

Harris Creek Baptist Church
Jonathan Pokluda
Series: I AM
April 2, 2023

The True Vine

John 15

Harris Creek, good morning! Let's go. How are we doing? I love it, I love it, I love it, I love it. So, when Monica and I, when our kids were younger, it was Christmas time and we are trying to find a gift for them. So, we had asked some people with kids around the same age as ours, "Hey any ideas?" We really wanted to get one gift for the family, and they recommended a bounce house. I thought, "Oh man, that is a good idea. So, I started researching bounce houses and I found a website that was just a wealth of knowledge regarding bounce houses. And so, I started studying it. And you know, it was really more than we would typically spend on Christmas, but Monica and I came to this agreement, "Hey, we will lend it out. We'll let people borrow it." You may have heard me talk about that before, where we said, "Hey, if anybody ever wants to borrow the bounce house, we can lend it out.

So, Christmastime came, we give them the bounce house. It was the perfect gift. They loved it! And we would use it all the time. It was like brown and green. It had these four palm trees on the corners, and it had a slide that went into the large bouncing platform. It was a great bounce house and so we would use it all the time. Sometimes we would just throw it in the front yard, put it up, you would connect it. It had this long yellow tube that went into this orange blower and within two minutes it was up and going and it is a party. So, you could just decide, "Hey, we're going to put the bounce house up." It was one of those things, as soon as it went up, kids just started coming out of the woods. Oh, man! Party over there!

Well, this one particular day we were hosting a party; this is a planned party in the neighborhood. It was in our front yard. We had the bounce house going and so all of the adults were kind of on this side of the sidewalk talking. All of the kids had moved over to the bounce house and they are having a good time. And so, we're free to talk and catch up and have fun. It's kind of like a babysitter, you know? And so, they're over there and you just hear sounds of joy and laughter and elation and life and just fun. It's just this kind of low hum roar of fun coming from the bounce house. Which allows the adults to have peace of mind; all is well over there.

All of the sudden, the sound of fun and joy and laughter turned in a moment to screams for help and tears and crying and sounds of horror and terror. And so, we - all the adults at once - we turn to look over there at the bounce house. Well, this yellow tube that was connected to this orange blower came undone. I don't know how. I don't know what happened, but it just came undone. And so that yellow tube is just kind of flopping in the wind as all of the air is coming out of that bounce house. The sides have caved in on the children, and the children are kind of folded up in the middle like a burrito. They're just shouting. They think it is the end. This is how we go out - a bounce house. Everyone was fine. Everyone lived, that is the punch line. But when it came disconnected, it was no longer a source of life, but a place of terror, a place of horror.

If you, as a follower of Jesus, disconnect from Christ you are not just ineffective. I think we think of that as, “Aw, now we are not as effective as I would be.” It is a person of terror, horror, a nightmare. Really dysfunctional. In fact, the metaphor that Jesus is going to give us today is of the vine and the branch, the fruit that is bore there. He's saying you have to remain connected to the vine. lunch. John 15 - this is the abide chapter. If you've ever studied the word abide or talked about abiding. As Christians we abide! In the NIV, where I will teach from, that word is rendered remain. That you have to remain in Christ and if you don't, it's not like you are just less effective, it is dysfunctional in the faith. The Scripture is going to be clear on that. It is going to tell us what happens in that situation.

If Jesus taught this today, he might use some electronic. You got to plug it in a lamp and if it comes unplugged it no longer shines. Or he may even go, ‘like a bounce house, it plugs into blower motor.’ But in the 1st century He uses a vine. The person in his audience that knew the least about the vine would be like the person here that knows the most about the vine. This was just commonplace in that culture. In fact, if you would have gone into the temple over the threshold of the temple was a vine. Israel, the nation’s symbol was the vine and grapes. So, Jesus is using something very familiar to Him.

We are in a series titled I Am. I Am. We said there are lots of places that you can go and lots of sources that you can listen to or read to learn about who Jesus is or who Jesus was – depending on who you're talking to. But what we get to learn from today is Jesus Himself, He says, “This is who I am.” We talked about how that's a reference to Exodus 3, where God says, ‘Tell them I Am sent you.’ A name for God, a claim to deity. And today, as we move through this series, we talked about how Jesus said things like ‘I am the bread of life. I sustained them. I am what they need the most like food.’ ‘I am the light of the world. I push back darkness. Where I am, there is no darkness. You bring me into the picture like striking a match and darkness is gone.’ ‘I am the gate. I determine what sheep get in or which ones go out to pasture, I am the gate.’ ‘I'm the Good Shepherd. I protect and provide for the sheep.’ Then last week – “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one gets to the father except through me. You want heaven? I am the way. I am the truth; I am the life.’

