

I AM The True Vine

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Date: 31 May 2026

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[0 : 00] Well, as we turn back to God's Word, we come to our final I am saying in the Gospel of John.

The Good Shepherd, the resurrection and the life. And this morning, the way, the truth and the life. And the message that we received as we came to study, come, believe in me, follow me, believe I am He.

And then we see there, enter by me, be saved, I lay down my life. And as we saw this morning, when we looked at John 3.16, we see that Jesus says, enter by me, I am the way.

The truth is, be saved. And I lay down my life. Why does He lay down His life? So that we can have eternal life. And then the resurrection and the life were twice told in the passage, believe in me.

And then this morning, for those that were troubled, believe in God, believe also in me. And it takes us to our passage tonight, for those that believe the importance of then abiding.

[1 : 43] Abiding in the vine. And we see in verses 4, where it tells us, abide in me, whoever abides in the vine. Verse 5, abides in me.

Verse 7, abide in me. My words abide in you. Verse 9, abide in my love. Verse 10, abide in my love. Abide in His love.

Your fruit should abide. Abide in my love. And we're told the importance of abiding. I never put it up there, but there's also a warning that we see in verse 6, about what happens for those that do not abide in the vine.

And as we go through the passage, we'll look at what that teaches us, and what it is that we're going to learn, all being well together, as we come.

So in terms of our passage that we have, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

[2 : 54] For apart from me, you can do nothing. And Jesus said of Himself, I am the true vine. If you just go back, sorry, just so I can settle anybody's nerves when they see that there are so many points there.

We'll look at what Jesus said about being the true vine, and abiding a part, and that will be the main part of our service this evening. But there are four other points there that I just want to highlight, and we'll step through them at the end.

So don't worry that there are going to be five points, all of equal length. Just to settle you now, the first points will be that wee bit longer, and then there'll be four shorter points, and I will try and keep to that.

So abiding a part, abiding example, abiding joy, abiding friendship, and abiding fruit. And they're very much just taken from the text that we have before us this evening.

So we move on in the slides. Jesus refers to Himself as, I am the true vine, and my father is a vine dresser.

[4 : 09] Why does he use this kind of metaphor as he speaks of himself and speaks of his father? Well, we sang in Psalm 80, and we can see there, before us, that we have what the psalmist reflects on as the children of Israel have been taken out of Egypt.

And he refers to them as being brought out as a vine. And then what happens is, God clears the ground, He drove out the nations, Egypt, Israel was planted, and they took deep root and filled the land.

The promise that was given to Abram that his children would be as much as the sand on the seashore and the stars in heaven, to the extent that they covered the land that was given to them.

And then we go on and we read in Isaiah, Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines. He built a watchtower in the midst of it and he hewed out a wine vat in it. And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

[5 : 29] We see there again the figurative speaking of Israel being a vine and how God cleared the ground but then when God came looking for a yield of fruit, the grapes were only wild.

And then he goes on in verse 7, For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are as pleasant planting. What did we know about the line of Judah?

David was of the line of Judah and out of the line of Judah Jesus was to come. And he looked for justice and behold bloodshed, for righteousness, but behold an outcry.

What God came looking for he didn't find within the vineyard. And then finally in Isaiah 53, For he grew up before him like a young plant, like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one whom men hid their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

[6 : 43] We see there that no ground was prepared, but out no pomp, no circumstance, but out of the ground came a plant, a tender plant.

And we all know in terms of the birth of Jesus, we've looked at it time and time again over the years. How Jesus came and was born in a stable. But we see here there was no majesty that we should look upon him or desire him.

But he was bruised, he was despised, he was rejected for each and every one of us here this evening. But only in him, when God came looking before to the vineyard for justice, he found none. For righteousness, it was an outcry. But if we come to Jesus, only in Jesus do we truly find justice and do we find righteousness.

righteousness. So we see why Jesus now calls himself the true vine. The true vine in God is the vine dresser.

[7 : 53] In the past, God had prepared the ground for the children of Israel. But then there was a way prepared for a son coming. John the Baptist came proclaiming and preparing the way.

And here we have Jesus now standing before the disciples and saying to them, I am the true vine. My father is the vine dresser.

And what does he then go on to teach us? We then see that in me, sorry, 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. It's a difficult verse when we read it.

It talks about separation. We see when we look at the commentators, they have differences of opinion as to what this passage actually teaches us.

[8 : 52] You'll find that they go into the depths of how grapes were planted in ancient Near East and provide different discussions as to whether the word should be taken away, should it be lifted up.

