

THE TRUE VINE

Key Verse: John 15:1-11

Key Thought: Remain in Christ

The last verse in chapter 14 tells us that Jesus and the Disciples are about to leave the upper room. They are headed to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus will pray and then later be arrested by the mob led by Judas. Jesus speaks the words which make up chapters 15 and 16 on route to the garden.

In this chapter, Jesus is pictured for us as the True Vine. I can imagine Jesus and these men going through the darkened streets of the city and then passing beyond the walls into the surrounding countryside. During this time of year, mid-April, the grape vines would be beginning to blossom with the promise of a fresh harvest. As Jesus walked with his Disciples, perhaps He reached out and took a vine in His hands and used it to teach an object lesson to His men. His desire is to teach them about the most vital relationship they have in their lives, the one that is with Jesus and His Father.

We might ask ourselves, "Why did Jesus give them this teaching now?" The answer is simple: They needed it! These men have just been informed that Jesus is going away, but that His work is going to continue, and that it is to continue through them and their lives, (John 14:12) If they were to carry on the work of the Lord, then they needed to know how to produce that kind of fruit in their lives.

This morning, we are 2,000 years removed from that night, but the work of the Lord still marches forth. God is still working through the followers of Jesus Christ to accomplish His work and will in the world today. Many of us may sit here and wonder how we are supposed to do the work of the Lord and how we can produce that kind of fruit in our own lives. Well, the answer is found in these verses. Because this passage is all about becoming a genuine Disciple and how to bear fruit for the glory of the Lord.

Let's take a few minutes this morning to view this portrait of Jesus, The True Vine, and see how we can become more like Him.

I. THE PERSONALITY OF THE TRUE VINE

1. The Genuineness of The True Vine - Jesus and Jesus alone possess life within Himself, John 14:6. All other vines are counterfeit. He alone is the true source of everlasting, abundant life.

2. The Gardener of The True Vine - The word "husbandman" refers to the vine dresser, the gardener, the one who has the responsibility of caring for the vineyard. Jesus says that the Heavenly Father is the Gardener. The key phrase in verse 2 is "in me". This lets us know that we are dealing with genuine believers. Jesus isn't speaking about those who profess Christ and yet have never possessed Him, He is not talking about wheat and tares, but only wheat.

The Gardener is involved in everything that has to do with the Vine. This verse focuses on the specific duties the Gardener has regarding the Vine.

a) **Protection** - That is, the Gardener provides tender, watchful care, and protection for the Vineyard. Aren't you glad that the Lord sees it all? I praise the Lord for the sure knowledge that nothing passes the gaze of my heavenly Father.

b) **Purifying** - The Gardener uses two primary methods of purifying his vineyard.

1. **He Challenges the Branch** - "Taketh away" means to lift or to raise higher. That is, the Gardener will take the unfruitful branch and lift it from the dirt into which it has fallen giving it a better chance to be productive.

On a personal level, this means that when we get to a place in our Christian lives where we are unfruitful and barren, the Lord will have to reach into our lives, disturbing our slumber and He will lift us up to challenge us and shock us to growth. There are times when the Lord can only accomplish this through discipline. Which, if responded to with repentance, will help us to be fruitful for His glory. If, however, we choose to go on in our sins, there is a sin unto death. (1 John 5:16.)

Has the Lord been challenging areas of your life? If so, do not run from His challenge. Instead of running from God, turn and run to Him. After all, His discipline is always proof of His love, and of your relationship to Him.

2. **He Cleanses the Branch** - That is, the Gardener removes things from the branch that destroy its vitality and strength. Things like sucker branches, useless buds, misdirected shoots, spots, discolored leaves, etc. Anything that consumes life but produces no fruit must go!

So, it is in the life of the believer. When we allow things into our lives that hinder our walk with the Lord, then we are in danger of a pruning. "Pruning" by its very name sounds painful, and it isn't always easy to cut the junk from our lives, but if we don't, the Lord surely will!

How is this pruning accomplished? By the Word of God!

1. Like a mirror, the Word of God reveals problems –

James 1:23-24.

2. Like a knife, the Word of God cuts to the heart –

Hebrews 4:12.

The question this morning is this, has the Lord been speaking to you through His Word? If so, have you been heeding the call from the Lord? If not, then I challenge you to allow the Lord to prune your life with His Word. If that is not accomplished, then He will take further and far more drastic measures.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUE VINE

1. There Is a Distinct Purpose - The Vine has but one purpose: to produce fruit. The Vine exists for that purpose alone. Without the fruit, the vine and all its efforts are wasted. The True Vine has a singular purpose and that is to bear fruit to the glory of the Lord.

2. There Is a Distinguished Purpose - The reason the Vine desires to produce fruit is so that the vine dresser might receive the honor. When fruit is yielded in a vineyard, the Vine, the branches, the soil, even the fruit does not get the credit.

All the glory passes on to the Gardener. So, it is with the Lord Jesus. Everything He did and does was and is to glorify His Father.