Today He says, ‘I am the true vine.’ So, I want to talk about this morning what does it mean for us that Jesus is the true vine? And how do we know if we are true followers? That's really where the text is going to go. We're back in John. You can turn to John, chapter 15. That's where we will be. He says in verse 5, and this really creates the need for the message, **Apart from me, you can do nothing.** You can't do anything apart from Christ!

And so, there are hundreds of thousands of people in church this morning trying with all their heart to produce fruit on their own and you can't. And it is a fast track to burnout. If you go through those doors today and you're like, ‘Man, I'm really going to try to love people in my strength’, you're going to fail miserably. You can't do that! You must remain connected to the vine, and the fruit is born forth out of the branches through the vine. A branch disconnected from the vine can bear no fruit. The Christian life is not difficult, it's impossible. That's what you need to know out of the gate. The Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible apart from Christ. The Christian life is really the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, inside of us doing the impossible

through us; things that we would never be able to do apart from Him. And that's why this is an important message.

As we move through, we're going to see how the true follower is pruned; the true follower remains; and then before you leave today what the true follower is known for.

This illustration that Jesus used it doesn't mean much to us because we're just not accustomed to it. It's not something that we're extremely familiar with, but to them they would have leaned in. 'Oh yeah, that. We get that. We see those all the time. They're everywhere in our culture.' He says this in verse 1, **I am the true vine and my father is the gardener.** Or your version might say the vine dresser, but why does He say the true vine? He puts that descriptor on the front of it. I am the vine, but I am the TRUE vine. To understand this, we have to realize that throughout the Old Testament Israel, God's people, are referred to as the vine. But every time they're referred to as the vine, it's really to highlight the reality that they don't produce fruit. You guys are a miserable vine! You're dying, decaying, you're fruitless. I'll show you one place, Isaiah 5:2 - it says this (God in relationship with Israel), **He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.**

And so, Jesus shows up on the scene - keep in mind, these last messages they're happening really fast in conversations. Jesus is about to die. It is Holy Week. It is Holy Week here. He's about to die. He's gathered them up. Peter, you're going to betray me. He's washed their feet; Judas has now left. Last Supper. Then he says, 'Hey guys, I'm going somewhere.' Thomas is like, 'Where are you going?' He says, 'I am going to tell you. I am the way, the truth, the life.' And He says, "I am the true vine." And what He's saying is, 'Hey you look around at God's people and they're fruitless. They're fruitless, they're dying, they're decaying. They're not a good vine, but I am the true vine.' And He says, "Hey, my father, He has a role here to play. Let me show you the role he plays." Verse 2, **He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.** And so, this idea of pruning is the process where dead and dying branches are cut off, allowing new growth.

In fact, I talked to somebody who works at the vineyard, and he said they're not just cut off, he said they're often ripped out. That is the ripping out that brings forth a new burst of fruit on the vine.

1. If Jesus is the true vine, then His true followers must be pruned.

His true followers must be pruned. So, what does that mean exactly? I read that...okay, we must be pruned. What does it mean? Whatever it means, it's not pleasant. OK? That's not one of those things where you're like, "Oh man, that was nice. May I get another?" This is something that is done to us, by a God who loves us, to produce something through us. That's what's happening here. God is doing something intentionally to produce something more in us.

Before we go further, I am going to tease this here and I'm going to come back to it later. The fruit that is produced, it's love. I am just going to give you the answer right now. The fruit that is produced is love. We think about the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. I think He really focuses on this chapter on the first one. He goes to joy a little bit, but He says it's love. In verse 12 He says, **My command is this love each other as I have loved you.** If you'll take that in faith right now, I'll show you in a minute why I believe He's really focusing on love.

