

Gospel of John #22
Vine and Branches
John 15

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Before we start, I want to make sure you know that our sermons are coming out as podcasts. So if you don't mind, I'd like to do a couple of advertisements for these podcasts.

1. "This sermon is brought to you about the Healing the City Podcast. There are two new episodes this week about awkward vulnerability and asking for help and a John 14 Remix where we talked about the practicals of fixing our eyes on Jesus: READ the Gospel stories, ASK where Jesus is and DO what he tells us, GIVE THANKS and PRAY."



2. A Youtube Masterclass recorded by Mark Crawford: I am a fake master gardener: In this episode, you will learn about growing roses: ROOTS and grafting onto roots so you can get roses that will not normally grow here in Tucson, the soil they need, and how to feed them, TYPES of roses: climbing, vines, bushes and how to turn them, PRUNING your bushes (most important thing!). You want learn to avoid Rubbing Canes,

Sick Leaves, Clearing out the branches so they can get more light and air, Yearly cutback (they look terrible and you feel like you are killing the rose but they come back even stronger the next year!).

Thanks for letting me do that!

Seven I AM Statements:

Seven "I Am" Statements

1. I am the bread of life (John 6:35)
2. I am the light of the world (John 8:12)
3. I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7)
4. I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)
5. I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
7. I am the true vine (John 15:1)



We have covered all of these except one which is for today:

John 15

1 "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^[a] 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. **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. **7** If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

What is Jesus talking about here? I want to highlight two points:

1. If I'm in Jesus, I'm connected to a **source of life**. This gives me joy, makes me clean, and able to bear fruit. I will live in such a way that my life produces more life. I go out and testify to this to others. I produce fruit.

A parallel reading of this comes from **Psalms 80:8-19**

8 You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.

9 You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.

10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.

11 Its branches reached as far as the Sea and its shoots as far as the River.

12 Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

13 Boars from the forest ravage it, and insects from the fields feed on it.

14 Return to us, God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see!

Watch over this vine,

15 the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself.

16 Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke your people perish.

17 Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself.

18 Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name.

19 Restore us, LORD God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

God brought the Israelites and established them and when they were persecuted and beaten back by their enemies. The Psalmist says these vines and walls are broken down and the fruit is being eaten by animals. He asks for God to send HIS SON, the root of the vine. In this Psalm, Jesus is saying that HE IS the vine, the son, and the life and that they are his people, his branches, if they believe in him. Otherwise, they will be cast off. He wants them to remain in him.

If Jesus is the vine, then what?

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

2. Jesus says he is the true vine and that the true kingdom is in him.

Remaining in him is LIFE and LOVE. The kingdom is about love: Love is not some romantic or even brotherly feeling. This is self-sacrificial **agape** love that gives up the self to care for the other. This is what the kingdom is about. The way of the kingdom is love, laying down my desires and demands of being cared for and loving the person next to me in service. He gives the example of washing the disciples’ feet where Jesus lowered himself to the role of a service to show us what this looks like. He also points forward to his own death and to the deaths of his disciples when he says there is no greater love but to die for a friend.

Most of us will not have an opportunity to die for another person but we CAN care for the people next to us. This is the ethic of the kingdom.

The world **will** respond to this:

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. **19** If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. **20** Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. **21** They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. **24** If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. **25** But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

If you have been following this sermon series, you will recognize what Jesus is talking about. You will go out and the world will hate you, but this is **not about us**. Jesus is talking about his own disciples. Too often, people have offered hate to another person and justified it because of this verse. This approach makes us not have to think about our own actions. This passage is about the disciples because they were hated because they were with Jesus.

Yet this passage **is about us!** If you live out of self-sacrificial love and set aside the demands to care for the people next to you, the world will have contempt for you. The world says to take care of yourself first and if you care for some people along the way, that’s OK.

The love that Jesus calls us to is different and we will encounter hate.

26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. **27** And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Today is **Pentecost**: the day that the Holy Spirit came onto the people in Acts. The Advocate will testify about Jesus and we are called to this as well: Our purpose is to worship, our work is to proclaim and testify to his name. This is the work of the Holy Spirit which we will talk about next week.

As we finish today, what lingers from **John 15**? Two things kept coming back to me:

1. **Remain in me.** I don’t really like the word REMAIN: it implies staying and not wandering off. Abide is used in other translations but we don’t use this word. What do we do with this? REMAIN also means TO DWELL in him, to LIVE with

him. It's like the Jesus mobile home that Eric talked about last week: we live out the kingdom in love day by day everywhere we go. What does this look like? To fix your eyes on Jesus:

- **Read** the Gospel Stories: know the words and stories of Jesus.
- **Ask** "Where is Jesus in this moment?" Too often we don't see Jesus in our situations even though Jesus says he is with us. Look for him in the mobile home!
- **Do** the things he is asking us
- **Give** thanks day to day
- **Pray**: dwelling with Jesus is to pray

2. **PRUNING**: I have some thoughts about what this looks like in our lives. I invite you to assess what Jesus is doing.

Rubbing canes: These are the places that have bitterness and contempt. Where are the places in my life that disease is entering in in the form of contempt and bitterness?

Sick leaves: These represent the practices that we have that we know are wrong: the rhythms in our life that need to be discontinued. As I walk with Jesus, I need to ask him to prune these things: our addictions: alcohol, drugs, phone, exercise, comfort, etc. What needs pruning in my life?

Clearing out: (this is harder!) This action represents the **busyness** of our lives, the things that aren't producing or creating anything. They are just creating the rubbing canes and sick leaves. How can I cut out practices that don't seem bad but are taking up spaces where Jesus could be speaking and providing for us?

Yearly Cutback: These are the places where it feels empty: Places where I'm not producing fruit. Grief, pain, darkness that are dry: nothing is happening. Be encouraged if you are in this season because when things are cut back to this extent, much fruit is in the future. This is something God does and it's not necessarily annual or at our initiation. It is not doing it yourself: it might be just BEING with Jesus.