



I AM The True Vine | A Fruitful Life

John 15:1-5 | Abel Mendez | November 30, 2025

I AM the True Vine : The Fruitful Life

John 15:1-5

Intro : Christmas is Officially Here! (BEFORE & AFTER IMAGE)

DID YOU KNOW?

- In the U.S. alone, there are ≈ 350 million Christmas trees growing on tree farms right now
- Growing a typical Christmas tree (about 6–7 feet tall) usually takes around 7 years
- For every real tree harvested, growers typically plant 1 to 3 seedlings, and they are renewable, recyclable, and biodegradable

Childhood Memory of REAL Christmas Tree - Cut at local tree farm. No matter how much we watered, by Christmas Day it was a Mess, Dry, Needles Everywhere, a Fire Hazard!

WHY? It was no longer connected to the earth! - A real life example of today's text

AFTER SERVICE IMAGE : Poinsettia Fundraiser Piazza

BUT, If you want something potted and living, bless Surge 46 Camp Fundraiser!

Today we conclude the FINAL I AM statement in our 14-Week Series

Main Point : When a plant or branch is disconnected it dies... BUT if it is planted back into the earth, or grafted back into the vine, it brings forth life and fruit!

Jesus is Teaching how God would Relate to his Disciples and how the Disciples would relate to Him (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

(IMAGE) Through Connection - Made ONE with Him through Faith

1. Christ the Vine Wounded in order to receive us in.
2. Christ the Vine The Source of Life
3. Christ at work in our relationships in the church, community and world

(IMAGE) Through Cultivation -

- God at work in everything—good, bad, painful, joyful; in wins and losses, promotions and layoffs, embrace and betrayal, life and death.
- God uses all things to form us—cutting, pruning, removing what's dead or damaged, and even grafting new growth.
- God reveals and refines, bringing hidden things to light to shape us into the image of Christ.

(IMAGE) Through Character -

- The Spirit empowers and comforts—giving strength to witness and peace in hardship.
 - The Spirit produces fruit—love, joy, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
 - The Spirit works through God's people to bring His goodness and blessing into the culture and the world.
1. As we are in the thick of holiday gatherings, visiting families, hosting families. Relational tensions can intensify! Displaying the Character of Christ has Great Benefit!



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1. Through Connection

To be connected to Jesus, by Faith, made ONE with Him, connected relationally.

15:1 "I am the true vine..."

15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches."

(IMAGE OPTIONAL : THE TIMELINE HELPS GIVE CONTEXT)

QUOTE : *"The branch is indispensable to the vine to bring forth fruit; the vine is indispensable to the branch to give it life and fruitfulness. Such a wonderful intimacy between Christ and the Believer" - Andrew Murray*

To Say I AM - Jesus Final Claim to be the Great "I AM" Hebrew Mind = God

- I AM (Ego Emi) Greek phrase for the Hebrew Phrase Jesus' final statement of Divinity. (Ex 3:14)
- As we saw last week, Jesus' most controversial statement to be is The Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn 14:6)

In a World of Subjective / Objective Truth : Jesus Speaks Objectively & Exclusively

1. Subjective Truths (Rocky Road) and Objective Truth (Gravity)
2. Jesus Objectively Claims to be the VISIBLE, TANGIBLE, WAY to CONNECT to the Invisible God!

VERSE : "Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation..." (Colossians 1:15 NLT)

Why The Vine?

(Historical, Biblical & Practical Reasons)

1. HISTORICALLY the Vine was a Symbol of Israel

- One of the first Samples of the Promise Land was a gigantic "cluster of grapes". (Num 13:23)

IMAGE - Bar Kokhba Coin (132-135 AD) - "For Freedom of Jerusalem"

QUOTE : "The temple had doors also at the entrance... adorned with embroidered veils, with their flowers of purple, and pillars interwoven... under the crown-work, was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and fine workmanship of which was a surprising sight to the spectators..." (Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 15.395)

IMAGE : Artist Rendition of Herod's Temple to Scale with Vine Placement



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2. BIBLICALLY The Vine was a Picture of Israel (2/8)

- Psalm 80:8 “You transplanted a vine from Egypt, you drove out the nations and planted it.
- Isaiah 5:2 “Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.”
- If you read the OT you will read of the history of God’s people....

