

I Am the True Vine

John 15:1-11 || Pastor Shawn Gendall || 02 August 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Describe a victory/win by someone else that you celebrated as if it were your own.

Worship: Galatians 5:22-24 (*Read the passage aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for John 15:1-11

We can best understand what Jesus means by “I am the True Vine” through 4 questions: What is the Vine? (Is 5:1-7). This image is a pleasant, peaceful one. Fruit-bearing. Life-giving. But for Christ’s disciples, it had the weight of their people’s history. God saw the Israelites as a vineyard, a nation for His glory. But they were not a nation unto themselves. They were expected to bear fruit – to be a light to the nations. But this story was never resolved. And now Jesus is saying that He is that long-expected victory; He is what the Israelites have longed to be but never could. There is tremendous freedom offered in this promise. Success is no longer a matter of our own ability; Christ alone is our Savior. And so we must ask ourselves: Will we allow Jesus to be the fulfillment of our story?

What is the Pruning? (v2) Judas heard Christ’s teachings, saw His miracles, and did work on His behalf... but he was not vitally connected to Jesus. The same is true for many today. As John Stott wrote, *“There are some who appear united to the vine, but are not. Their apparent union is merely external. Set today, Judas would be a member of the church, but not a member of Christ.”* This is an arresting but necessary question: Are we vitally connected to Jesus? Is this bearing fruit in our lives? Is our church bearing this fruit and supporting one another’s connection to Christ? Our connection to the True Vine means we will be “pruned” by God. This may involve grief, suffering, loss, and it will certainly involve waiting. But fruit produced will be humility, gentleness, wisdom, and maturity. May we embrace this uphill climb, knowing that life with Jesus is so good – filled with God’s glory – and that the road we walk ultimately leads us home. May we therefore receive the pruning of the Vinedresser as a gift of His Grace.

What is the Abiding? Abiding is that connection to the vine which brings life and brings fruit (v4-5). This is a call to a life of grace-fueled effort, of discipline, of intentionality, as we seek to live out our union with Christ. This means knowing and loving the Bible. Treasuring it – not just to gain its knowledge, but to live by it. This means living an ever-deepening life of prayer. This means living in vital relationship to the Church, receiving its care and discipleship as well as receiving the Lord’s Supper. This means embracing all which stirs our affections for Jesus.

What is the Fruit? Christlikeness (v9-11). And so we must ask, *“Am I becoming more like Jesus – more loving? Joyful? Peaceful? Patient? Kind? Good? Gentle? Faithful? Do I have more self-control?”* Bearing fruit is also a challenge for us as a community: generosity, humility, freedom, mutual submission, yielding to others, valuing justice and righteousness, acting on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Acting out of conviction that we are telling the story of God, longing for the freedom and flourishing and fullness offered to all people in our LORD Jesus.

Discussion Questions (*You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like.*)

- **The True Vine** - How does this image deepen our understanding of what it means to grow as a Christian?
 - **Pruning** - Why should we consider pruning a gift of God’s grace? How have you experienced this?
 - **Abiding** - What would have to change for you to say that you are abiding in Jesus? (v4, 5, 7, 9, 10)
 - What types of things do you do which stir your affections and longing for Jesus?
 - **Fruit** - How does bearing fruit prove we are Christ’s disciples? Who needs this proof?
 - How can we corporately become more like Jesus? How does this give us Christ’s joy? (v11)
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Prayer: See this week’s Prayer Guide found [here](#).

Engage & Experience: Jesus said, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (v7). We are called to live in the light of Scripture and under its authority in all aspects of life. Scripture memorization makes this connection more constant, more deep, and more transforming. It even strengthens our prayer life. Consider committing John 15:1-11 to memory as an aid to abiding in the True Vine.