

## “I am the True Vine” John 15:1-8

### INTRODUCTION

*“I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser (gardener – NIV) ... I am the vine, you are the branches.”*

These are among the last words Jesus would speak to His disciples on the night before He was betrayed and crucified. He said them right after the Last Supper and only hours before He would go to the Cross.

**In some ways, they are difficult words spoken on a tough and difficult night.** Three times before the sun would rise, Peter would lie about his relationship with Jesus. By now, Judas had left to betray His Lord for a few lousy pieces of silver. The other disciples were frightened and confused...that is their hearts are troubled (14:1). A short time later Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, and brought to trial and every one of the disciples would scatter, nowhere to be found.

**Now, these were twelve men who had hung around Jesus for three years.** They enjoyed His company, they watched His miracles, and they listened to His teaching. They had been with Jesus on the hills of Galilee and in the streets of Jerusalem. They were the inner circle of His friends. **They were His followers. But on this night, perhaps the most important night in their lives, they held back and distanced themselves from Jesus.** They were afraid, far from the joy and peace, victory, and blessing of being close to the Lord. They were a long way from their call to be fruitful and productive disciples of Jesus.

**Can you relate to them?** Do you feel that your life bears the marks of a follower of Jesus Christ? This morning are you passionate about living for Jesus and telling others about Him? **Or is your spiritual life a little dry?** Do you hope that no one gets too close because, deep down, you feel distant from God? Well, friends, **if spiritual barrenness has cast its shadow across your path – like the disciples that evening and perhaps some of us here this morning – you are not alone.** These words of Jesus were written for you.

As the True Vine, Jesus claimed to be the only true source of life. Without Him, we perish. But with Him, we will bear much fruit.

Only Jesus can give life to new covenant people to bear fruit for God’s glory.

**Proof of being Christ’s disciple means fruit bearing...that is, having evidence in our lives that we belong to Him.**

I. Remember that the \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_  
(John 15:1-2, 6)

A. It is part of God’s divine plan to \_\_\_\_\_  
fruit in our lives.

- Fruitfulness is what God does in us because of our union to Christ.
  
- **God is bending His purpose and will to one purpose: to shape you into the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29).**

**B. God is \_\_\_\_\_ at work producing fruit in our lives.**

Without going into great detail about this horticultural process, let me tell you three essential facts about the pruning **process: It is essential. It is unavoidable. And it hurts!**

Don't miss the warning at the end of verse 2 and in verse 6. **The words of Jesus get more difficult.** Jesus already told us His Father is the Gardener. A good gardener must make choices. He must decide which branches are dead and draw off the nutrients the good vines need.

**The question is: do these branches represent Christian people who lose their salvation OR are they people who profess to be Christians but show by their lives they are not truly connected to Christ?**

**A person who professes to be a believer but has no change in their life, their desires, or their purpose, gives evidence they are not really believers at all.** They have an academic relationship with Christ rather than a saving relationship with Him. They believe the facts but have not surrendered to the One the facts are pointing to. They know about God but do not know God. They are dead branches. **They miss Heaven by 18 inches, the distance between your head and your heart.**

**II. Remember that the \_\_\_\_\_ is the \_\_\_\_\_ vine (John 15:1, 5)**

Jesus is the source of the branch's power and success. Our lives are fruitful, productive, and God-honoring because of Christ alone.

Jesus said **"Abide in Me."** To **"abide"** means **"to remain in union, maintain a living communion, to maintain unbroken fellowship with another."** This is our responsibility in Christ. John uses the word **"abide"** over fifty times in his writings; eleven times in John 15. When I am abiding, I am believing, on and persevering.

**"Abide in Me"** addresses the will. It is a grace-driven choice we make every day. We must make a daily decision to abide in Christ. We decide to expose ourselves to Him by reading His word, responding to His word in prayer, choosing to align my affections, my decisions, and all aspects of life to His standard of holiness, choosing to fellowship of other believers in Christ and maintain that relationship of being yielded to Him.

Yes, we must make choices, and determine to follow Him. We must choose to place ourselves so He can speak to us through His Word. Then we have to count on Him to supply us and empower us to live His life. God desires an intimacy with you that is more real than any other relationship in life. That is the only place you will ever find the power to be all God wants you to be. He does in us what we can never do for ourselves. It is His power, His vitality, His strength, His spiritual sap that enables us to be Christlike.

### III. Remember that \_\_\_\_\_ are just a \_\_\_\_\_ (John 15:5)

MAX LUCADO wrote a provocative **beatitude**: “**Blessed is the man who knows that there is only one God and stops applying for the position.**”

The reason why we must remember that we are just branches is so that we don't lose sight of the one who produces the fruit. Christ is the true vine. We are the branches. **Fruit is produced in us, not by us.** The true vine is the One who produces the fruit. All the branch does is hold on to the vine.

### CONCLUSION

After all has been said and done, the question is ‘**So what?**’ How does this apply to you and me?

- **We must expand our \_\_\_\_\_ of what it means to be a follower of Christ.**

- **We need to be \_\_\_\_\_ about our spiritual health.**

- **Fruit-bearing proves \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ God.**