3. ULTIMATELY The Vine was POINTING TO JESUS... HE IS TRUTH!

Jesus in saying TRUE Vine implies other vines, opposing or false vines.

- Jesus is Speaking to DISCIPLES who would personally endure rejection from religious elites.
- John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God.

Jesus using the VINE is affirming, being CONNECTED to God is THROUGH ME, not Judaism, nor Religion, nor Tradition or Dogma... BEING CONNECTED IS THROUGH ME... I AM THE TRUE VINE!

The Application : We relate to God through Jesus.

- Everyone On Earth Is Invited into Relationship with God through Jesus!
- John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Jesus the VINE was WOUNDED So WE COULD BE GRAFTED INTO HIM!

Image : Process of Grafting (Which brings us to point 2 how we relate to God, through Cultivation)

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- In order to graft a branch into a vine, the vine has to be wounded.
- When we find ourselves wounded in life, we should look to the ONE WOUNDED for us!



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2. Through Cultivation

The Sovereign God at Work Cultivating our Lives with Intention & Care

15:1 ... my Father is the gardener.

The Owner, Keeper, One who Takes Pleasure in and who cultivates with care for the purpose of Fruit

Main Point : God is Committed to Making His Vine Fruitful.... HOW He does this.

v15:2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. (Grimace Emoji - Ouch)

IMAGE : The Anatomy of a Vine

- Renewal Spurs : a *small stub from previous years* growers keeps so the vine can *renew itself* the following Season.
- Canes : branches connected to spurs are where fruit buds, competitive, dead, diseased or damaged canes are removed, good are cut down to endure greater fruit production.
- Buds : Are where potential fruit stems from.
- *Ultimately this image speaks of the Father's Loving and long-term commitment to making the life of Christ in his Believers Fruitful*

How the Father Does this:

1. To Cut (airō)

- Take Away, Cause to Cease, To Carry, To Raise Up, Elevate, Lift Up, Draw Forth, Take Upon One's Self, To be Raised to Bear.
- This word communicates CULTIVATION WITH CARE, God taking that which is unfruitful, perhaps because it is hidden under the shadow of other branches, doing what is necessary in order to elevate, find nourishment
- Cutting in this regard includes breaking off that which is dead, diseased or damaged.
- Cutting also includes raising up, bringing things into light for the purpose of fruit.

2. To Prune (kathairō)

- To cleanse, pruning, get cut back. It often was used in the original context as a word to illustrate the cutting way of shame, or guilt.
- Pruning in order to remove competing branches
- Pruning in order to level a branches to have similar proximity to the nourishment of the vine.
- Pruning so each branch can fully participate in fruitfulness.
- The Disciple hearing this would themselves endure physical trial.
- The VERY NEXT DAY these Disciples would Be CRUSHED by the Crucifixion!



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**I do not believe Jesus was giving this giving this Metaphor to produce FEAR in his disciples about being as fruitful as they could be! No I believe he was Preparing them for the biggest disappoint of their lives, that very night, and the very next day!*

LIFE AS A FOLLOWER IS FULL OF CUTTING AND PRUNING.

- We all deal with realities of death, disease, disappointment, losses.
- Brokenness over our mistakes
- Or we endure the consequences of OTHERS who have acted against unknowingly and KNOWINGLY!
- Even as Disciples we will inevitably endure disappointments.

BUT GOD (SOVEREIGN) is in the Business of Fruit....

QUOTE : "Like a surgeon, friends cut you in order to heal you." - Timothy Keller

- We like RENEWAL SPURS in the Vine, God is committed to bring forth HIS LIFE & HIS FRUIT!

ALL GOD ALLOWS HE USES... EVERYTHING WE ENDURE, CHRIST HIMSELF HAS ENDURED... ABIDE, REMAIN....

