

# Jesus, in His Own Words

## *The True Vine*

John 15:1-11

April 6, 2025

HDBC

It is the night before the most important event in human history. In a matter of hours Jesus would be on a cross, dying for the world. There He would endure our Hell and pay in full the penalty for our sins.

And now, with only hours left, he spends valuable time with his disciples. **Not all of them. Judas has already gone out into the dark night** to commit his act of treason. During these last moments Jesus spoke with his friends about their changing relationship. In doing so, He once more tapped into their understanding of the world around them, using an illustration from nature to reveal divine truth.

### **Read John 15:1-11**

#### **1. The Characters (1-2)**

Three important characters in this picture.

##### **1) The True Vine**

The vine was not a new symbol to Jews. Israel was seen as vine which was taken out of Egypt and planted in new land (Ps. 8:8-19). Also depicted as a vine that produced no fruit and fell into judgment (Is. 5:1-7). It was the national symbol for Israel during the Maccabean period. So, they understood the picture.

Vine is the base of the plant. **Like the trunk of the tree.** That which reaches down into the earth carrying life-giving sap to the branches. Israel was to be that for the world, but failed. Jesus would not. He would bring life to the world. **Jesus is the true vine.** He is **genuine and real**. Unlike Israel, he was faithful and true.

## 2) The Vinedresser

This is **God, the Father**. He oversees the entire operation. He has a watchful eye. Might call him the foreman. He deals directly with the branches. Main thing he is looking for is healthy fruit.

## 3) The Branches

Branches are attached to the vine. Through that attachment they receive life. They have no life of their own. They are tender, fragile, totally dependent. If you cut off a branch and it will die, but vine will live. Life is in the vine. The branches are pictures of **believers**.

### **Keep these three players in mind:**

God is the overseer, like the farmer or gardener.

Jesus is the vine which is like the trunk of the tree.

We are the branches.

We are attached to the vine (Jesus) and the vinedresser (God the Father) is looking at us to see what kind of fruit we are bearing.

## 2. The Goal

Vineyards are planted and cultivated **with an end result in mind**. The **primary purpose is to produce fruit** that may be enjoyed by the owner and others. Jesus uses this picture to teach us about our relationship with Him, as well as the role the Father plays in that relationship. As He unpacks this illustration, He reveals **one intended result and several benefits**. The primary intended result is that we . . .

### **Bear Fruit (2-6)**

**Not talking about apples, oranges, or even grapes**. Talking about something much more important. The New Testament has much to say about fruit. One of the basic teachings is that the **fruit is a reflection of the plant**. More than anything else, the fruit reveals the nature of the plant. Apples, Oranges, Grapes. We all bear fruit in our lives. **Jesus wants it to be the right kind of fruit**.

**Romans 7:4** - *Therefore my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might **bear fruit** for God.*

**Phil. 1:11**- . . .*having been filled with the **fruit of righteousness** which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

**Col. 1:10**- . . .*so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, **bearing fruit in every good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

### **What is the Fruit that Jesus is Referring to?**

**1) Souls Won to Christ** - John 4:35 – YES

The harvest is ready, pray for workers.

**2) Fruit of the Spirit** - Gal. 5:22-23 - YES

The life of Christ being reproduced in me. That's what happens in plant. **Life of the plant is reproduced in the fruit.** When you were saved, the Holy Spirit came to live in you. He began a process of changing you, developing you, maturing you. His goal is to make you look and act and be more and more like Jesus.

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son. . . Romans 8:29*

So, the primary intended result is **to bear fruit**. We will see some additional benefits or outcomes in a moment. But first . . .

### **3. The Responsibilities**

Remember the three characters? There are unique responsibilities for each one. We find those woven through this illustration shared by Jesus. We are the branch. Jesus is the vine. God is the vinedresser. So, what are the unique responsibilities?

## 1) Responsibility of the Branch – Two mentions. One is primary.

### a. **Abide** - Remain, sojourn, tarry.

Jesus has used **other illustrations from nature** to describe his relationship to his disciples, but **none so intimate** as this one. For example, **He referred to Himself as the shepherd and us as his sheep**. Sheep are dependent on shepherd for food, shelter, protection, guidance. That is close relationship, but sheep and shepherds are totally different. They don't share common nature.