So, have you ever gone through a pruning that brought about a greater ability in you to love others. My mom is a counselor; growing up she was an elementary teacher and then became a counselor. I was having a conversation with her once - this was years ago - but I was a pastor. A new pastor on staff at the church and she was talking about a relative of ours who was struggling with anxiety, some anxiety disorder. And in the call, I carelessly said, I'm embarrassed to tell you. I said, "I think I just feel like somebody needs to put their hands on their shoulder, look them deep in their eyes, and shake them up a bit." That is what I said. And she goes, "Oh, Jonathan." Just like, shame on you. And she just said, "Oh Jonathan". I remember she says, "Hey, you don't understand what's happening there. There's brain chemistry. There are serotonin levels at play. You can't go through life just thinking that's the solution – just shake them up." You know?

Fast forward a little bit later, I meet with my life group. I say, "Hey, you know what? I sense something in me... I sense a spiritual arrogance in me kind of welling up. I went into ministry, I'm confident, for the right reasons but in this season I'm not sure I'm here for the right reasons. I sense a spiritual arrogance. I need you guys to pray for me. I sense that God wants to wrestle me like He did Jacob. That I might need to walk with a limp." I said, "Would you just pray that for me?" Which is...don't ever ask that. Man! So, two weeks later, they're praying every day 'God wrestle him like Jacob'. Oh man. And I'm in Austin and I mean anxiety just jumped on me like I was a trampoline. Pounced on me like a tiger - just out of nowhere. Panic attacks. I'm like, what is this I'm wearing? And I looked back on all the times that I had taught on anxiety to the realization that I was teaching on worry. And this is something new that I didn't even know existed, and I couldn't get rid of it. It came on me. I didn't know how to take it. It was put on me and I didn't know how to take it off. And I went through a season with that. And as I came through that season, you better believe what was born in me was a greater empathy and a greater ability to love someone in that struggle. Specifically, a story that I could teach from that would help people find healing.

Now, I never wanted the anxiety, but I'm thankful for the fruits of the anxiety. The anxiety was the pruning. The story, the ministry, the love was the fruit that was born out of the pruning. This is what I think he's talking about here.

AW, Tozer says this, "It is doubtful whether God can bless a person greatly until he has hurt him deeply." God actually rises up storms of conflict in relationships at times in order to accomplish that deeper work in our character. We cannot love our enemies in our own strength. This is graduate level grace.

And so, as you meet with your Life Group, I would encourage you to talk about what is the pruning that has happened in your life? What is the pruning that needs to happen in your life?

And you don't need to fear it! You don't need to fear it. In fact, I'm going to show you from the text how to endure it so that the fruit is born. That the good comes through it.

If you are disciple, a true follower, you will be pruned. When you're pruned, you must remain. Remain in Him. This is what it says, I'll start in verse three, he says next. **You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.** This is like a parenthetical statement. You could remove it from this text. It seems a little bit out of place here, but I think it's actually God's kindness to us and God's kindness to them to say I'm not talking about salvation. You guys understand the word, you've already been clean. I'm not talking about losing your salvation, I'm talking about what you do with your salvation. How you use your salvation. So, all of them hearing this would have thought back to John 13. Right? A couple days ago, when Jesus washes their feet, and He says this to them. **Jesus answered, "Those who have had a past need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.**

Judas is there. He says, "Hey, one of you is not clean. The rest of you are clean." And now Judas has left, in John 13. He exits the story to go and betray Jesus and He says, "Hey you all, you're clean." It's a kindness to them. Hey, rest assured you are clean because of the word that you understood that I spoke. Then verse four, this is where we go. **Remain in me,** [yours might say abide in me] **Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I and you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.**

Jesus is leaving them to be crucified, tortured, left for dead on the side of the road. And he says, "Hey, the temptation is going to be for you to scatter." And they stepped in that direction. Peter goes back to fishing. Jesus says, "Guys, listen! In this world, you're going to face really difficult things and it's so paramount that you remain in Me. You must remain in me! In the midst of the pruning; in the midst of the hardship; and in the midst of what comes your way remain in me.

2. If Jesus is the true vine, His true followers must remain in Him.

Another way to say it is they must abide. The reason I don't love the word abide is because it is so Christian-ese. We are like, "What does it mean?" I want to show you what remain in Him, what it actually means. When we say remain, we don't mean remain a Christian. He's talking to Christians and He's saying, "Christians, be sure that you remain in me." There are so many people today trying to bring about fruit by their own strength. You can't! You can't.

