

# Abide, Remain in Me

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## John 15:1-11

Let us review the seven I AMs:

1. I Am the Bread of Life (6)
2. I Am the Light of the World (8)
3. I Am the Door of the Sheep (10)
4. I Am the Good Shepherd (10)
5. I Am the Resurrection & Life (11)
6. I Am the Way, Truth & Life (11)
7. I Am the True Vine (15)

-Jesus is the light. He is not any light, but the LIGHT that gives life.

-Jesus is the GOOD Shepherd. He is not any shepherd, like a hired one, but Jesus is a real, good, genuine Shepherd, THE SHEPHERD.

-Jesus is the VINE.

Jesus gave examples from the daily life of the people of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. His audience could definitely identify with these examples.

**The light:** they needed it every day. They used to fill their lamps with oil and put them on a stand.

**The Shepherd:** they all knew shepherds, and some of those were standing right there in the audience when they heard Jesus' teaching.

**The Vine:** all over the Middle East one could find vineyards, because the climate (sun, moisture, tough soil) was ideal for them.

But there is more.

All those metaphors in the gospel of John (shepherd, bread, water, light) are from the **Old Testament**. We examined those in the chapter 1-12. (previous sermons)

### Outline of this chapter:

15:1-11 Relationship with **Christ**. Key word: **remaining, abiding**.

15:12-17 Relationship with **fellow believers**, disciples. Key word: **love**.

15:18-27 Relationship with **the world**. Key word: **testimony**. There will be hostility, yet the Advocate will guide us the share the gospel.

Let us read the Word:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> 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. (John 15:1-4 NIV11)

### -True Vine

The image of a vineyard was used in the Old Testament to describe Israel.

You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. <sup>9</sup> You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. <sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. <sup>11</sup> Its branches reached as far as the Sea, its shoots as far as the River. (Psalm 80:8-11 NIV11)

Israel was told she was like a vineyard. Yet, Isaiah warns his people: "Watch out! The vineyard is producing sour wild grapes!"

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard...Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. (Isaiah 5:1-2 NIV11)

Jeremiah adds:

I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine? (Jeremiah 2:21 NIV11)

The old vineyard (Israel) did not yield good grapes. Jesus declares he is **the True Vine**.

Israel is no more automatically seen as a vine growing in God's vineyard. All of us, which means Israelites and gentiles, **need to be attached** (grafted) on one vine. We all are called to remain and abide in Jesus.

### -Remain, Abide

**11 times** Jesus uses the verb remain, abide. Why?

The previous chapter we studied the words: love Jesus and obey his commandments. The point I tried to make last week was the essence of our obedience should be our love for God, our love for Jesus.

This chapter gives further instruction about our relationship with Jesus.

Let us read the passage:

"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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> This is to my Father's

glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:5-8 NIV11)

The healthy and fruitful branch is the one that is connected to the vine.

In chapter 14 we spoke about loving Jesus.

Loving Jesus means abiding in his Word, abiding and remaining in HIM; having an intimate relationship.

**11 times**, remain in me, abide in me... there is a reason Jesus overemphasized this word.

-Without being on the vine, we cannot be fed.

Naturally, any branch which is not connected will not be fruitful. The consequence is bad. We see the gardener, God, will cut off that branch since it is not useful anymore. I see the **judgment of God** on the branches which refuse to be connected the vine.

-Yet, I see **God's discipline** when He is pruning.

Why do we prune?

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> 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.

**while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.** (15:2b)

One of the reasons the gardener prunes the vine is to stop wasting energy and being unproductive. "You cut out, particularly, the parts of the plant that are growing inwards and getting tangled up. You encourage the shoots that are growing outwards, toward the light."<sup>1</sup>

Don't you love the metaphor of the vine?

Pruning will help the branches grow **towards the light.**

Oh, how much we need pruning. It is not fun. It is painful. It is discipline. It helps me grow towards the LIGHT.

