

DIVINE  
"I AM the True Vine"  
Knowing God's Power (John 15:1-8)  
December 13, 2015

## **Jewish Context**

The vine often represented the covenant people of God in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 5:3-6

I am the Vine:

*"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.*

*"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."*

John 15:1-8 (NLT)

### **1. Jesus' Words Are Life-Giving (John 6:63)**

Is there fruit?

*"Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do."*

Psalm 1:1-3 (NLT)

### **2. Jesus's Words change our Lifestyle (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

Pruning is a good thing, but it's not an easy thing.

The point isn't to make this life easy or pain free.

**3. Jesus' Words Conquer the Devil (1 John 2:14)**

*"But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!"* John 15:7  
(NLT)

**God's Word is the weapon we have to fight against the Devil (Ephesians 6:17)**

*"I will bless the Lord who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me. I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me."* Psalm 16:7-8  
(NLT)

### Leadership Tip!

Now is a great time to start putting together a long range plan for your life group for the upcoming year. What goals do you have for your group to Love, Impact, Play and Engage?

## Divine “I am the True Vine”

### STARTER QUESTIONS:

How has your understanding of who Jesus is grown over the last few weeks? What is the most significant impact that you have seen in your walk with God?

### MAIN IDEA:

This series is helping us re-discover who Jesus is. We are looking at his six “I AM” statements. When Jesus used his, “I am...” statements, he was connecting with the Jewish culture and their understanding of God’s proclaiming “I am who I am” to Moses at the burning bush. (Exodus 3:13-14)

Last week we discussed Jesus- “I am the Bread of Life”, this week we are studying Jesus – “I am the True Vine.”

The key question that we are going to try and answer this week is... **Is there fruit?**  
Are we producing the fruit that God intends for us to yield?

Philip started his message explaining how significant grapes were in the days of Jesus’s ministry. And how they were sacred images of Judaism. He talked about the words of the prophet Isaiah referring to the people of Jerusalem and Judah as God’s vineyard.

### Read Isaiah 5:3-6

<sup>3</sup> *“Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? <sup>5</sup> Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. <sup>6</sup> I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”*

Because of the importance of grapes in biblical times, great care was used to make sure that farmers would produce the best, heartiest fruit possible.

In order to produce a quality harvest, growers would prune, branches off of the vine and cut off non-fruit bearing branches.

Jesus uses this analogy to describe how God considers us to be the branches and Jesus as the vine.

Let's look at the key Scripture from today's message:

**John 15:1-8**

***"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener.***

***2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.***

***3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you.***

***4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.***

***5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.***

***6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.***

***7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples.***

***8 This brings great glory to my Father."***

This is Jesus's way of saying that the old imagery is gone of Israel being like a vineyard, and now if we are Christ Followers we become the branches attached to Jesus, who is the vine.

**What stands out the most to you in this scripture?**

In the message, Philip discussed what Jesus' words mean to us:

1. Jesus's Words Are Life-Giving (**John 6:63**) - Our life comes from His Words  
To continue to grow, and live a more abundant life, we must consistently be in God's Word.
2. Jesus's Words change our Lifestyle (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) – We must allow God to prune us.  
To be a disciple of Jesus, we must change our lifestyle in order for us to produce fruit.
3. Jesus's Words Conquer the Devil (**1 John 2:14**) -Our relationship with God helps us fight back.  
When tempted we need to find verses to read, memorize, and hide in our heart in dark times.

**Of these three, in which area are you the strongest?**

**Which one do you need to improve on?**

Jesus's word is our nutrient to help us produce fruit as well as the weapon to prevent sin.

***We must "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"***  
- ***Ephesians 6:17***

In our scripture today, Jesus leaves no doubt that he is the way the True Vine. The question we must ask is are we being a "true branch".

## **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

### **How are you letting God prune you?**

Knowing that Jesus is the "True Vine" provides an opportunity to rejoice. His word gives us comfort, peace, hope, a means to fight off sin, builds our faith and helps us become a fruit bearing branch for God.

The biggest hurdle is recognizing the expectation, utilizing the resource of Jesus as the "True Vine" and bearing wonderful fruit for God.

Let's close by reflecting on a few questions to capture how we are using the word of Jesus in our lives:

**Are you getting into God's word? How often? Do you want more?**

**Is God's word alive and changing me?**

**Does God see me today as a strong branch that will be pruned? Or a dead branch that will be cut off?**

Lastly...

**Is there Fruit?**

As we approach Christmas, this series is perfectly timed to help us focus on the gift that we receive by God sending his son to teach us and to die for our salvation. That truly is the greatest gift that anyone can receive.

**What is a good next step for you based on the relationship that you want with Jesus?**

### **Additional Scripture resources:**

John 14:30

Psalms 1:1-3

Psalms 16:7-8

## **FAMILY FOCUS:**

Theme: To bear fruit, we must be connected to the vine

Object: A lamp and an extension cord

Scripture: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NIV)

I am sure that you all know the song, "This Little Light of Mine." I want you to help me sing that song this morning. While we sing it, I'm going to hold this light up and let it shine all around. (Start to sing the song, but stop when you notice that the light isn't shining.) I wonder what is wrong, my light isn't shining. (Someone will probably notice that it isn't plugged in.) Oh, here's the problem, my light isn't plugged in.

Now that we are plugged in, let's try it again. (Sing) Oh, that was much better. The lamp was shining brightly, wasn't it? It's pretty hard for a light to shine when it isn't connected to the power source, isn't it? Well, actually, it isn't just hard -- it's impossible!

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus told his disciples a story to teach them the importance of staying connected to him. Of course Jesus didn't use a lamp to tell his story, because electricity hadn't even been invented yet. Instead, Jesus used an example that his disciples would understand. He used the example of a vine. You know what a vine is, don't you? It is a plant with a lot of branches growing out from it. The branches have fruit on them. If it is a grapevine, the branches should have grapes on them.

Have you ever seen a branch that has been broken off of a tree or a vine? What happens to it? That's right, it withers up and dies. Can it ever have any fruit on it again? No, it isn't any good for anything -- except fire wood.

Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branches. If you remain in me, you will have much fruit, but apart from me, you can do nothing." Jesus wants us to produce a lot of fruit. Good fruit like being kind, generous, and faithful. Most of all, he wants us to love others as he has loved us.

Can we do that on our own? No way. Just as the lamp must be plugged in before its light can shine, and just as the branches must be connected to the vine before they can produce fruit, you and I must stay connected to Jesus to produce the good fruit that God expects of us.

Dear Father, help us to remember that we need to stay plugged in to Jesus if we are going to produce the kind of fruit you expect. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.