QUOTE: "When a new graft is placed in a vine and it abides there ... then there is the second process, in which the sap of the vine enters the new structure, and uses it as a passage ... Here is the vital union." - Andrew Murray

- *Perhaps this holiday weekend has found you feeling especially lonely.*
- *Perhaps this holiday season is bringing back painful memories of things you have lost*
- *Things cut, things pruned... I sincerely pray you find encouragement in the LORD...*
- *HE HAS MORE FRUIT in MIND!*

NO MATTER WHAT YOU FACE, JESUS CAN RELATE, FURTHERMORE HE CAN EMPOWER YOU NOT ONLY TO ENDURE BUT TO BEAR FRUIT!



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3. Through Character

We relate to God through the Holy Spirit! Who Empowers, Comforts, and Produces the Character of Christ in us in order to Bless the World!

v15:3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

You are Clean (katharos)

- To be Pure, part of the vine, Clean in levitical sense. To the Disciples it meant they were set apart for a purpose, called to service as the levitical priest were in the OT. Jesus is inviting them into something new

VERSE : 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light!

To Bear Fruit - Means to ABOUND in Christ Character - To Share HIS GOOD NEWS to the World!

v15:4 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.

Remain (menō)

- To abide, tarry, not depart, to sojourn, to continue, to be present, to be held, kept continually, to endure and to wait.
- NOTE : Word can mean - Stay Put - AND GO!!! Every life in the vine is going to look different! (Think of 2 Great Legends - The Apostle Paul - Pastor Orville Stanton)
- 2 Corinthians 10:12 (those) measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit is to Produce the Character of Christ in and Through Us

What the Fruitful Like Looks Like

- A Life of PEACE & STRENGTH (In Trials, Difficulties and Hardship)
- A Life of POWER & WITNESS (Supernatural Renewal and Energy)
- A Life of GOOD & BLESSING (Blessing to the Culture and World!)



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1. A Life of Peace & Strength

John 15:26-27 "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father - the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father - he will testify about me. And you must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Advocate (paraklētos)

- One summoned and called to one's side. To one's aid, defense, assistance, advocate. Who pleads one's cause, who is a helper, gives divine strength to undergo trials, persecutions and difficulties.
- Mentioned 4x : John: 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, and 16:7.
- Translated NIV as Advocate, also translated: Comforter (KJV, ASV), Helper (ESV, NASB) and Counselor (NLT)

Leukemia Story : Daily communion bringing peace comfort and strength!

2. A Life of Power & Witness

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Notice : This is not a Command, rather this is a promise.

- When Pentecost (Shavu'ot - Feast of Weeks) Came 50 Days Later
- Every nation, tribe and tongue was present to hear the Gospel!
- This came not by Efforts, Schooling, Learning - But by the Holy Spirit! God's SPIRIT AT WORK in us to make us HIS WITNESS!

3. A Life of Goodness and Blessing to Others

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

Fruit of the Spirit is NOT a promise of avoiding hardships, BUT TO BE FILLED THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST WHEN WE DO! (i.e. Stepping on that ONE LEGO that did not get gathered with the rest!)

IMAGE : Daughter Sent of Children at Orphanage being Blessed.

VIDEO / IMAGE : El Camino HS Wellness Center (Brenda/Steve Noel UNITE)

Its about getting out of the Locker Room and into the Field!!! Knowing God and Making Him Known through Connection, Cultivation and Character!



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Conclusion : We were Made for A Fruitful Life!

Connected By Faith, Cultivated Through Life, Abounding in Character through the Holy Spirit at Work in and Through His Church!

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.

The Fruitful Life is By GRACE THROUGH FAITH!

- He is the Vine Wounded
- We are the Branches Grafted in
- The Father is the Gardner Cultivating our Lives
- The Spirit produces Fruit for help, strength, and producing the Character of Christ

APART FROM JESUS WE CAN DO NOTHING!

- Raised in a church (Christian Crib and All)
- Seed took earth in Jr High, but I still struggled with identity and compromise
- Harvest Crusade Moment - “I can’t do it”
- Still Small Voice - I know you can’t
- Surrender to calling and ministry

Jesus is Inviting us into Him, to Find Life through His Wounds and to Be made Fruitful for His Honor and for His Glory!