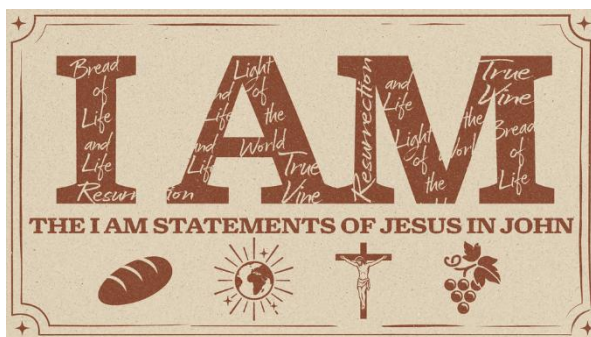




The True Vine

Week 6 – I Am's – 10/18/'26

THE TRUE VINE

I am the True Vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

John 15:1

- Jesus, the True Vine, provides true, genuine nourishment. He provides spiritual sustenance and power.
- So when we feel spiritually dry, weary, and unconnected, Jesus gives us the strength to thrive and the power to be fruitful Christians, for we cannot bear fruit apart from him.

So what does the vine metaphor mean?

- This passage is part of the extended teaching time with his disciples before crucified (Jn 13-17).
- Using a familiar illustration from agriculture. Vineyard and fruit – grapes.
- Some say Jesus was walking in a vineyard with his disciples outside city!
- This is an, “extended” metaphor, (some say it is more of a parable) – to make a main point, tip – to not get too wrapped up in each little detail.

What are the major elements of the metaphor?

1. Jesus is **The Vine**

- He is the **source** of our spiritual strength and power. We rely on him.
- Apart from him we can do nothing (4-5). ..we cannot bear fruit.
- He is also the **pattern** for us. We look to how he loved and abided in the Father, to show us the way.
- “I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” (10)
- His love and dependence on Father is the pattern for our abiding in him.
- **As the source & pattern...we are dependent** on him, we live Christian life in his power/strength not our own. Just as a branch is connected to vine.

2. **The Father** is the Vinedresser

- **Vinedresser** – The job was to tend to the vine—was to clean, and prune.
- Purpose of **cleaning** was to lift the branches off ground—affix them so they could grow/thrive.
- Purpose of **pruning** was to take off the unfruitful branches so that the vine would produce more lasting, vibrant fruit.

3. Believers (Jesus' followers) are **the Branches** (us)

- We are to abide in him and his love, doing his will – and so we will bear fruit, resulting in God's glory and our full joy.

So what does this metaphor mean?

- Abiding is Essential to the Christian life.
- **Point** - this metaphor is teaching the importance of abiding in Jesus in order to bear fruit.
- A key word is, "True," Vine... this sets up an intentional contrast with Israel.

Old Testament Background – Passages on the Vine/Vineyard

We will consider the metaphor,

1. In the Prophets.
2. In the Vineyard Songs of Isaiah.
3. In Psalm 80.

First, The Vineyard metaphor in the Prophets

Ezekiel 15:2–6

² "Son of man [*God talking to Ezekiel*], how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? ³ Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do people take a peg from it to hang any vessel on it? ⁴ Behold, it is given to the fire for fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? ⁵ Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything! ⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord God: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

- Israel is a vine without fruit, only good for burning.

- Pronouncement of judgment on Jerusalem's inhabitants – it is compared to wood of the vine that is dry and not useful for anything but to be given for fuel to the fire.
- Why did this happen? To show them God's name, he is the Lord.
 - They will know that I am the Lord who will "set his face against them" and desolate the land because of their unfaithfulness (7-8).

Jeremiah 2:21 – God talking to Israel

"Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?"

