



The Life of Jesus (105)

The Last Teachings of Jesus (7)

John 15:1-8



#1 I Am the True Vine

In John 15, we find one of the most well-known metaphors for the relationship between Jesus and His followers—the vine and branches.

The image of a vine is often used to refer to the people of Israel.

“You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches” (Ps 80:8-10)

Here, the psalmist describes God delivering the Israelites from Egypt as a vine being transplanted.

The people of Israel were God’s vine. God rescued them from their slavery in Egypt and guided them to the promised land. Not only that, God helped them defeat their enemies so that they could take root and settle in the land.

#2 I Am the True Vine

God had a purpose for doing this. He wanted the people of Israel to be great among other nations so that all nations would be naturally drawn to Him and come to Him.

But, the vine ended up being cut down and burned.

“Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke your people perish.” (Ps 80:16)

That’s because the Israelites became corrupt in their ways, departing from God’s will for them.

“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?” (Jr 2:21)

The Israelites forgot what they had been chosen for. Rather, they fell into the trap of thinking they were the only ones chosen by God, and so they looked down on the other nations. They failed to show God’s holiness through their lives. That was the reason God had to cut down His vine.

#3 I Am the True Vine

Isaiah chapter 5 also tells us about God's purpose in making his vineyard, the Israelites' failure, and God's judgment on them.

“I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. **He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines.** He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.” (Is 5:1-2)

God cleared the vineyard of stones and planted vines. He loved His vines and took care of them.

Because He did everything He could for His vineyard, it was natural for Him to expect good grapes from the vines. But even though God looked for good fruit, the vines only yielded bad fruit.

#4 I Am the True Vine

“What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? **When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?** Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.” (Is 5:4-6)

There was nothing wrong with the way God took care of the vines. The problem was with the vines themselves. So, God said that He wouldn't take care of His vineyard anymore.

And, after telling this story, the prophet Isaiah concluded, “The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.” (Is 5:7)

#5 I Am the True Vine

This story is in line with what Jesus said in today's passage.

Jesus said, "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit" (Jn 15:2)

All these passages in both the Old Testament and the New Testament tell us **the importance of bearing fruit as God's people**. We should know that God has specific expectations for us when He saves us.

God rescued us and planted us in His vineyard to produce good fruits. In order to transplant us from the world and from the dominion of darkness and into His vineyard, God paid an enormous price: His Son.

He cleansed us through Jesus' blood and put new hearts and new spirits in us so that we could be like Jesus in every way.

Moreover, God also grants us the Holy Spirit so that we could be nourished by the truth of God word, experience deep union with God, and be empowered by Him to the point of we overcoming our weaknesses and sinful nature through His help.

#6 I Am the True Vine

God has given us everything we need to follow His way. God not only completely washed away our sins with the blood of His one and only Son, but also set us free from the law of sin by the law of the Spirit so we could live in accordance with the Spirit, having our minds set on what the Spirit desires, not on what our sinful nature desires.

God did all these things in His eager expectation that His vines could bear “**the fruit of the Spirit...**” which is “**love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**” (G1 5:22-23)

Then, we should respond to His grace by bearing good fruits according to the purpose for which He calls us. We are to reflect His goodness and faithfulness to the world. We're to show His abundant love and righteousness through our lives. We should glorify our heavenly Father through our words and actions. That's the fruit we must bear as His people.

#7 I Am the True Vine

Then, the important question is, “how can we produce good fruit as God’s people?”

In today’s passage, Jesus describes Himself as the true vine.

“I am the true vine… 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. “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.” (Jn 15:1, 4-5)

Here, we find the most important criterion needed for us to bear fruit. We’re to remain in Jesus by faith and let Him remain in us by surrendering our lives to Him.

No branch can bear fruit alone because the power and vitality that make branches bear fruit don’t come from the branches themselves, but from the root. So, just as branches apart from a tree are dead, we can do nothing apart from Jesus. What we really need to care about most is whether or not we remain in Him and He remains in us.

#8 I Am the True Vine

When we're spiritually united with Jesus through the Holy Spirit, He will fill us with His love, and it will naturally overflow from our lives and we'll naturally bear good fruit in our lives.

That's what the apostle Paul found. He confessed, "I have been crucified with Christ and **I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.** The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
(Gal 2:20)

In order for us to be true Christians whose faith is revealed in our fruit, we should make every effort to remain in Christ by faith and ensure that His words remain in us.

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

#9 I Am the True Vine

We need to know that our spiritual union with Christ can only be initiated and sustained by His words.

The more we're filled with His words, the more we experience Him remaining in us and working in us. Through His words, we remain in Jesus and He remains in us and works in us.

So if we really want to be true Christians who remain in Christ and bear good fruit, we should never neglect His words. That's why the apostle Paul encourages us to “**Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly...**” (Col 3:16)

Memory Verses

“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.” (Jn 15:4) (1)

“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.” (Jn 15:5) (1)

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (Jn 15:7-8) (2)

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gl 2:20) (2)

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Gl 5:22-23) (2)

Reflection Questions

1) How is your relationship with Jesus nowadays? Do you remain in Jesus and does He remain in you? Why do you think it is important for Christians to remain in Jesus? How do you think you can develop this type of relationship with Him?

2) Bearing fruit is one of the essential elements of being a Christian. What type of good fruit do you want to bear in your life now?