

# The True Vine

## John 15:1-8

Life Group Discussion – December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

In the land of Canaan, there are three plants that remind people of God's blessings: fig trees, grape vines, and olive trees. The word "grape vine" is used several times in the Old Testament to represent Israel because the two have similar characteristics. A grape vine is a very unique plant. The tree itself does not have much use. It is not good for lumber or fire. While the tree itself does not have much use, it produces delicious fruit that many people enjoy eating.

Jesus is the True Vine.

**I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. (John 15:1)**

In this verse, Jesus is describing His relationship with the Father. The Father is the gardener and Jesus is the True Vine.

People say the hardest part of cultivating grapes is trimming the branches. The work is tedious, yet necessary, because it allows the vine to bear more fruit.

**Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:2)**

What does it mean to "bear fruit"? According to Scripture, a fruitful life is a life that honors God and His will. The greatest thing we can do in this world is to live according to God's will. This might seem foolish or harmful at times. But when must have faith that God will take care of us when we remain faithful in Him.

In today's passage, we see two key principles in the process of pruning.

**1. Every branch that does not bear fruit is taken away.**

Here, Jesus is not talking about nonbelievers. He is talking about believers who do not bear fruit. These people look holy on the outside, but inside, there is

no change or fruit. These are the branches that are cut off.

**2. Every branch that does bear fruit is pruned.**

Sometimes, a vinedresser would cut branches that look normal. This process might seem harmful at first. But if a branch is not pruned, it will never produce good fruit. In order to produce maximum quality fruit, a branch must be pruned.

This picture of the vine and branch describes our relationship with Jesus.

**- A branch cannot exist by itself.**

A branch is dependent on the vine. It cannot exist by itself. The same is true with our relationship God. We were created by God and for God. Therefore, we cannot exist apart from God.

**- A branch has life only when it is attached to the vine.**

In order to stay alive, a branch must be attached to the vine. The same is true with us. Instead of trying to hard to be a good vine, we need to try hard stay attached to the True Vine.

A fly cannot cross the Atlantic Ocean by itself. But if that fly is in an airplane, it can cross the ocean in a safe manner. The same is true with us. On our own, we can do nothing. But when we abide in Christ, we have the power and strength to live victoriously in life.

So, how can we abide in Christ?

**1. We need to be victorious in our worship.**

The church is the body of Christ. Therefore, when come to church, we are actually stepping into deep fellowship with Jesus. Some people say, "I believe in Jesus but I don't need church." This statement is actually contradictory because you can't believe in Jesus while denying His body. The church is the

body of Christ that is composed of believer who gather under His name.

## **2. We need to obey God's word.**

**If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)**

The key phrase here is "if my words abide in you."

The word of God must abide in us. When His words abide in us, He grants us the wishes that we ask in prayer. Therefore, we must obey God's word in our everyday life.

## **3. We need to pray.**

**... ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)**

Our wishes are not granted to us automatically. We need to make our request known to God in prayer. When we ask God, He responds. Prayer is like breathing. In order for us to stay alive spiritually, we must diligently pray. In today's passage, there is a clear promise that God will answer when we pray. Prayer is a privilege and blessing that is given to those who earnestly seek God.

So, what happens when we faithfully abide in Christ?

## **1. Our hearts become filled with the love of Christ.**

**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and**

## **abide in his love. (John 15:9-10)**

When we abide in Jesus, the love of Christ abides in us. On our own, we do not have the ability or the desire to love like Jesus. But when His love abides in us, it motivates us to love like Him.

## **2. We are filled with joy.**

**These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)**

Believers need to be joyful. There are some people who say that they believe Jesus, yet their faces are all dark and serious. If we truly trust in Jesus, joy and thanksgiving should flow out of our hearts on a daily basis.

## **3. Our prayers get answered.**

**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (John 15:16)**

As mentioned before, when we abide in Christ and the Word abides in us, whatever we ask, we will receive.

Today's passage reminds us to abide in Jesus, our True Vine. In all situations and circumstances, abide and remain in Jesus. When we do, we will experience the power and blessings of God, following from Jesus into our lives.

## **SHARING-----**

1. What two key principles of pruning that are used in today's passage?
2. In today's passage, Jesus uses the picture of a vine and a branch to illustrate our relationship with Him. In light of today's passage, how is your relationship with Jesus?
3. Based on today's passage, if we abide in Jesus, we must bear fruit. Looking back at 2018, what kinds of fruit have you bore in your life? Also, what kind of fruit do you hope to bear in the upcoming year?