

Lenten Bible Study

April 19, 2020

I Am the True Vine

Based on "I Am" Life Guide Bible Study

Jesus spoke the words of John 15 as he and his closest followers made their way from a banquet room in Jerusalem to an olive grove on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Maybe they were walking through a grape vineyard on their way or maybe Jesus pointed to carvings of grapevines on the walls of the temple as they walked through. The imagery of the vine and the branches was a very familiar part of the cultural setting in Jesus' world.

Read: John 15:1-8

The Vine and the Branches

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

- How are you at getting plants to grow?
- If you picture your life as a plant, what condition are you in: pretty healthy, a little wilted or dry and brittle?
- In the natural world what does the main vine do for the smaller branches?
- What benefits do the branches provide to the vine?
- Jesus uses the vine and branches as an allegory of the relationship he has with his followers. If he is the vine and we are the branches, what does Jesus provide in the relationship? What do we as branches, provide for Jesus the vine?
- God the Father is the overseer and caretaker of the relationship between Jesus and his followers. How does he tend to the branches that bear fruit and to the branches that do not (v. 2)?
- What is the “fruit” that the Father desires to see in our lives? Take a few minutes to think about that question: what fruit do you think the Father desires from you? (Remember we are all different and have different gifts.)

- Jesus calls us to “remain or abide” in him. What does that mean? What are the results of remaining in him? What are the consequences of not remaining in him?
- How might the Father “prune” our lives to prompt us to produce more fruit?
- Can you relate this time of pandemic and social distancing as a time to allow Jesus to do a work in us?
- Would you consider this a time of pruning or a time of blessing?
- Does this portion of scripture help you with the reality of the necessity of pruning?
- Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that God has a wonderful plan for our lives. A plan for good and not evil. A plan to prosper us and not to harm us and to give us a future and a hope. If Jesus is doing some pruning in your life know that it is so you can bear much fruit to his glory.