- God planted it pure.
 - They turned it wild, degenerate.
- "God **planted** Israel in the Promised Land (Ex. 15:17) out of **pure seed**.
- Yet Israel has become a **wild vine** that bears only putrid fruit...
- The Septuagint [Greek version of Hebrew OT] of this verse reads, "Yet I planted you a fruitful vine, all true."
 - This probably is the background for Jesus' words in John 15:1, "the true vine": he claims to embody the genuine people of God, unlike the Israelites of Isaiah's day." (ESVSB)
- **So this** vine imagery is used to describe God's people (see 8:13; Isaiah 5; Ezek. 15:1–8; Hos. 10:1).
 - God says that he planted Israel as "a choice vine," yet his people have become "a wild vine."
 - Israel was called to bless the nations with the blessing they themselves had received (Gen. 12:1–3), yet they proved consistently fruitless in this calling.
 - Unfaithfulness and idolatry mean that Israel is worthy only to be destroyed. Thus, Judah is a wild, degenerate vine.
- **Quote**, "In Jesus, however, this tragic history of fruitlessness is wonderfully reversed. Jesus declared himself to be the true Vine, in union with whom fruitless and faltering men and women can once more be fruitful (John 15:1–8). Israel failed to be the "firstfruits" (Jer. 2:3) they were called to be, but Jesus himself has become the firstfruits of all those united to him by faith (1 Cor. 15:20–23). Acknowledging the way we too have "turned degenerate," and looking to Christ and being united to him by faith, we receive the benefits of Christ's work. (GTB)

Jeremiah 12:10-13

¹⁰ Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled down my portion; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. ¹¹ They have made it a desolation; desolate, it mourns to me. The whole land is made desolate, but no man lays it to heart. ¹² Upon all the bare heights in the desert destroyers have come, for the sword of the LORD devours from one end of the land to the other; no flesh has peace. ¹³ They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns; they have tired themselves out but profit nothing. They shall be ashamed of their harvests because of the fierce anger of the LORD.”

- Many kings and leaders of other countries have attacked and destroyed Israel. Evil neighbors of other countries.
- Yet it is the hand of the Lord that did this, “I have forsaken my house” (7) “sword of the Lord devours” (12) “fierce anger” (13). Judgment of God.

Hosea 10:1–2

¹ Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars. ² Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will break down their altars and destroy their pillars.

- Speaking of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- They set up idol worship in Northern kingdom, Israel. Altars in the capitol cities.
- The context - The calf, the idol will be carried to Assyria (6), and Israel will be put to shame.

The Vine Metaphor in the “Vineyard Songs” in Isaiah, two of them.

Vineyard Song 1 - Isaiah 5:1–7

“Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. ² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall

not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!"

- God did everything to provide for these vines.
- But they only produced wild grapes – good for nothing, no fruit.
- So God abandoned the care of the vineyard (5-6). "Make it a waste" Judgment.
- **This Passage:** Symbolizes God's care, love and... Israel's rebellion and rejection of God – and the consequence of exile.

Vineyard Song 2 - Isaiah 27:2–6

- Focus is on promises of God, whereas Isaiah 5 focuses on the consequences of sin.

² In that day, "A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! ³ I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day; ⁴ I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would march against them, I would burn them up together. ⁵ Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me." ⁶ In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit."

- Note God's loving care, his desire for peace with his people.
- This is a promise of better days to come after all the judgment – whole world will be filled with fruit (6).
- How is this fulfilled?
- Points toward Christ and his work on the cross to bless all nations through the gospel... the people of God in the NT are to make disciples of all nations.

➤ So we've looked at metaphor in prophets, Isaiah's vineyard songs, and finally

The Vineyard Metaphor in Psalm 80

Psalm 80:7–18

⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved! ⁸ You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹ You cleared

the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.¹¹ It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.

- This passage is a prayer, a plea for restoration for the people, for salvation.
- Reflects on how God did all this – brought Israel out of Egypt, drove out nations and planted Israel in the land.
 - He cleared ground, filled land, shade, branches to river.
- Set it all up for success... Then asks, why have you done this, walls broken down?

¹² Why then have you [*God*] broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? ¹³ The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. ¹⁴ Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, ¹⁵ the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself. ¹⁶ They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face!

- Left it unprotected so that the vine is eaten by passersby and wild boars!
- This Psalm is pleading that the Lord would look down and have regard for his vine, his people!
- Israel has been planted, is the son of God whom he has made strong.
- And it is a prayer that God would judge those nations that have destroyed Israel (16).

