

The True Vine (Part I)

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John 15:1-11

This is an URGENT MESSAGE of DISCIPLESHIP. The MESSAGE is this... Your IDENTITY in CHRIST is that of a BRANCH. And by being in fellowship with the VINE, you produce spiritual fruit in your life.

John 15:1 – [1] *“I am the true vine,*

It begins with the last of Jesus’s 7 “I AM” Statements. What JESUS is teaching about HIS DIVINE IDENTITY.

- JESUS says I am the “true vine” or the “authentic vine.”

In the OLD COVENANT, the VINE or VINEYARD is ISRAEL.

- Psalm 80:8 – [8] *You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.*
- Psalm 80:14 – [14] *Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine.*
- Jeremiah 2:21 – [21] *Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?*
- Ezekiel 15:6 – [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. [7] And I will set my face against them. Though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them, and you will know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them. [8] And I will make the land desolate, because they have acted faithlessly, declares the LORD GOD.”*
- OT ISRAEL failed to produce the fruit... HOLINESS. DEDICATION to GOD. RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JESUS SAYS – I CONSTITUTE the TRUE ISRAEL. I am the embodiment of Israel. I will keep the PROMISES. I will CONSTITUTE the PEOPLE of GOD.

In the Old COVENANT... to be saved... you have to JOIN ISRAEL.

- In the New Covenant – you don’t have to join Israel. You must be united to Christ.
- William Temple – “The Tree that was planted on Calvary has shoots going out into all the world. By perfectly fulfilling the mission of Israel He released it from national limitations, so that from the Cross and Resurrection onwards the Chosen People is the community of those whose hearts have received the divine Word spoken in Him; from that time on the Chosen People is the One Man in Christ Jesus.”
- You are UNITED to CHRIST. This is called SPIRITUAL UNION.
- You are in CHRIST by faith... united to HIM.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 – [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.*
 - Galatians 1:22 – [22] *And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.*
 - 2 Cor 12:2 – [2] *I know a man in Christ...*

It was PROPHESED that the VINE would bear FRUIT.

- Isaiah 27:6 – [6] *In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit.*
- Zechariah 8:12 – [12] *For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit...*
- The VINE is BEARING FRUIT throughout the world. This is what is happening since Pentecost.

IMPLICATIONS of the TRUE VINE

- 1) *Being united to Christ in Faith is what places you in the Vine.* It is by faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST alone that you enter the VINE.
- 2) *Being a Branch is your Identity.* It's an identity of Dependence. You are dependent on Christ and His Work.
- 3) *It's an Organic Relationship.* It's a relationship of oneness. We know that this is worked out through the Holy Spirit. We are truly united to Christ as the branches are united to the vine.
- 4) *It's a Fruitful Relationship.* Christ, in you, is the hope of glory. Christ produces Fruit in and through the branches.
- 5) *It's a Joyful Relationship.* Grapes and Wine are symbolic of joy and celebration. What is produced is great JOY.

1) The Purification of the Vine

John 15:1 – [1] *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.*

The Father is the VINEDRESSER.

- See Isaiah 5:1-7.
 - The Vinedresser is the one who tends to the VINE.
 - In the OT His reward was wild GRAPES... or IDOLATROUS WORSHIP
 - The PICTURE is that GOD the FATHER tends to the VINE as a FARMER; As the GARDENER; as the VINEDRESSER.

In the VINE: There are two types of BRANCHES mentioned. There are FALSE BRANCHES and TRUE BRANCHES. They represent those who have close personal contact with JESUS. They represent FALSE and TRUE DISCIPLES. The FALSE DISCIPLES HE REMOVES. The TRUE DISCIPLES HE PRUNES.

John 15:2 – [2] *Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,*

- This is in REFERENCE to the "Professing Christians."
- What GOD does (*airo*) He cuts them off; He sovereignly removes them.
 - Mark 4:15 – Satan takes away the Word that is sewn on the hard path.
 - Paul uses the same word in Colossians 2:14 in a positive way [14] *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside (airo) nailing it to the cross.*
- JESUS said the FATHER the VINEDRESSER removes the PRETENDERS.

The Arminian claims that this is a LOSS of SALVATION. That you have branches... in Christ... and then they are REMOVED.

1) Jesus's Other Statements.

- John 6:39 – [39] *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*
- John 10:27 – [27] *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch*

them out of my hand. [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

- 2) The rest of the NT.
 - Romans 8:29 – [29] *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
 - Philippians 1:6 – [6] *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
- 3) The Immediate Context.
 - John 15:8 – [8] *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*
- 4) The Broader Context.
 - Judas has left the 12 and is on his way to destruction. Jesus is most likely addressing the reality of JUDAS. God has sovereignly removed him from visible fellowship.
- 5) The Analogy Itself.
 - True branches that are truly connected to the Vine inevitably bear fruit.

These are the PRETENDERS. What GOD does is through circumstances and events... He removes the PRETENDERS.

- John 6:66 – [66] *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*
- 1 John 2:19 – [19] *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

2) The Pruning of the Vine

The Father's Desire is that the Branches Produce Fruit

John 15:2b – [2b] *and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

- God's desire is that every BRANCH bears fruit.
- Ephesians 2:10 – [10] *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

What is FRUIT?

- A) Good Works Which Evidence Faith.
 - It must be fueled by Faith.
 - Matthew 13:8 – [8] *Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*
- B) Spiritual Virtues.
 - Galatians 5:22 – [22] *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
- C) Acceptable Worship.
 - Hebrews 13:15 – [15] *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*
- D) People Won to Christ.
 - Colossians 1:6 – [6] *the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing.*

- 2 Corinthians 9:10 – [10] *he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.*
- E) Peace-Making.
 - James 3:18 – [18] *And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

What the Father does so we bear more FRUIT?

- *Kath-airo* – Means to make CLEAN.
- Pruning a vine hurts it... it makes it smaller. It makes it shorter. It cleans it. But in the LONG RUN, it helps it to BEAR MORE FRUIT.
- Hebrews 12:7-11.
- Charles Spurgeon – “Much of our Lord’s purging work is done through afflictions of one kind or another. It is not the evil but the good who have the promise of tribulation in this life (John 16:33). But then, the end makes more than full amends for the painful nature of the means. If we may produce more fruit for our Lord, then we will not mind the pruning and the loss of foliage.”

3) The Grafting of the Vine

John 14:3 – [3] *Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.*

- Clean is synonymous with being SAVED.
- John 13:10 *“And you are clean, but not every one of you.”*
- In this context it means you are grafted into the vine.
- Paul describes this process in Romans 11:17 – [17] *... although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,*

The way you are GRAFTED into the VINE... made CLEAN is through the WORD of GOD’s WORK in your LIFE.

- Old Covenant – Deuteronomy 30:14 – [14] *But the word is very near to you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.*
- Jeremiah 31:33 – [33] *“I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

The POWER of the WORD.

- 1 Peter 1:23 – [23] *since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.*

The WORD CLEANSSES the SOUL.

- God’s WORD makes you CLEAN. Applying the Blood and righteousness of Christ to your heart.
- Ephesians 5:26 – [26] *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.*