You can hear me on this thing (microphone) because it's connected to a power source. (JP disconnects the mic wire and he becomes silent. You can see he is talking, but you cannot understand anything he says.) (JP plugs it back in.) But if I connect it back in, it comes back up. You can hear me. We have to remain connected to our source of power.

Let me show you Colossians 1:29, one of my favorite verses. **To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.** I strenuously contend, with all of Christ's power. I strenuously contend, but it's Him producing it in me. Him in me. What does

this mean? It's two words. I am going to give you two words. Love and Obey. Those words, if we put them out in the 1st century context, there would be so much overlap. You would say, "To love me is to obey." When we think of love, we think emotional response. We think all of the feels, you know. "Hey, I love them!" "Do I love them? I don't know." "Have I fallen out of love?" That is what we think.

You have to keep in mind that in this first century context, they were given someone and told, "This is who you're going to love the rest of your life." Love meant something very different here. He says, "What does it mean to love me? To obey me. That's what it means to love me, to obey." So there has to be this aspect of our faith and our journey that we create time and space to love Jesus.

I was talking with a friend this week and we were just talking about the challenge that the American church faces. Challenges of consumerism. Challenges of complacency and apathy. Challenges of the word deconstruction. People are kind of 'church hurt'. All of these things are happening here. And he just said, "Hey, you know, our family, we've been watching The Chosen." I'm a big fan of The Chosen! Big fan. And he says, "We have been watching The Chosen and that Jesus character, it just seems like they nailed it; I'm watching that guy interact with His enemies and His friends and all of the people." He goes, "Here's the deal, if that's who I'm following, I'm all in on that. Because I see problems in his bride. I see challenges in the church. But if that's who I'm following, I am all in!" And that's kind of foundational understanding of what it means to abide. Who are you following? Do you know Him? Do you love Him? Do you obey Him? Are you all in? Do I create space in my life to understand who He is and what He wants for me?

It's so easy to think about the word abide as the spiritual disciplines and in fact I've heard a lot of sermons, and I have probably preached some, out of this chapter on the spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines are the trellis. OK? Those are the things the vine grows on, but this is not talking about disciplines. This is talking about what makes you love Jesus and you obeying Him. That's the context of this chapter. The trellis, that's the things the vine grown on. This is talking about you continuing to remain connected to the vine. What does that look like for you?

I think for a lot of us, you hear that, and we think I better make sure I keep abiding. I better make sure I remain close to Jesus. There are people in the church that have never started abiding; they have never remained. And if you've been in church long, and you've grown as a mature Christian it's so easy to consider your effectiveness as a true follower by pointing to the disciplines. Saying, "Well did I read the Bible, did I pray, and did I share my faith?" And you could do all three of those things without enjoying God. You can grow to a place where you've got lots of head knowledge and you're going through all of the motions, but you don't love God.

What He's talking about, is loving God. So you might say, "Well how do I love God?" Well let me tell you how I love God. I love God in sunsets. Love sunsets! I create space and time for them. If you follow me on Instagram, you know I love sunsets. They make me love God more. I love a warm cup of perfect coffee on a cold day. Amen. It stirs my affections for God. And I love...and it is weird...I have this strange emotional response - it's always been there as long as I can remember - to really gifted people. When I watch somebody who's really gifted do something they were made to do, I start to cry. I don't know why, but it makes me love God

more. Meditating is a practice that I've come to appreciate because I go, go, go, go, go fast all the time; that I just have to sit still and just reflect on the goodness of God. I have to write down five things I'm thankful for and just sit there and do nothing which feels so inefficient, but it stirs my affections for him.

But if you are like, "Alright, how do I love God more?" And I say, "Here is the deal man, I want you to come over at 7:30 PM, sit on my back patio in January. I'm going to make you some of Pinewood's finest. We're going to watch America's Got Talent and then we're going to mediate." You might be like, "Oh, I'm out on that, right?" It's not going to work for you. That's how I found out I love God more; you need to know how you love God more. What do you do that makes you love God more and do a lot of it! And then what do you do that distracts you from loving God? And don't do that. If at all possible, stop doing that. Things that pull you backwards in that journey.

