

## I Am The True Vine; John 15:1-5

### I. Vines and Branches

#### A. Throughout the Bible, authors use agricultural illustrations over and over

1. Jesus and the fig tree —
2. Matthew 24:32–35 (ESV); <sup>32</sup> “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup> So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>34</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.
3. James and the harvest —
4. James 5:7 (ESV); Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

#### B. This is because God causes the agricultural cycle and seasons

1. God is the one who sends the rain
2. Matthew 5:45 (ESV); so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
3. God is the one who gives the increase
4. 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 (ESV); <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

### II. The True Vine

#### A. Israel is referred to as a vine many times

1. Psalm 80:8–11 (ESV); <sup>8</sup> You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. <sup>9</sup> You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. <sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. <sup>11</sup> It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.
2. Hosea 10:1 (ESV); Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars.

#### B. Jesus claims to be the true Vine

1. This is in direct contradiction to the religious leaders who are doing everything they can (to include murder) to hold onto their power
2. He is claiming his divinity as the Messiah, the Christ
3. And the whole point of this illustration is that we are the branches (everyone — all nations, Genesis 12:3)

#### C. Jesus just finished (in John 13) breaking bread and drinking wine with His apostles — instituting the Lord’s Supper

#### D. It is not coincidence that He chooses this illustration of a ‘vinedresser,’ a vine, and branches

#### E. Branches

1. John 15:2 (ESV); Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
2. If you break a branch off does it survive without the vine?
3. A branch receives all of its nutrients from the vine
4. A branch must be connected to the vine in order to bear fruit

### III. Bearing Fruit

#### A. What is ‘bearing fruit?’

1. John 15:3–4 (ESV); <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.
2. Luke 3:8–14 (ESV); <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from

- these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” <sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” <sup>12</sup> Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” <sup>13</sup> And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”
3. But the context in John 15 is Jesus speaking to his 12 (11 now) apostles just before he is betrayed and arrested — remember, Jesus just ‘took away’ one of the branches (Judas Iscariot)
  4. So, I think in order to understand what fruit is in this context, we need to look at the lives of the apostles
- B. The Day of Pentecost
1. Planting
    - a) The twelve apostles were gifted with the ability to speak in many different languages
    - b) They were speaking of the “mighty works of God”
    - c) We have Peter’s speech recorded for us
  2. Watering
    - a) At the end of Peter’s speech, they were all convinced that Jesus was the Christ and asked, “what must we do” — Acts 2:37
    - b) Acts 2:38 (ESV); And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  3. Increase
    - a) As I mentioned before, God gives the increase
    - b) Acts 2:41 (ESV); So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
    - c) These are the first words we receive from God about the beginning of the church
- C. Cornelius
1. Planting
    - a) Acts 10:1–2 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup> a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.
    - b) We have to note that he was devout — someone, who is not mentioned, was either an example to him, or he spoke to him about the Almighty God
  2. Watering
    - a) Acts 10:37–41
    - b) Peter explains the Gospel through events that they were familiar with
  3. Increase
    - a) Acts 10:44–48
    - b) God poured Himself out on Cornelius and his household, letting Peter know that the Gentiles were to included in salvation (Genesis 12:3)
    - c) Cornelius and his household responded, and just like on the Day of Pentecost, they were added to the Body of Christ
- D. Bearing fruit is living out your Christianity — and speaking about the mighty works of God
1. Thus, giving others the opportunity to respond to the Gospel of Christ so God can add them to His Body
  2. And we can only do this if we abide in Him
- E. Pruning

1. The lexicon defines this as removing unnecessary growth — another agricultural illustration
2. We might define this as suffering
3. 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV); Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
4. We can expect, as Christians, to be pruned by God (Peter's denial of Jesus)
5. If we are abiding in Christ — otherwise we are taken away (Judas)

#### IV. Abiding

- A. To remain, to dwell, to live
- B. Jesus is encouraging his apostles to remain faithful — right after he said that God would prune them
- C. Lots of people run away from God in the midst of His pruning — I'm sure you know someone
- D. Peter had a choice to make after He denied Christ
- E. Jesus, when he met them in the upper room after his resurrection, gave Peter a mission
- F. John 20:19–21 (ESV); <sup>19</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

#### V. Mission Possible

- A. Your mission, should you accept it, is to abide in Christ and bear much fruit
- B. Will you accept your mission?
- C. Fortunately, Scripture will not self-destruct — ever!