This ought to be the burning desire of every child of God this morning. That is, to live our lives so that every waking minute brings glory to the Father in Heaven! There is something wrong when there is no desire to bring glory and honor to the God who loves us, sustains us and cares for us along the way.

3. There Is a Delegated Purpose - Notice this truth. The Vine itself does not bear fruit! Its fruit is the branches. The branches have the obligation of bearing fruit. The Vine supplies its life to the branches, and they take that life and use it to bear fruit.

For that to happen, a few things are very important.

a) The Branch Must Be Attached to The Vine - If you are not in the Vine, then there is no way for you to share in the Vine's life. This is all about a vital union between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ, the True Vine.

We need to recognize our standing this morning. If we are in the Vine, then we were with Him at Calvary and when He arose from the dead. If that is the case, then our old man has been crucified and we have been raised to walk a new life in Jesus. If we are in Him, then we are in Him today, that is, we have already ascended to Heaven and are seated there with our blessed Savior!

b) The Branch Must Abide in The Vine - That is, we must maintain a close fellowship with the Vine if He is to live through us and produce His fruit in our lives. This is only accomplished by "abiding" in Him! How does one abide? Prayer, studying the Word, deny self, draw nigh to God!

The closer we abide to the Vine, the more His life can flow through us to produce the fruit He desires. Is there any wonder that so many Christian lives are fruitless and barren? How would you describe your life this morning? Are you bearing much fruit for the Lord?)

c) The Branch Must Be Available to The Vine - May I remind you that fruit bearing is a passive activity on the part of the branch? If the branch will simply abide in the Vine, then the Vine will most certainly produce its fruit. I don't know about you, but I find that truth liberating! I am not required to do anything but abide. It is the Vine's responsibility to produce His fruit in my life. That frees us from having to work and labor to get His approval. If we yield, He will live through your life and mine!

When we speak of fruit, what do we mean? What will be produced in our lives when we yield? How will we know if fruit is being produced through us?

1. The Quality of Our Fruit - This is not the branch's responsibility! When we are abiding in the Vine and He is reproducing His life in us, we can rest assured that the fruit that is produced is honoring to the Lord. Again, this is a liberating truth!

2. The Quantity of Our Fruit - Again, this is not the responsibility of the branch. Some will produce much; some will produce little. Which depends upon the will of the Vine. Our duty, to repeat myself, is to abide!

However, it is clear from these verses that God anticipates a steady progression in the level of our fruitfulness.

The closer we abide in the Vine, the more fruit He will yield through our lives. However, not every branch abides in the Vine as it should. Some are still attached but have ceased to draw life from the Vine's fulness. As a result, they are fruitless and withered. The withered branch still possesses the same nature as the Vine, but it is no longer attached in the sense of life drawing fellowship.

When this life is over, there will be many who name the name of Jesus but were unfruitful. They will experience the loss of their heavenly reward. Many think they will be content just to get to Heaven, but there should be a desire to have rewards to lay at His feet. Will you hear, "Well done?" Only if you are a fruitful branch!

III. THE PROMISE OF THE TRUE VINE

Those who abide in the True Vine can rest assured of certain precious and sure promises!

1. An Unhindered Prayer Life - (John 14:13-14)

Why? When we are abiding as we should be, and when we are drawing our life from Him, then His will becomes our will. That is, every time we pray, and everything we pray for, will fit perfectly with His will and He will grant our requests.

2. An Unending Love - Jesus loves all people, always, but those who are abiding in Him have entered a special, ever-deepening relationship with Him. This is the promise of the Vine to the branches!

3. An Uncommon Joy - Joy is not happiness, which depends upon happenings, but it is a deep settled inner pleasure. It is the deep settled assurance and confidence in our relationship with the Father and with His Christ that fills the heart with "joy unspeakable and full of glory", and that ignites the heart to serve God.

Note these truths about joy:

Joy is Divine in nature - It originates with God and is only given by God. It is unaffected by earthly or material things.

Joy is not dependent upon happiness - God's joy always abides, even through the most difficult times!

Joy is the product of faith - When one is assured of one's standing in Christ, joy is the result!

Joy in the Lord produces faithfulness to the Lord - His joy is our strength and that which gives us courage for the battles.

Jesus is the True Vine. His desire is to live through your life so that you might bear fruit unto the Heavenly Father.

As we close, there are a couple of questions I want you to reflect on.

Are you "in the Vine"?

Have you ever been saved and grafted into Jesus?

Are you "abiding in the Vine"?

Are you drawing your strength from Him so that He can produce His fruit through your life?"

Are you bearing His fruit today?

Where do you stand with Jesus today?

If God has revealed areas in your life that need to be pruned back or otherwise dealt with today, then I challenge you to come to Jesus and let Him take care of your need. If you have never been saved, please come, and let me show you how you can be placed into the Vine and become a child of God.

**Is there a need? If so, Jesus is the supply!
You come if the Lord has called you!**

Place: FCA

Date: February 18, 2024

Time: 10:30 am

After Service: I Could Sing of Your Love Forever