¹⁷ But let your hand be on the 'man of your right hand,' the 'son of man' whom you have made strong for yourself! ¹⁸ Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!"

- There's a desire to remain true to the Lord, calling on his name, asking for life!
- The immediate context refers to Israel and its king.
- But the continuing context is that it refers to the "son of man" made strong for God. And who is the ultimate Son of Man?
- Title Jesus loved to use about himself
- About this Jesus quoted, Ps 110:1, God said, "sit at my right hand (Jesus) until I make your enemies my footstool."
- Heb 1:3 says about Jesus, "after providing purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high."
- Hebrews 10:12, "Christ offered himself as the sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God."

- “The **man at your right hand** is usually a king (110:1; cp. Is 45:1) who received divine appointment and approval.
- In the NT, Christ is seated at the right hand of God, identical with God in authority, power, and holiness (Heb 1:3).” (CSBSB)

Summary Quote by Bruce Ware,

“Such tender care by God for his prized plants makes their sin against grace all the more heinous. God was faithful to redeem his people in the past by transplanting them as a tender shoot from Egypt to the Promised Land (Ps. 80:8–11). Changing metaphors, Asaph assures that the Father will restore vitality to his favored “son” in the future (vv. 14–18). While Israel is the immediate referent, the Son of Man eventually fulfilled all righteousness for God’s people (Matt. 2:15).”

Point: Jesus is the answer to the plea “give us life!!” in Psalm 80.

- He was the sacrifice, defeated sin and death on our behalf that we might have eternal life and peace with God. (Rom 5:1-2)

Some summary questions and answers, now that we have read these OT passages

1. How did Israel fail to be the true vine? What are the consequences of this failure?
 - Turned degenerate, went after other gods, heart became false, became prideful when prosperous.
 - Destroyed by fire, lamentation, other nations overcame them, exile.
2. What do we learn about God from these verses?
 - He is watching and taking account.
 - He sends other nations to judge.
 - He’s just and jealous for his name.
 - He disciplines his people
 - He set them up for success and gave grace and blessings.
3. How has Jesus, the True Vine, succeeded where Israel failed? In other words, how has Jesus fulfilled this Old Testament metaphor?
 - Great promise in Isaiah 27:6 – whole world filled with fruit of blessings.
 - Jesus obeyed, loved God fully – Israel did not.
 - Jesus is the vine that remained true to God – Israel did not remain true to the Lord.

Point: Jesus is saying he is the true vine, the Israel of the OT, he succeeded where Israel failed and has opened up a way of “peace” with God the gardener, for all people who trust him!

So how can we apply these truths this morning to our lives?

What does Jesus want us to do? 3 main things, but all connected

1. **Abide** in Jesus (4)

- Main command of passage.
- This word used 11x in John 15. Don't use is much, “humble abode”
- It is translated “remain” “continue” “dwell” “remain in union” “ABIDE”
- BDAG, “an inward enduring personal communion”
- **Union** – connected to vine AND **Communion** – an enduring, life-giving relationship.
- Live in him and let him live in you, make your home in his presence.

2. Bear Much Fruit (8)

- Some see a progression... believers bear “fruit” (2a)
 - The God prunes them and they bear – “more fruit” (2b)
 - As they abide in him/he in them, mature, “much fruit” (5).
- What is the fruit? ... Actually a lot of different answers proposed.
 - Witness to the world (16, 27); disciples (disciples make other disciples); new converts, love, good character (like fruit of the Spirit).
- Might be broader than those specific answers – contextually fruit encompasses product of effective prayer in Jesus name (10), obedience to his commands (10), experiencing Jesus' joy (11), love for one another (v12) and witness to the world (16).
- **D.A. Carson** – “the fruit is nothing less than the outcome of persevering dependence on the vine, driven by faith, embracing all of the believer's life and the product of his witness.”
- **ESV SB – (Köstenberger)** “the fruit is an image for good results coming from the life of a believer, probably in terms of bringing benefit to the lives of others and advancing the work of God in the world.”

