

August 20, 2023

“I AM” – Jesus “I AM the True Vine”

How many of you would like to experience spiritual growth, increased productivity, and the ability to make a positive difference wherever you are?

This is not a trick question. Who wouldn't? Right!? I know I sure would like that?

Jesus' claim today “I am the true Vine” includes teaching about the ONE central requirement to experience spiritual growth, increased productivity, and the ability to make a positive difference wherever you are.

What is the ONE central requirement? Here it is in one verse.

John 15:5 (NIV) “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit...

Now you are ready for points 1, 2, and 3:

I. Jesus is the SOURCE

II. You are His AGENTS

The one ONE central requirement you need to do is...

III. REMAIN in JESUS

But here's the QUESTION: How do you remain in a PERSON?

If you don't get what Jesus is saying, you are in good company. The disciples didn't get what he was saying at first either. It wouldn't make sense to them fully until at least 50 days later.

TIMELINE:

- Jesus teaching of John 15, was on that eventful **Thursday night**, just before he was arrested.
- Followed by a farce of a trial through the night.
- **Friday** he was Crucified.
- **Sunday** he Raised from the dead.
- **For the next 40 days**, he appears to many and explains many more things. Including instructions to wait for the Spirit and power he will send them. Then he ascended into heaven as they watched him go.
- It was **10 days later that** Jesus poured out the HOLY Spirit in a miraculous way. upon them because of his accomplished victory!!!

The Word picture (the Vine/Branch/“REMAIN” in Jesus REALITY) only WORKS because of WHO he is and WHAT He has done.

BECAUSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT Jesus’ word picture is more than a concept. It describes a Spiritual reality we can experience. Jesus tells us to “REMAIN” in him.

DEFINITION “REMAIN” (Greek: *meno*):

- “*Remain, stay, stand fast, dwell, abide*”. Which means **live there. Dwell there. Camp out** there consistently.

SO... How does one “Remain and camp out in a person”?

- This can only work when that person is God!
- He has already revealed this in so many ways...
- Earlier, that same evening...

John 14:1 (NIV) “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

Wait, did he just claim to be God?

Jesus continues...

John 14:7 (NIV) If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Wait, what?

John 14:8–10 (NIV) Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

If you know what Jesus is like, you know what God is like.

The vine is divine! Jesus is your living space and your life source.

IV. Jesus is your source for PRODUCTIVITY

John 15:1–5 (NIV) “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 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.

“Fruit” is “produce”. Eternally significant productivity is what Jesus calls “*lasting fruit*”. It has eternal significance in his kingdom. He is the source for all of this kind of fruit. All we need is to make sure we are united with him, remaining in him, as in living in him and camping out in him, he’s the source of everything.

PARENTS: This is far more productive than parenting books! **Camp out “in Jesus” if you want your kids to become more like Jesus.**

COUPLES: Do you want a blessed marriage? Remain in JESUS as your **living space** and **life source**, **his character will flow through you** making your marriage a **taste of heaven on earth** rather than a taste of hell on earth!

V. **Jesus recovered your DESIGNED PURPOSE**

A branch seems passive, BUT in Jesus, you are not a PASSIVE branch. You united your life to Jesus as a willing and ACTIVE AGENT who reigns with him in partnership in his Kingdom.

What DIVINE PURPOSE for us did Jesus RECOVER?

Genesis 1:27–28 (NIV) So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

God created people for the joy and purpose that he provides us in a relationship with him.

JOY: At sunrise Yesterday....something inside of me responded to the beauty of God’s gift and I praised him for it.

- We experience **joy** when something inside of us responds to something inside of God that he reveals to us.
- We experience **misery** when something inside of us responds to something inside of the rebel prince. He is not giving joy, he is stealing it and destroying it where he can.
- **QUESTION:** Have you ever noticed that when we fall for his seductions, we find ourselves in this joyless state where blue skies, or sunrises no longer seem to awaken our joy? When you are there, you know his strategy is working against you. You lean away from God’s beauty, with some twisted fixation.