So, to abide means to love Jesus, and to love Jesus means to do, by his own words, means to do everything He's asked you to -in any situation. This is not a thing that you do. You don't create space to abide, it's the thing you always do. This vine (there is a vine on stage) didn't create time and space to be planted in the soil. It stays planted in the soil at all times. The branches didn't create time and space to sit onto the trunk. No, it remains there all the time. It's a source of life.

I was raised Catholic, and I went to Catholic school for nine years. I was taught a theology that we kind of received grace through the sacraments. I disagree with that, but the way that it was described to me is when you go through the sacraments you are kind of pouring grace into a cup. They said if you haven't done that well, it's like you go to call God and all of a sudden there's a lot of static on the line. You're trying to talk to Him, but you're distracted by a bunch of noise. You're like, God, where are you? But He seems far like a long-distance phone call. You have got to check the connection. So, there's going to be these times in life where God feels far, and you have got to go back and check the connection. Am I remaining? What's happening around me? Am I still in all of the things that I said I want to be in? Am I obeying Him anytime and in every situation, no matter how difficult? Am I committed to Him. Am I committed to doing anything and everything He would ask me to do? When you are pruned, you must remain. As you remain, you will produce fruit.

Verse six, **If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.** He's saying those pretending to know Jesus, they're going to burnout. They're going to be found out. They're going to be exhausted. It is not His strength working in them. Verse 7, **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**

Two things I want to bring your attention to: the showing yourselves to be my disciples. Put a pin in that, coming back to it. But He says, **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. This is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit...** OK? You can't read something like that and blow past it. Oh wait, I can ask whatever I want. You know? He actually bookends this section with the same sentence. He says this in verse 16, same chapter - **So that whatever you ask in my name, the Father will give you. This is my command, love each other.**

So, there's this talk about fruit and then it's book-ended by 'Ask God for whatever you want.' 'Ask God for whatever you want.' And in the middle is love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love. Let me show you, OK? Verse 9, **As the father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love. My command is this love each other as I have loved you; greater love has no one than this. This is my command love each other.** He's like, what fruit? Guys, the fruit of the follower of Jesus is love. We love God and we love others. That's the fruit of remaining in Him.

So, when He bookends that with ask God for anything, ask anything in my name - this is why we say in Jesus name. Amen. We can get superstitious about it, it's not meant to be superstitious. I'm not saying it's bad to say, 'In Jesus name', I say it. It's bad to say it flippantly and superstitiously. You have to know why you say it. And the reason that we say it is as a reminder to us that we remain in Him. So, what is He saying in ask anything of my Father? He's saying you ask my dad to help you love somebody or to love Him and He is always going to answer that prayer. That's what He's saying. If you ever ask Him, "God, would you please just grow in me a love for them." You pray that like somebody knocking on the door at midnight who wants food, He is always going to answer that prayer. In 17 years of ministry, I've never known anyone that asked God for a love for a person, and He didn't grant it. He will do it and He says here - every time.

3. If Jesus is the true vine, His true followers are known by love.

His true followers are known by love. If you're pruned, when you're pruned, to endure pruning you must remain. And if you remain, Jesus will produce fruit in your life and the fruit in your life that He produces is love. In verse 8 He says, **showing yourself to be my disciples.** How do we know His disciples? Well, John 13 says this, **A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.** It's a really big deal. It's a really, really big deal.

You can be a masterful debater. You can win every conversation or argument. You can win and you can you victorious here on the earth; if you have not love, you are not His follower. You can be a good mom or dad in the way that you provide, but if it's not out of love from Jesus it is all for not. You can be incredibly successful. Well-known, big house, fast car, lots of things, lake house, vacations, all the things and if you are void of love, it's all for not. 100 years from now, it all burns up. It's handed to somebody else. The deed changes names and you're placed in a box and placed in the ground. That's how that goes.

You will know His disciples by the way they love Him. Matthew 7 says, **You will know my trees by their fruit.** This theme is repeated throughout the Gospels. Jesus is very clear on it. Somewhere in church history, we've moved away from that. In 1 Corinthians 13:3, **If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.** A fruitless disciple is an unbeliever. I'm not trying to be heavy-handed; I'm telling you what the Scripture says - repeatedly. A fruitless disciple is an unbeliever. They're not a disciple. It is an oxymoron. It's a misnomer. They're not a follower.

