

I AM the Vine 5.28.17 #cccsermons

The I AM Claims of Christ Series

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; apart from me you can do nothing.

- In order to produce good fruit, it takes patience and wisdom from the owner and the fruit needs TIME attached to the vine.

Today's Passage: John 15:1-17

#1 Everywhere Jesus went, He used what was around Him to preach the message of the Gospel.

- Here, somewhere along the way to the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples, they likely came across a vineyard or a vine on the temple which was as the perfect setting for another important lesson to His disciples. The disciples would have known the vine was the SYMBOL of the nation of Israel.
- Psalm 80:8 (NIV) You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit,

- A vine is designed and intended to grow and bear fruit, but it cannot do it by itself. Once a vine is planted or takes root, it must soak in the nourishment of the sun and moisture in the air in order to grow healthy and strong. If something stops or impedes its growth, it is useless to the Gardener and it is cut off.
- If those branches don't get adequate sunlight and the moisture in the air, then the vine will SELF-DESTRUCT itself and produce more and more branches full of leaves that will only increase shading and kill itself.
- Just like the vine, we, as Christians, are designed and intended to grow, but just like grapes on the vine, we don't grow AUTOMATICALLY. Once we accept Christ, we need to consistently seek nourishment from God in order to help us grow.

² every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

- Jesus says that God cuts off the bad branches in us, but He prunes other branches to make us more fruitful.
- The act of pruning appears harsh, but if a grapevine is left untended, it will produce **MORE** leaves and **LESS** fruit.
- Actually, pruning PROTECTS a cultivated vine from its self-destruction so that it can produce big, fuller grapes.
- A grapevine will never produce anywhere near its POTENTIAL without being pruned.

• #2 God must sometimes prune us through DISCIPLINE to strengthen our character and faith. (see Hebrews 12:5-6)

- C.S. Lewis once said, *God whispers through pleasure, but He shouts to us through pain.*

- God's actions are always intended to NUDGE us lovingly and persistently toward the life and character He desire in us and that we may produce fruit.

⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. **No branch can bear fruit by itself**; it must remain in the vine.

- Remaining in Christ means BELIEVING that Jesus is God's Son (see 1 John 4:15) and **CONTINUING** to do what He says (see 1 John 3:24) while living the life of love (see John 15:12). This means that I need to be **CULTIVATING** my relationship with Christ everyday by spending time with Him in prayer, reading the Word, worship and listening to the Holy Spirit.
- This is so important because without ROOT, there will be no fruit!

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 reason I stay connected to the vine is so that I can BRANCH OUT.
- #3 God doesn't just want us to be **FAITHFUL**, but He wants us to be FRUITFUL.

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. **BUT**

⁷ **IF you remain in me and my words remain in you, THEN ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.**

- God wants to bless us, but we have to stay in the word. (see Psalms 37:4)

⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you **bear much fruit** showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- Notice, when we stay connected to the vine and keep His word in our hearts, we will bear much fruit and the world will notice a DIFFERENCE in us.
- **The problem with today is that the church seems to have more FRUITS in it than those that are producing good fruit.**
- Somewhere we forgot that we are supposed to be a blessing to our community and started focusing on we can bless ourselves.
- God wants us to bear much fruit: inward (see Galatians 5:22-23) and outward (see Colossians 1:6). Inward fruit has to do with our character and becoming more like Christ. Outward fruit has to do with share Christ with others.
- #4 We need both inward and outward fruit to be EVIDENT in our lives in order to be most effective for Christ.

John 15:16-17 (NIV) You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷ **This is my command: Love each other.**

- #5 God is more interested in you producing fruit than in your COMFORT.
- Whatever is rotten in your life will soon infect everything else.
- #6 Pruning YOURSELF first hurts way less than if God prunes you.
- *The pain of discipline weighs ounces, but the pain of regret weighs tons.*