The Lord disciplines the ones who loves (12:6)

but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Heb 12:10b,11 NIV11)

**Warning:** You cannot bear fruit artificially. You cannot plan and control bearing fruit. You can add artificial fruits on the tree, but that is just decoration...not real... We read in NIV commentary:

Fruit-bearing is not a test; that is, a branch does not have to demonstrate a level of productivity to be safe from destruction. Rather, fruit-bearing is a byproduct. “Apart from me you can do nothing” (15:5b). To be connected to the vine means that the life of Jesus is flowing through us, and this leads to fruitfulness. Fruitfulness will be the inevitable outcome of an interior spiritual life with Jesus (cf. Gal. 5:22–23).<sup>2</sup>

What is the Fruit?

Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)

Carson:

This suggests that the ‘fruit’ in the vine imagery represents everything that is the product of effective prayer in Jesus’ name, including obedience to Jesus’ commandments (v. 10), experience of Jesus’ joy (v. 11– as earlier his peace, v. 14:27), love for one another (v. 12), and witness to the world (v. 16, 27). This 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.

We are back to one thing: ABIDING in Jesus

**Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World.** Do you remember Dorcas studied this?

Prayer + the Word (reading, meditating, memorizing...) + Time = Intimacy with God (abiding in God)

Let me give you a summary of this chapter according Dr Mark Bailey.<sup>4</sup>

He divides to three sections:

Three great priorities, and three relationships:

Each section effects the next one.

Chapters 1-11, our relationship with:

**1<sup>st</sup> Christ.** The word that dominates in this section which describes our relationship with Christ is **abide**, remain. (11 times) Abide in Jesus and abide in Jesus’ love.

The result: we bear fruit, much fruit....

Chapters 12-17, Our relationship with:

**2<sup>nd</sup> Believers**, Disciples. The dominating topic here is to **love** the believers. (love one another)

In this section Jesus gives five characteristics of genuine love. (we will discuss next week) The result: **“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”** (13:35)

Chapters 18-27, our relationship with:

3<sup>rd</sup> **The World**, our responsibility is to **witness** to the world.

The Advocate, the H.S. will come, he will **testify** about me.....and you also must testify.

They will hate you, but we should not stop from being witnesses.

-Fruit that is lasting (you will bear more fruit, go and bear fruit—fruit that will last)

-Prayer that is effective (ask anything in my name...)

-Joy that is heavenly (so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete...)

**Application:**

Therefore, examine yourself,

Where are you?

1. Maybe you are not a branch that abides in the vine; you are not on the vine.

Don't expect anything to happen when you are not connected. I pray that God's Spirit will lead you to take the most important decision in your life: accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior to be your light, Shepherd, and your Vine and you will be the fruitful branch.

2. If you are connected to the vine, make sure you remain in Jesus.

What are some specific things you can do to deepen your relationship with Jesus? Find a prayer partner; plan longer quiet times; fill your mind with biblical truth, spiritual songs...

3. The word disciple and discipline are similar. Allow God the gardener to prune you. Whatever that means to you practically. Go make disciples.... Allow God the gardener to prune you. Whatever that means to you practically. I urge you to become a disciple of Jesus, a student of Jesus, who abides in Him daily.

*Therefore, on behalf of Christ, I urge you, abide in him. That is, keep on enjoying him and his joy — as your joy. Keep on enjoying him and his peace — as your peace. Keep on enjoying him and his love — as your love. And ask him — and the vinedresser — to cause*

*you to grow in this experience of being filled with all the fullness of God ([Ephesians 3:19](#)). (John piper)*

1. NT Wright, *John for Everyone* p69
2. Gary M. Bruce, *John, NIV Application Commentary* P418
3. Carson p517
4. Dr. Mark Bailey, Dallas Theological Seminary, online course, Gospel of John, lesson seven.

D.A Carson says:

It is organic growth, internal growth, driven by the pulsating life of the vine in the branch, and only this kind of growth produces fruit... The point is clear: continuous dependence on the vine, constant reliance upon him, persistent spiritual imbibing (absorbing) of his life—this is the *sine qua non* of spiritual fruitfulness. The Christian or Christian organization that expands by external accretion, that merely apes Christian conduct and witness, but is not impelled by life within, brings forth dead crystals, not fruit. **Carson 516**