**The relationship between the vine and branches is much closer. Share same nature.** Literally joined together. It is hard to tell where one ends & the other begins. There is a distinct difference between Jesus & us, but it is also true that He has **given us his nature**, by coming to live in us. *Christ in me, the hope of glory.*

The branch is **completely dependent** upon the vine for its very life. Paul said *Christ is our life*. **A branch without the vine can do only one thing, and that is die.** So, what does it mean to abide?

Constantly being aware of His presence. Intentional fellowship through His Word, prayer, worship, meditation, listening.

### b. **Obey (8)**

Jesus said we abide in his love by obeying Him. Am I doing His will? Obeying His word? This will determine if I am abiding in Him. Get up each morning and acknowledge His presence, and determine to listen to His voice. It is a determination to obey, even when we may not understand.

**General Montgomery, of WWII fame once said, *Orders no longer form the basis for discussion, but action.*** Our responsibility is to **abide and obey.**

## 2) Responsibility of the Vine

Vine has responsibility for producing the fruit. Branch can only bear it. Vine produces it. Jesus is the true vine. He is the only one who can produce life in and through you. The source of the fruit is Jesus. If we abide in Him He will produce fruit through us.

## 3) Responsibility of the Vinedresser

This is where it gets interesting, even scary. He has the responsibility for dealing with the branches. Doesn't deal with them all in the same way. Only one thing determines how he deals with an individual branch. Only one question is asked. **Is it bearing fruit?**

### a. Branches that bear fruit (2)

He prunes them. Opposite of what we expect. I would prune the ones that bear no fruit. Talking about cutting them back. Cutting off of those things that hinder productivity. **Talking about personal suffering.** When you begin to bear fruit for God, you can expect some pruning. Pruning hurts, but is necessary.

Even when we are being effective, there are things that crowd in & compete for our affections. Those things have to be gently cut away. We too often see the pruning shears as tool of torture rather than the gentle means to more fruitfulness. We must learn to welcome the pruning shears of God, regardless of the manner in which they come. **Only the vinedresser can do it effectively.**

***Where He prunes now, He will produce fruit later.***

### b. Branches that bear no fruit (2,6)

They are not allowed to remain in the vineyard. They are taken out and thrown away. Why does the vinedresser do it? Not bearing fruit. Why not bearing fruit? Not abiding in vine. I shudder at the thought that God might one day set me on a shelf

to wither and die due to my lack of faithfulness in abiding in Christ. I would hate to face Him that way.

#### 4. The Additional Outcomes (7-11)

##### 1) Leads to effective praying (7)

One important key to effective praying is **abiding in Christ**. When you obey the words of Jesus in this text it will not only result in bearing of fruit but also in answered prayers. Not because you can impress God with your piety so that He will say **yes**. This is important to understand. **As we abide in Christ we learn to ask for the right things**. When we ask for the right things His answer is always positive.

##### 2) Brings glory to God (8)

My chief purpose in life is not to be happy. It is to honor and glorify the one who made me. Jesus makes it clear that one of the best ways to do so is to bear fruit. **As the farmer looks over the fruit of His labor and takes great pleasure in it**, so our Heavenly Father sees the good fruit of our lives and take great pleasure in it.

No one looks at a beautiful and fruitful vineyard and thinks, **what wonderful and awesome branches**. No. They think of the one who planted and cultivates the field. The glory goes to the owner.

##### 3) Proves our relationship with Jesus (8)

This makes sense. When the branch is bearing fruit it proves that it is connected to the vine. If you lop off a branch it will bear no more fruit. In a similar way, as we bear the fruit of Jesus life in us it **demonstrates that we are intimately connected with Him**. How do people know that you are a Christ-follower? They should be able to see it in the fruit you produce.

#### **4) Produces joy (11)**

Our joy comes from abiding in Christ. There is a deep-seated fulfillment that is found in the person who is heeding these words. Jesus wants us to have joy. He does not want us to be unhappy, depressed, down in the dumps. But He makes it clear that this joy comes not from external circumstances but from our deep, intimate relationship with Him.

An expert in plants knows the difference between a pear tree and an apple tree by looking at the leaves and bark. Untrained observers will have difficulty identifying the differences. However, if the branches of the tree are sagging toward the ground because of an abundance of fruit, there is no chance of error.

When people look at your life, is there a chance of error? Or is it obvious that you belong to Jesus? To bear the kind of fruit that makes it obvious we must abide in Him. That means we should . . .

Read His word

Converse with Him often

Remember His presence in our life

Obey His commands and instructions