Him.

Then He claims to be God, which they see is the ultimate blasphemy, and that becomes the reason they want Him dead.

So here He is on the final night with His disciples, and He reveals another powerful declaration of His divine nature and says, **"I am the true vine, I am the vine."**

Nature of Salvation

This analogy is simple: there is a vine, there is a vinedresser, and there are two kinds of branches - branches that bear fruit and pruned to bear more fruit; branches that don't bear fruit, cut off, dried, burned - that simple.

We know that the first two characters, Jesus said, **"I am the vine - ", and He said " - My Father is the farmer, the vinedresser."**

So, we know the vine is Christ, and who planted the vine and cares for the vine is the Father.

But the question here is, Who are the branches?

This all begins back in chapter 13 in the upper room, and it's pretty clear that there are two types of disciples in that upper room. Jesus is there, **vs 1 - Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He would depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**

On Business, He Loves us.

Jesus was very aware that His hour of death is coming.

However, there was somebody else there, **(Judas Iscariot)**

John 13:2 - And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

So then, I don't really think there's a lot of mystery about the two branches.

John 13:21-26 -When Jesus had said these things, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me." **22** The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking. **23** Lying back on Jesus' chest was one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. **24** So Simon Peter *nodded to this disciple and *said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." **25** He then simply leaned back on Jesus' chest and *said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" **26** Jesus then



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

*answered, "That man is the one for whom I shall dip the piece of bread and give it to him." So when He had dipped the piece of bread, He *took and *gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

There was nothing manifestly obvious in the life and character and behavior of Judas that would have distinguished him as a false disciple.

- He was visibly attached, looked like everybody else, did what everybody else did.
- There were two kinds of people in that room that night.
- There were those who bore fruit and there was that one who did not.
- There were those who remained abiding in, remaining in, attached to the vine; and there was that one who's cut off.

Can we lose our salvation – the great topic

John 10:27-30 - My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; **28** and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **30** I and the Father are one."

This is not talking about believers, fruit-bearing branches that all of a sudden are cut off and thrown into hell.

This is talking about people who are attached, but there's no life because there's no fruit.

Judas had that very night just a few hours before walked away from Jesus terminally, finally. What the Bible would call an apostate, an ultimate defector.

Matt 26:24,25 - The Son of Man is going away just as it is written about Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." **25** And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself."

So here in John 15 Jesus needs to explain to these men Judas.

He is the vine, the Father is the vinedresser; the branches that bear fruit are the true disciples; the branch that bears no fruit, cut off and burned, is a false disciple.

There are, in the kingdom of God, possessors of life and professors.

Matt 7:21- "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. (Sermon on the Mount)

Let's start with the vine, the first character in this picture:

The vine, Christ Himself: "I am the true vine," verse 1, verse 5, "I am the vine."



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

He chose to see Himself as a vine, to present himself as a vine.
This illustrates dependence, as our Lord said, "Without Me, you can do nothing."
It illustrates that kind of dependence. All the life comes from the vine.
It emphasizes belonging. If you are connected, you belong.

And I think all of that is true. But there's another, much more important reason

He says, "**I am the true vine**," and that is because there was a defective vine.

There was a corrupted vine. There was a degenerate vine.

There was a fruitless vine. There was an empty vine.

Israel was the defective, corrupted, degenerate, fruitless, empty vine

The covenant people of God, the Jewish people. Israel is God's vine in the Old Testament.
In **Isaiah 5:1-7**, Israel as presented as a vine. This text talks about everything God did to give them all that was necessary for them to bring forth grapes. They produced (**beushim**) sour berries, inedible, useless.

- Isaiah says it produces sort of toxic, useless, inedible results.
- Israel had been the stock of blessing. Israel had been planted by God.
- His life would come through Israel to all who attached to Israel.
- But Israel was unfaithful, idolatrous, immoral, and God brought judgment.

That's what the Old Testament lays out for us. The disciples, like all the other Jews, thought, "**I'm Jewish. I'm connected to God.**" Israel, the people of God, the Jewish people, are the source of divine blessing: "I am a Jew; I was born a Jew. I'm the seed of Abraham; I'm connected to God."
Not so.

Our Lord comes along and says in John 15,

If you want to be connected to God, you have to be connected, not to Israel, but to me. I am the true vine.
I am the perfect vine. Through Me, the life of God flows

Connection to the Church doesn't save you, Connection to Christ saves you!

- Paul understood that. He said Israel has all the privileges in **Romans 3:5**.
- They have a form of godliness, but they have no life.
- They don't know God. They're alienated from God. He's the true vine.

Jesus is the vine. Now the second character in this picture is the vinedresser, **verse 1: "My Father is the vinedresser."**

- That's the farmer, the person who cares for the vine.
- Christ pictures Himself as having been planted by God.



NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
OAKLAND, CA.

- The Father was behind everything that Jesus did. The Father sent the Son into the world, right? That's what Scripture says.

The Father laid out the plan. Jesus said, **John 5:19** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in the same way.

The Father provided everything He ever needed. It was the Father caring for the Son, and it is the Son who is the One who possesses true, divine life.

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

Vs 2 - introduces the branches, and there are two kinds of branches. "They all appear in Me, every branch in Me."

They all are attached, just like there were lots of people attached to Israel in the past. But not all Israel is Israel, and not everyone who is a Jew is really connected to blessing.

They were attached, they were connected, but there were branches that do not bear fruit. And He takes those away (lifts up), the Father does - the Father is the judge.

And then there were branches that bear fruit, and He pruned those so that they would bear more fruit. The Father is at work and He's doing two things, two very divine works.