

I AM — ENCOUNTERING THE IDENTITY OF JESUS

The Vine That Sustains

INTRO / RECAP

- Central Question:
 - *Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?*
- This is not just about belief:
 - It is an invitation into a **whole new way of life**
- Key Idea:
 - Being **born again** leads to a transformed identity and way of living

THE PATHWAY OF SONSHIP

Jesus has been leading us step by step:

- I am the Bread → **Believe**
- I am the Light → **See**
- I am the Gate → **Enter His care**
- I am the Good Shepherd → **Live in His protection and provision**
- I am the Resurrection and the Life → **Receive life**
- I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life → **Trust**
- One statement remains:
 - **I am the True Vine**

CONTEXT — THE NIGHT EVERYTHING CHANGES

- Judas has left to betray Jesus
- Jesus tells the disciples He is about to leave
- The disciples are questioning:
 - Where are you going?
 - How can we follow?
- They move from the upper room to a garden
- Jesus understands what is coming:
 - He will not be physically present
 - The world will oppose them
 - They will be tempted to return to the world
- Jesus speaks:
 - **John 15:1–8**

THE TRUE VINE - John 15:1

Old Testament Background

- **Psalm 80**
 - God planted Israel and caused them to grow
 - Israel is now struggling and broken
 - Question: *Why are we falling apart?*
- **Isaiah 5**
 - God planted a vineyard expecting fruit
 - Result: **Wild grapes**
 - Expected:
 - Justice → Received corruption
 - Righteousness → Received cries of despair

Key Insight

- The issue was not:
 - The planting
 - The nurturing
- The issue was:
 - **The fruit produced**

Jesus' Declaration

- "I am the true vine"
 - I am what Israel failed to be
 - I will produce what God desires
- Emphasis:
 - "Mercy, not sacrifice"
 - A shift away from performance-based thinking

Core Truth

- Your works do not produce fruit
- You are not the source of good fruit
- The life you are looking for:
 - **Does not come from you. It flows through you**

YOU'RE ALREADY CLEAN - John 15:3

- Jesus declares:
 - You are already accepted
 - Already chosen
 - Already made clean
- This is:
 - Not future tense
 - A present reality

What is “the word” Jesus spoke?

- Everything Jesus revealed about who He is
- The call to believe in Him
- The disciples’ response to receive Him

Key Scriptures

- John 1:12 — Receive Him → Become children of God
- John 3:16 — Believe → Receive eternal life
- John 6:29 — The work of God → Believe in the One sent

Meaning

- You are not working your way into relationship with God
- You are already brought into it through belief

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION

- Religion says:
 - Produce → then be accepted
- Jesus says:
 - Accepted → now abide → then produce

Natural Human Drift

- Performance
- Earning
- Proving

Even as believers:

- “If I do more, I’ll be closer to God”
- “If I produce more, He’ll be more pleased with me”

Core Truth

- Abiding is not working for acceptance. It is living from acceptance
- **You don’t produce to belong — you belong, so you produce**

OUR PURPOSE — FRUIT THAT GLORIFIES GOD - John 15:8

- John 15:8:
 - The Father is glorified when we produce much fruit
- Isaiah 43:7:
 - We are created for God’s glory

What Fruit Is NOT

- Busyness
- Activity
- Performance

What Fruit IS

- The visible evidence of the life of Jesus in you

Expressions of Fruit

1. Character (formed by the Spirit)

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

2. Love

- Not self-seeking
- Sacrificial
- Reflecting how Jesus loved us

3. Obedience

- A life aligned with Jesus

4. Multiplication

- Others encounter Jesus through your life

5. Endurance

- Remaining when it's hard
- Staying when others walk away

Core Truth

- Fruit is not what you do for God
- It is what God produces through you
- God is glorified when:
 - People recognize that only He could produce this kind of life

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS OUT?

The Command

- Abide in Jesus
- Stay connected
- Remain in His love

Supporting Scriptures

- John 15:10 — Remain in His love through obedience
- 1 John 5:3 — His commands are not burdensome
- John 15:17 — Love one another

WHAT ABIDING LOOKS LIKE

- Staying with Him daily
- Trusting Him when life is unclear
- Returning when you wander
- Depending instead of striving

Deeper Dimension

- Fellowship in His suffering (Philippians 3:10)
- Partnership with Jesus through trials
- Alignment with His sacrificial love and obedience

Love in Practice

- 1 Corinthians 13
- Loving others as Jesus has loved us

NEXT STEPS / PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Where are you trying to be the source?
- Where are you striving instead of abiding?
- Where have you drifted?

Key Statement

- **The Christian life is not sustained by striving, but by staying**

INVITATION

- This is not a call to try harder
- It is a call to:
 - Come back
 - Reconnect
 - Remain
 - Abide
- Jesus is not asking you to produce life
- He is inviting you to stay connected to it through love