Now, here's the only disclaimer I put on that. I'm not talking about fruitless in a season. I'm not talking about when you went through a hardship - mental illness or there's something driving me

back. I'm talking about the sum of someone's life. If it's fruitless, what are they pointing to to say I knew him? I was a disciple; I followed Him without ever following Him. No! No. No.

I talked about, the other day, an Olive Tree. I got the Olive Tree because Monica wanted an olive tree. She wanted a fake one, I got a real one. We're trying to keep it alive. Neither of us have green thumbs, it's just not our strong suit. You know? So, I say that story, and someone gives us a fake Olive Tree. They hear me say that and they gifted us a fake Olive Tree. Which is awesome! These fake plants y'all, the game has changed on the fake plants. This thing right here is fake (pointing to the real looking vine on stage). No, I am kidding. It's not! I didn't have you for one second. Like no, it's not. But it could be because they're that good. The fake plants are awesome; all you have to do is dust them. That's it. There's no water, there's no sunlight and they look the same. Even succulents - all the things. I mean, I'll go up and I'll feel them and be like, "Oh, that's real. Sorry about that. Here's your leaf back."

So how do you know if a plant is fake? If this was fake, there would be none of these (JP is holding grapes). That's how you can sure fire away know. There's no fruit blooming on a fake plant; only the real deal produces the fruit. That's why He says, "They will know you are my disciples, so that they know that you are my disciple." In verse 8 and repeated in John 13. "Then they will know...showing yourself as my disciple".

If there's fruit in your life that didn't come from Jesus, it will certainly rot. It won't make it. As you are pruned and as you remain in Him the fruit that is born out of that will last forever. Forever and ever and ever. In summary, True followers are pruned; True followers of the true vine remain; and True followers are known by love - that is the fruit that is born in their life.

Today, in Holy Week, is Palm Sunday. We celebrate Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday, if you are not aware, it is known as the triumphal entry. It's the day that kicks off Holy Week, where Jesus moves into Jerusalem. When He does, what's happening and this is going to be new information for some of you, the crowds gather. They're there for the feast and they start waving these palm branches and placing them on the ground for His donkey to walk on. They start worshiping, they lift their hands up, they're worshiping, and they say, "Hoshana! Hoshana!" There is delight and cheering. "Hoshana! Hoshana!" Hosanna, we say. It means salvation is here. God has come to rescue us! He's come to save us! Hoshana!

He says in John 12:12, **The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival head that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"** And they were worshiping. And they worshipped Him.

And in one week - in one week - the same vocal chords, the same people, the same crowd that just one week earlier were saying, "Hoshana! He is here! He is here! He has come to save us!". Said "Crucify Him! Release Barabbas, the insurrectionist; the one that deserves to be here. Crucify Him (Jesus)!" Same crowd, in one week. Why? Because Jesus did not give them what they wanted from Him, so they turned on Him in one week.

They had expectations of Him and as soon as the realization occurred, "Oh, He's not setting us free from the Roman regime. He did not come here to build the Kingdom. The government's not

going to stand on His shoulders. Crucify Him! We are done with Him. Next. Next.” How - in one week? How? They did not remain. They did not remain. They did not foster a love for Him and obey Him. They just were disappointed by Him. The pruning got them. I mean, somebody grabbed some pruning shears, and they were out. “We're done with that. We did not sign up for that.” That is why the whole next section of this chapter is like, “Hey guys, listen the world is going to be hard. Do not fall away remain in me.” Remain in me.

You are going to go through those doors and get bumped up against. There are some hard things out there. Remain in Him. Let me pray that you would.

Father, we do just ask for your help in that. That we would not be the ones today with our hands raised, singing songs to you, only to go about our day and turn on you. To be disappointed in you at the first sign of pruning, to say that you are no longer good; to not trust in your process. Would you help us. I know that I do not, and I'm sure I speak for others, I just don't want pruning God. It does not sound like anything that I want to experience. So, would you create and stir in us a hope for the fruit as we remain on the vine. Give us the ability to endure anything that would come at us here. When we face the pressures of this world, help us to lean more into you - understanding that being disconnected does not make us ineffective, it renders us ineffective. Help us. Help us to stay near you. God, would you stir in our hearts a delight in you; a love for you. Enjoyment of you. In Jesus name, amen.