

Midweek: I Am, pt. 7  
I Am the True Vine, John 15:1-11  
1.8.19

### **Introduction:**

- We have been going through the I Am Statements:
  - I Am:
    - the bread or sustenance of the community (6:35, 48, 51),
    - the light of the world (8:12; 9:5), the one who is from above and not from the world (8:23),
    - the gate or entrance way to the sheepfold (10:7, 9),
    - the good shepherd (10:11, 14),
    - the resurrection and life (11:25).
    - The way, the truth and the life (14:6)
- High School – challenged to memorize this passage
- Children’s Sermon
  - An Apple-Orange Tree!

### **Outline:**

- Unpack:
  - Jesus is the Vine
  - We are the Branches

### **Jesus is the Vine that We Can’t Be**

John 15:1  
I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

- Apart from the analogy – why would Jesus refer to himself as the vine?
  - COMMUNICATING THAT HE IS WHAT ISREAL COULDN’T BE

Psalm 80:8-19

You dug up a vine from Egypt;  
you drove out the nations and planted it.

<sup>9</sup> You cleared a place for it;  
it took root and filled the land.

<sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered by its shade,  
and the mighty cedars with its branches.

<sup>11</sup> It sent out sprouts toward the Sea  
and shoots toward the River.

<sup>12</sup> Why have you broken down its walls  
so that all who pass by pick its fruit?

<sup>13</sup> Boars from the forest tear at it  
and creatures of the field feed on it.

<sup>14</sup> Return, God of Armies.

Look down from heaven and see;  
take care of this vine,

<sup>15</sup> the root your right hand planted,

the son that you made strong for yourself.

<sup>16</sup> It was cut down and burned;

they perish at the rebuke of your countenance.

<sup>17</sup> Let your hand be with the man at your right hand,  
with the son of man

you have made strong for yourself.

<sup>18</sup> Then we will not turn away from you;

revive us, and we will call on your name.

<sup>19</sup> Restore us, Lord, God of Armies;

make your face shine on us, so that we may be saved.

- When left on their own, trying to be all that God created them to be – UNABLE
  - Facing national disaster as God’s people
  - Their failure indicated that the trunk that was Israel, had been cut down
- Every religion tries to be their own Vine
  - These religions say:
    - You control your life
    - You sustain your life
    - The better you are, the better you act, the stronger you will become
      - But Israel shows: THAT CAN’T BE
        - They will always fail to be the TRUE LIFE SUSTAINING AND LIFE GIVING VINE
- BUT
  - Jesus says: I Am that True Vine
  - I am the restoration that you long for!
  - I am the one who will be what you couldn’t, and I will be the one who reigns and will unify in the brokenness
- THE FACT THAT JESUS IS THE VINE MENAS THAT HE IS THE SALVATION THAT ISRAEL COULDN’T BE
  - HE IS THE SALVATION THAT WE CAN’T ACHIEVE ON OUR OWN
- What then of us?

### **We are the Branches that Produce Fruit**

John 15:2-11

<sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

## **What Does it Mean to Produce Fruit?**

Matthew 15:10-20

<sup>10</sup> Summoning the crowd, he told them, “Listen and understand: <sup>11</sup> It’s not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth—this defiles a person.”

<sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came up and told him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?”

<sup>13</sup> He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father didn’t plant will be uprooted. <sup>14</sup> Leave them alone! They are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

<sup>15</sup> Then Peter said, “Explain this parable to us.”

<sup>16</sup> “Do you still lack understanding?” he asked. <sup>17</sup> “Don’t you realize that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? <sup>18</sup> But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a person. <sup>19</sup> For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, slander. <sup>20</sup> These are the things that defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile a person.”

- The fruit of a person is the overflow of a person’s heart:
  - We reap what we sow: there’s no such thing as an apple/orange tree!
- We looked at this passage in REFUGE this week and then turned to Matthew 23 –
  - DO I ACT LIKE A PHARISEE?
    - Checking the fruit of our hearts!
- What does Paul say:

Galatians 5:22-25

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- The overflow of a heart in the Spirit are these things!
  - NOT A CHECKLIST – Sow the Spirit, reap the fruit of the Spirit
    - Otherwise, we create a morality and try to be the vine, rather than the branches

## **What Happens if Your Life Has No Fruit?**

John 15:2a, 6

<sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes...<sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

- Yikes: REMOVAL & WITHERING & BURNING
- Neighbors had a dead tree sitting in their front yard
  - Why? That’s what weird people do
    - Keep around dead trees
- But when the outpouring of our heart is fruitless (SPIRITLESS) – we are removed
- SO WAIT – DOES THIS MEAN IF I AM SAVED, I CAN LOSE MY SALVATION?

- Context is huge here:
  - Ask the question:
    - What else has been said
- I Am the Bread of Life:

John 6:37-40

Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> This is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me but should raise them up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

- I am the Good Shepherd

John 10:26-28

But you don't believe because you are not of my sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.

- These verses offer assurance – No One can snatch us from the Father's hand!
  - We are saved, preserved and we remain until the end
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God for His children
- What does this mean then?
  - There are those who "know Jesus" and there are those who KNOW Jesus
    - And the difference lies in the fruit they bear:

John 6:66-71

From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you?"

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

<sup>70</sup> Jesus replied to them, "Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." <sup>71</sup> He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him.

