

# **“I Am the True Vine”**

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

## A. John 15:1-9

1. The last verse in John 14 tells us Jesus and the disciples are leaving the upper room. They are headed to the Mount of Olives where Jesus will pray the great prayer, and from there passed over the Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He would pray again. Then He will later be arrested by the mob led by Judas. Apparently, Jesus speaks the words which make up chapters 15 and 16 in route to the Mount.

Jesus is portrayed as the True Vine. One can imagine Jesus and these men going through the darkening streets of the city and passing beyond the walls into the surrounding countryside. During this time of year, mid-April, the grape vines would be beginning to blossom with the promise of bounty. As Jesus walked with His disciples, He may have pointed at the vines and used them to teach a lesson to them. His desire is to teach them about the most vital relationship they have in their lives: the one with Him and His Father.

We might ask: “Why did Jesus teach this now?” They needed to hear it. These men have just been informed that Jesus is going away, but that His work is going to continue, and that it is to continue through them and their lives (John 14:12). If they were to carry on the work of the Lord, then they needed to understand that they were still connected to Him and that through that connection, they would produce fruit for Him in their lives. At a time when we feel so far removed in this world from the days when Jesus walked here in person, we need to know and feel that connection to produce fruit.

## **I. JESUS IS THE VINE**

A. Jesus is the root, the source of life; temporary and eternal.

1. One must be connected to the vine as the source of life in order to be alive; a branch cannot live if the root and stock are dead.

2. John 1:1-4; Col. 1:15-16; 1John 5:14-15

B. Jesus is the only living vine

1. Jesus alone possesses life within Himself - John 14:6

C. Jesus as the Vine has a Divine purpose

1. Distinct purpose - To produce fruit

2. Distinguished purpose - To glorify the vinedresser - 1Cor. 10:31

3. Delegated purpose - The Vine itself does not bear fruit; it feeds and sustains the branches, and the branches bear the fruit

## **II. GOD IS THE VINEDRESSER**

A. “Husbandman” refers to the vine dresser, the gardener, the one who has the responsibility of caring for the vineyard. Jesus says that the Heavenly Father is the Gardener.

B. Four specific duties of the Gardener toward the Vine:

1. Protecting - He provides tender care for the vineyard - Prov. 15:3

2. Purifying - He lifts up the branch - He raises it higher, lifts it out of the dirt and moves it closer to sunlight, giving it a better chance to produce

- a. "Takes away" airo - "to lift up; to take up or away; to raise, keep suspended, by Hebraism - to expiate sin, bear up, carry, lift up, loose" (Strong's)
- 3. Pruning - He removes things from the branch that sap its strength; anything consuming but not producing
  - a. John 15:3; James 1:25; Heb. 4:12
- 4. Purging - Those who will not remain in the vine are cast out of the vineyard and burned. A vinedresser does not throw away a branch casually, unless they are lifeless and brittle. They can be grafted into a living stock, they can be used to propagate more vines, or if flexible, they can be used to bind things or weave into structures. That they are cast into the fire means they have no life in them or purpose remaining for them.

### III. CHRISTIANS ARE THE BRANCHES

#### A. Qualifications for bearing fruit:

- 1. The branch must be attached to the vine - John 15:4-5
- 2. The branch must produce fruit from this attachment
  - a. Sanctification - become like Him - Rom 6:22; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10
  - b. Spirituality - behave like Him - Gal. 5:22-24
  - c. Souls - busy like Him - Rom. 1:13
- 3. The branch must produce fruit that glorifies that attachment
  - a. The quality of the fruit is not the branches' responsibility. The power is in the Gospel, not the bearers of it
  - b. The quantity of the fruit is not the responsibility of the branches. God gives the increase - 1Cor. 3:6
  - c. Branches simply bear the fruit; it is the duty of the vinedresser to judge the fruit. There are four fruits listed: no fruit, fruit, more fruit, and much fruit. The more firmly the branch is attached to the vine, the more fruit the branch produces.

#### B. The state of fruitlessness:

- 1. Loss of fellowship - Cast out, no longer attached, no longer in fellowship
- 2. Loss of vitality - Withered, lifeless, dead and waiting for the fire
- 3. Loss of reward - 1Cor. 3:13-15

### IV. LIFE IS IN THE TRUE VINE

#### A. Unhindered prayers - John 15:7, 14:13-14

#### B. Unending love - John 15:9-11

#### C. Uncommon joy - John 15:11-13

- 1. Joy is Divine in nature; it originates with God and is only given by God. It is absolutely unaffected by earthly or material things.
- 2. Joy is not dependent upon happiness; God's joy abides at all times and circumstances, even the most difficult
- 3. Joy is the product of faith and produces faithfulness to the Lord
  - a. Neh. 8:10; 1John 1:1-4