

I AM The True Vine
John 15

The Big Reveal is a technique that makes an important point in a story:

EX: Empire Strikes Back; Gen- Joseph with his brothers...

Jesus: John 6; 8;10; 11; 14 (Bread, light, door/good shepherd ;Resurrection; Way Truth and Life) and now it continues in the life and ministry of Jesus in chapter 15

John 15:1-11

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

This passage in John 15 Jesus actually uses two vine metaphors. He speaks in verse 5 of the relationship of the vine and the branches, and this is the one which is most familiar, but this morning we want to focus on verse one where he makes the point that he is the TRUE vine, which would be in contrast to a false Vine.

Jesus speaks of a True Vine as opposed to a corrupt Vine. What is he talking about?

The metaphor the vine is not something new because **The Vine is an important metaphor for the Jews in the Old Testament to describe the relationship between God and Israel.**

In that picture God is the vinedresser and Israel is the Vine. So, what are some of these Old Testament references. **Isaiah 5:1-7 A Love Song – about a Vineyard**

There have been some crazy loves songs over the years:

I Would Have Written You A Letter, but I Couldn't Spell Yuck

I've Been Flushed from the Bathroom Of Your Heart

My John Deere Was Breaking Your Field, While Your Dear John Was Breaking My Heart

My Wife Ran Off with My Best Friend, and I Sure Do Miss Him

Oh, I've Got Hair Oil On My Ears & My Glasses Are Slipping Down, but Baby I Can See through You

She Got the Gold Mine and I Got the Shaft

You Done Tore Out My Heart and Stomped That Sucker Flat

You Were Only a Splinter As I Slid Down the Banister of Life

In Isa 5 we see a different love song – **"The Vineyard of God gets the Rod" Read Isaiah 5:1-7**

The idea is simple: God sees Israel as a vine that He has planted, tended, cultivated and delights in. God chose the vineyard and he prepared the location. He set up a watchtower for oversight of the vineyard. There is a deep affection for his vineyard –

But the vineyard did not respond. It did not bear good fruit. The grapes were rotten.
v. 3-4 There is a call for witnesses to judge between God and the vineyard.
v. 5-6 describe the punishment
v. 7 the reason for the strong reaction.

Jesus probably has this song from Isa in mind when he gives the parable in Luke 13:1-9. In that passage Jesus calls the people to repent after the report about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He then tells a parable about a vineyard that is not fruitful for three years and the owner tells the vineyard keeper to cut it down if it doesn't produce this year.

His parable and the song of Isaiah end in judgement. The point is clear and sobering in both passages:

FRUITLESSNESS BRINGS JUDGMENT.

Fruitlessness = NOT just failure to produce good fruit, but producing sin instead

There is another Song about a vineyard in Psalm 80. V. 1-7

This song is addressed to God as the shepherd of Israel and it is appealing to him based on who He is and all that He has done for Israel that He would come and restore and save and cause his face to shine upon them.

The psalm is a lament because they've experienced God's anger and they are drinking their own tears and asking, "how long oh Lord?" will this continue. They want to see the countenance of his face shining on them.

verse 8 he moves to the vine imagery of God making Israel a Vine and planting it and taking care of it. He explains how God brought Israel out, cultivated Israel as a Vine, and caused it to grow and spread to become fruitful (you could say prosperous), and then now they're experiencing hardship and the Psalmist is confused and is in Lament.

He is stating his plight before God that the vine that was once cared for is now broken down and is being attacked by the Nations and the wild beasts all around it, and they come and eat the fruit and plunder Israel.

In verse 14 to 19 he is calling for God to come down and do the work on their behalf.

The Plea is for God to return and save the vineyard.

In both passages- Isa.5 and Ps 80, we see that God is expressing his judgement on the nation that he bore. Israel has become a corrupt Vine and now **Jesus says that he is the TRUE vine.**
He is saying that he is the ultimate embodiment of Israel.

There is an echo of this after Jesus's birth and the family's flight to Egypt, and then they come back, and the prophecy is applied to Christ when it says, "out of Egypt have I called my son". Jesus is THE representative of his people as the Messiah. There is a sense that He represents Israel.

John speaks of Jesus in chapter one as the word made flesh and that he is the Tabernacle of God in the Flesh. Everything symbolized by the Tabernacle is found in Jesus- God's presence with us. Jesus is the TRUE son of the father who brings forth the fruit. He is the True Vine who bears fruit and not the wild grapes.

So, then Jesus carries the imagery into John 15 and he points out that He is the TRUE VINE and His Father is the vinedresser who will be tending the vineyard.

How does that happen?? The fruit bearing branches need to be pruned in order to maximize their productivity.

God is interested in us bearing fruit. Any owner of a vineyard or a garden wants to see fruit
EX: Linda's garden

EX: I think about the rose bush at our house in Palaiseau when The Neighbor first pruned it.

The sole purpose of the branch is to bear fruit. If not bearing fruit then it is taken away

Ex: pecan tree out front

Fruit = Glory for God

Unfruitful branches are useless for anything.

This much is clear: **God EXPECTS FRUIT from the branches united to Jesus.**

Your degree of fruitfulness will depend on how closely you remain attached to the Vine. There should be no disparaging of good works if we understand Grace and our Unity with Christ. Works and fruit are the manifestations of our connection to Christ. They don't earn connection to Christ but they are evidence of it. One thing we see from this passage clearly is that God does not want wild grapes, but He wants fruit.

SO WHAT?

How do we apply this Vineyard Love Song and parable?

THE TRUE VINE IS A PERSON WE MEET

He speaks to us personally through His Word, so we need to listen.

SET UP FOR REFOCUS 2018

One way to apply John 15 is to understand the Branch Life and to become a fruit inspector.

The fruit inspection begins by looking at ourselves, but here's where it gets tricky; it also means that we get close enough to others, so they can see things we don't see. They can ask questions that we may not ask.

As we move to the new ministry year, we'll be addressing what this looks like and we'll create some environments where this can happen.

We are NOT HERE TO play church. We want to create a vineyard where healthy branches are growing and bearing fruit. Some will grow at different stages and in different ways, and some may seem to have more fruit at first, but the key thing is that we're all in a place where we can be nurtured for spiritual and relational health.

Jesus wants us to know that he is the Vine and we are called to live the BRANCH Life. (Andrew Murray)

This passage is so rich in meaning and application for us that it will serve as a closing of the "I AM" series and the beginning of our Refocus disciple making series.

Ps 80:17-19

We can take comfort and joy in knowing that God did rest his hand on the man at [his] right hand. He did anoint the Son of Man and raise him to be our Redeemer, so that we might call on the Lord's name. **In Christ GOD did restore us; He does make His face shine upon us. By His grace we are saved.** Thank God that the final verse of his song ends in joy.

As we come to the TABLE, the juice should remind us of the True Vine who gave himself for us.

COME TO THE TABLE

This table shows the depth of Jesus' love for you. But it is also a table that requires an examination before you come.

Are you united to the True Vine by faith? Do you want his grace and mercy and pruning more and more in your life?

Then come to His Table because this is a means of grace

.

But if you have not bowed your heart before him as your king or if you are hiding some secret sin that you have not yet dealt with, then don't come, rather seek Christ and work out your relationship with Him first. Then come back when your Heart is in line with His.

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (ESV)

²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,

²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We can enjoy the cup of the Lord now, but as we do remember the day to which it points...

Matt 26:29

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. ²⁹But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

--	--