- So some were looking, and lightly following, but when pressed – THEY NEVER WERE COMMITTED
- And then what about Judas??
  - Follower but not a TRUE FOLLOWER

John 8:37

I know you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill me because my word has no place among you.

- Jesus says the same thing to the Israelites: You think you're in because of birth
  - BUT IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT FAITH
- One of the most haunting passages around this:

Matthew 7:21-23

A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> So you'll recognize them by their fruit. <sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!'

- Matthew's account makes it clear:
  - Some of you may know about Jesus, but DOES HE KNOW YOU?
- Ask that to you this evening:
  - Do you know about Jesus, but your life isn't one that produces this kind of fruit?
  - Do people know you are a believer because of the overflow of what's in your heart?
  - DOES JESUS KNOW YOU?
    - Check your fruit!
- And then let's press a little further:

### **How Can We Become Branches that Produce Fruit? (THE TRINITY AT WORK!)**

- **We Must Be Pruned and Cleaned by God**

John 15:2b-3

...and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

- The most odd verse in this passage is right here in verse 3
  - Why say that? Why are they ALREADY PRUNED AND CLEANED?
- Similar to Jesus washing his disciples feet: You are all clean, but one of you isn't.
  - Because Jesus is making it clear:
    - Their salvation is not dependent upon their actions of remaining in Christ
      - It is dependent upon the work of God in their life!
- Once DEAD and now ALIVE!
  - They are already pruned and cleaned! THIS IS SALVATION.
  - That the Lord would take us as these dead branches, deserving removal, withering and destruction
  - And GIVE US LIFE -HOW?
- Because the WORD has been spoken and revealed to them!
  - WORD – logos
    - Same as in John 1
      - THE FULL REVELATION OF JESUS HAS SAVED THEM AND ALREADY MADE THEM CLEAN

John 5:24

<sup>24</sup> "Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

- The Lord saves – And those who are saved RESPOND AND BELIEVE IN THE WORD
  - Lay out Jesus
- How do you know if you have already been pruned and cleaned?
  - GOD IS CALLING YOU RIGHT NOW TO HIMSELF – Do you want to keep trying to produce fruit on a dead branch, or will you believe in to pass from death into life:
    - FROM A BRANCH DESERVING FIRE, TO ONE CARED FOR AND PRUNED?
- God saves you through His Word – have you responded and been made clean?
- IMPORTANT:
  - This is a prerequisite to abiding:
- **We Must Learn to Abide in Christ**
  - To abide in Christ is to respond to the salvation that you have received and learn to delight, enjoy and love the life sustaining vine of your salvation!
    - You must be cleaned and pruned by God through Jesus to flourish as one who benefits from the nutrients of the vine.

John 15:4-5, 7-11

<sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me... <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

- Abiding in Christ is our call to learn how to flourish in the vine (JOY- VERSE 11)
  - Think of the analogy – some of you may be producing a little fruit and some of you may be producing a lot of fruit
    - DEPENDS ON HOW WELL YOU’RE CONNECTED TO JESUS!
- Personal relationship
  - gathering nutrients, enjoying and remaining in the love
    - You need spiritual discipline to abide in Christ
- Communal relationships
  - the need for cross pollination – HELPS PRODUCE MORE FRUIT!
    - You need the church to abide in Christ
- Pruning Relationship
  - As you grow, the father continues to prune SO THAT WE PRODUCE EVEN MORE FRUIT
    - Zinnias – cut the first flower, to gain a large harvest
  - As you produce fruit – DON’T BE SURPRISED IF SOMETHING GETS CUT OUT

- Good chance: will be used to produce even more fruit
- You need pruning to abide in Christ

Reflection:

- Are you benefiting from gaining nutrients from the vine?
- Are you cross-pollinating?
- Are you welcoming God's pruning?
- **We Must Ask for Help of the Spirit**
- Sandwiched:

John 14:15-18

<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commands. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.

- OUR PASSAGE

John 16:7, 13

Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you... <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

- You can't abide in Christ without the help of God Himself!
  - And God has said: I WILL HELP YOU.
- The Spirit opens our eyes to the Word of God
- The Spirit speaks on my behalf when I don't know what to pray
- The Spirit guides my steps and answers my prayer I try to get connected with other believers
- The Spirit calms my Spirit while I am being pruned and reminds me of the goodness of God

Reflection:

- Maybe you know you have been cleaned and pruned – you know you have been saved
  - BUT YOU ARE STRUGGLING TO REMAIN AND ABIDE IN THE VINE
- Have you asked the Spirit of God to help you?
  - To show you His truth?
  - To show you His way?

Conclusion:

- “I am the true vine and you are the branches”
  - Are you producing fruit? No?
    - Does Jesus Know You?
      - Be Cleaned and Pruned by him – ALL who hear and believe will be saved

- Are you producing fruit? Yes?
  - Here's how you can produce even more:
    - Learn to abide in the vine – to remain in Jesus
      - Personal
      - Communal
      - Pruning
  - All the while - ASK FOR HIS HELP
- We have been created to overflow the good things of God
  - To produce His Fruit
    - There's no such thing as an apple/orange tree
      - Be Who God Has Called You TO BE!
        - A pruned and cleaned branch, ready to produce more and more fruit for His name's sake.