3. Abide in **Christ's Love** (9) –

...which is keeping Jesus commandments (10)

- Loving Jesus, living in a love relationship with him is linked with doing his will, following his desires for your life, keeping his commands.
- Look to Jesus' example: Christ's love and obedience to the Father is our pattern/example.
- **How did Jesus abide in the Father's love and obey the Father? (look at cross)**
 - Obeyed fully "obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Php 2:8).
 - Obeyed joyfully "for the joy set before him endured the cross" (Heb 12:2).
 - Delighted to please the Father, loved to please him!

Back at text, What promises can we cling to in this passage?

- We have been made clean (3) - We have been forgiven, have his word!
- Christ lives in us (5) - We have him living in us, Spirit, relationship, secure!
- We bear fruit (4-5) - He uses us to bless others! He makes us more like Christ!
- Answered prayer (7) - He lets us see how he is working!
- The Father is glorified (8) - We please the Father, he is honored, we delight God's heart!
- Christ's love lives in us (9-10) - God shows his love in and through us to others
- Fullness of joy (11) - He gives us deep contentment, full Joy in relationship with him!

BIG IDEA

- Jesus fulfilled the OT metaphor of the vine. Jesus provides true, genuine nourishment—he provides spiritual sustenance and power.
- When we feel spiritually dry, weary, and unconnected, Jesus gives us the strength to thrive and the power to be fruitful Christians – for we cannot bear fruit apart from him.

Questions for Application

1. How specifically can you abide in Jesus more deeply and fully? List ideas and pick one of them to work on this week.
2. Look again at the list of promises in this passage in John 15:1-11. Do any of the promises stand out to you as particularly encouraging or meaningful? Why?

Series Review

Summary of the I Am Statements of Jesus in John

Statement of the meaning of the I Am, and a statement of how each I Am changes us.

1. I Am The Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48)

Jesus, as the Bread of Life, is God's provision of eternal life. Everyone who believes in him has eternal food, life forever. He is also the Word of God.

So when we need spiritual sustenance, he gives us the food of God, His Word, to provide spiritual direction and life. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled!

2. I Am The Light of the World (John 8:12)

Jesus, the Light of the World, gives us the light of life. We no longer have to live in darkness. He provides truth for us to walk in today and gives us hope for a bright future.

So when we feel in the dark, confused about life, or discouraged because of sin, Jesus provides truth, understanding, and his firm promises to lean on.

3. I Am The Door (John 10:7)

Jesus, the Door for the sheep, is our salvation, security, sustenance, and satisfaction. He provides the only way to eternal life.

So when we are in danger, he gives us protection and peace. He sustains us spiritually through his Word and provides for our needs. And when our hearts wander, he satisfies our deepest longings now and promises to satisfy us with future abundance in heaven.

4. I Am The Good Shepherd (John 10:11-14)

Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, knows us, protects us, leads us, and saves us by his sacrifice.

So when we stray, he knows us and what we need to get back on the path. When we face danger and spiritual attack, he protects us. When we get scared and anxious, he provides for us. And when we need direction, he guides us.

5. I Am The Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)

Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life, gives life to the dead and provides true spiritual life.

So when we feel stuck, defeated, and spiritually stagnant, Jesus provides resurrection power to overcome death and the Devil. And He provides resurrection power to give life in abundance now and hope for the future.

6. I Am The Way, Truth, and Life (John 14:6)

Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life, is the only road to true, eternal life. As the Way, he is the path to heaven and to a relationship with God. As the Truth, he embodies what is true. As the life, Jesus is eternal life.

So when we feel lost or confused, in need of direction and assurance, Jesus shows us the ways of God and the path to eternal life. He embodies truth, so we can trust his Word when we need direction. Jesus is eternal life. He provides an abundant relationship with God today and an eternal future in heaven.

7. I Am The True Vine (John 15:1)

Jesus, the True Vine, provides true, genuine nourishment. He provides spiritual sustenance and power.

So when we feel spiritually dry, weary, and unconnected, Jesus gives us the strength to thrive and the power to be fruitful Christians, for we cannot bear fruit apart from him.