PURPOSE: We are designed to **share in God's purposes in partnership** with him in his entire created Kingdom.

- For this purpose, God gave humans a **will to choose and the authority to be his ruling agents in partnership with him.**
- He also provided ADAM and EVE **ongoing access to his presence** in relationship with him.
- Their relationship with God was different from our experience.
- But with their SIN, something changed inside of them and their SPIRITUAL CONNECTION was SEVERED.
- God's design for all mankind was damaged from that time forward.

BUT GOD of all MERCY PROPHESED HIS PLAN of DELIVERANCE: He revealed it with greater and greater clarity, as his plan was revealed like a SCROLL..., A BOOK chapter by chapter. Jesus accomplished the ESSENTIAL and CENTRAL victory to RECLAIM our DESIGNED PURPOSE as God's agents!!!

There were already occasional HINTS of this throughout the OLD TESTAMENT: Think of how God used MOSES as his AGENT of Mediation (Hints of the PERFECT coming MEDIATOR).

What was available to MOSES, David, and the prophets THEN, is now more pervasive, more personal, and more powerful!

“In JESUS”, GOD’S PARTNERS ARE IN COVENANT WITH HIM AS ACTIVE AGENTS :

- “Remain in me”, “live there” THINK CUP, in POOL of LIVING WATER, think MOSES meeting with God and GLOWING as a result). He was just the FADING PICTURE. Jesus Light of the World is the REALITY.
- AS Partners and Agents called to reign with him, you can only bear fruit with this active connection. Without him you bear no “lasting fruit”.
- **Live in God's Word, and let God's Word live in you.** That's how you will have faith and trust enough to let God's will become your will. God wants you to choose to merge your will and desires into his will and desires.
- **We still have our own wills,** but we willingly become agents of God's will! That's how God wants it. He wants you to choose him and love him, because he chooses to love you.
- He committed to you and died for you, **are you ready to commit to live for him?**

MERGING your will by submission into HIS does not make you less yourself; you become more yourself than ever, as you were designed to be. You become **more human and less animalistic.** You are restored to be IMAGES in the likeness of God. **What is God like? He's like Jesus!** What are we to be like? Godly like Jesus. How? Connect with Jesus. Live with Jesus. Live in Jesus. Jesus lives in you.

When you connect to Jesus in this way, powerful stuff happens.

John 15:7 (NIV) If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Remaining in Jesus means more than a mere concept—more than a word picture. It describes a Spiritual reality you can experience.

STEPS: Unite with Jesus! Cultivate daily connection. Experience this!

Talk It Over

“I AM” -Jesus

(Week 7)

“I Am the True Vine”

SMALL TALK

1. Do you have a favorite plant or tree? Why is it meaningful to you?

VIEWPOINT

2. **Read John 15:1-8.** What does Jesus' word picture convey about how we are to relate to Him, and how does it emphasize our dependence on Him?
3. **Read John 15:9-11.** How does “remaining” (abiding) in Christ's love affect our relationships with others and our overall outlook on life?
4. **Read John 15:12-14.** Why is this commandment (15:12) significant in the context of Jesus' vine analogy? How does our love for one another reflect our connection to Jesus?
5. **Read John 15:15-17.** What kind of relationship does Jesus want to have with you? What purpose does he describe? What is required for “lasting fruit”? (15:4-5, 16-17)

GETTING PERSONAL

6. What are some practical ways you can remain connected to Jesus in your daily life? How can you cultivate a deeper and more intimate relationship with Him?
7. In your current season of life, what are some ways you can bear spiritual fruit, such as love, joy, peace, and kindness? How can your actions and attitudes reflect the presence of Christ in you?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

Pick one: Cultivate daily connection, seek opportunities to love _____ (name), study or memorize God's Word, pray a bold prayer in keeping with God's will, or other: _____.