But as we have it here, what it talks about here is a separation. A separation that's going to take place. And as we read on, we have to think and reflect on what we saw on one of our earlier slides where we see that Jesus spoke about not just following him, not just coming to him, the importance of believing, believing in him.

Every single person that comes to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior believes in him. They don't stand at a distance. What do we learn from the passage that we had there in verse 2?

We see that there is going to be a separation. we can read earlier on in John, John 6, 66, that there was those that followed Jesus.

They were part of the group for all intents and purposes. When they were seen by others, they maybe spoke the same as everybody else that was there. But when the word became difficult for them, they walked away.

[10 : 23] They left. reject. And as Lainey says, they are not all disciples or followers or believers. Some listen and learn for a time, but then turn away rejecting Jesus and his teaching.

It's a hard message. Not all believers or not all disciples are believers, should I say. Some listen and learn for a time, but then turn away rejecting Jesus and his teaching.

as you search your own heart as you come here this evening. Where are you? Are you coming here just to learn a wee bit more about Jesus?

Or are you coming to believe in Jesus? Knowing that as we learnt this morning that he is the way, the truth, and the life. Knowing that he promises us riches untold that if we come and believe in him. And even when things do get difficult, we can trust in Jesus. Not in our own strength, but we can trust in Jesus. Do you need to move from a position of following to believing this evening?

[11 : 40] What does the fruit look like in a believer? Jesus said, I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever abides in me and I am him, he bears much fruit. There's two passages that many of us can think of and turn to when we think of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5.22.

We can turn again to 2 Peter 1.5-8. The list that we see from Galatians, many of you can probably recite it, you know it, you've learnt it, you can sing it.

What Peter teaches us when we look to supplement your faith, he says to us, make every effort to supplement your faith. And what is your faith?

Your faith is your belief in Jesus. Make every effort it's not something that we do passively. We have to work at it, we have to be intentional.

[12 : 42] Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly love.

Sorry, brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you're believing in Jesus tonight, are you making every effort to supplement your faith? Are you intentionally reading God's word, learning about God's word, and using what you're learning from God's word?

God's word. It says there about pruning. I don't have a vineyard at home where I've learnt about vineyards I've read.

But those that keep vineyards, they tell us that some of the pruning takes place during the growing season. But the main pruning takes place in the fall or winter when the grower prunes the vine severely to prepare it for the next growing season.

[14 : 06] As young Christians, as we grow, God clips, God snips away from us the things that are going to stop us growing and bearing fruit.

Places that we maybe once had a desire to go to that desire has taken away. Language that we maybe once used has taken away from us. Things that we maybe had a taste for is removed.

And as we mature in our faith, many will know that sometimes the pruning we can receive can be more severe. And I don't want to belittle the experiences of anybody here this evening.

But what I would seek to do is try and encourage you that while you go through that pruning, what we learn about, if we think of nature and the pruning that takes place is to prepare the vine for the next growing season.

That as God works in our lives and God takes away from us things that maybe hinder our growth or aren't going to bless us in our growth, that God is preparing us for the next growing season.

[15 : 18] will there be an opportunity to bear fruit? And we'll see that later on in the passage. There are hardships that we endure, difficult providences in our lives, but be encouraged that God is still with us and God is going to bless us and that may involve further fruit that is born through our witness in this world.

As we move on we see that the passage very clearly tells us that if we abide in the vine, not apart from the vine, but in the vine, we come and we believe in Jesus, there are blessings, there are rewards.

We see in verse 5 that we bear much fruit. Verse 7 our prayers are answered verse 8 God is glorified. Verse 8 we're proven to be disciples.

Verse 11 we have a life full of joy. And verses 14 and 15 that Jesus calls us friend. Isn't that a great encouragement for those that believe in Jesus?

That we receive these blessings in our lives. I want you to be encouraged by that. To recognize that by abiding in the vine that we receive so much blessing from God.

[16 : 57] But you see there is a second column on the page. Verses 5 and 6. if you're apart and you're not within the vine and bound to the vine tells us very bluntly you can do nothing.

You can do nothing in and of yourselves. And then we come to this picture of the branches that aren't growing and bearing fruit in the vine.

we spoke earlier on of a separation that was going to take place. It doesn't take us long to jump forward to a day that has been promised when Jesus will return and there will be a great separation.

And we see there that the branches that are taken off are thrown away. They're left to wither and they're withered they're gathered. Only good for being thrown into the fire and burned.

For those that live apart from the vine we're painting a very difficult a very hard picture but that's what God's word teaches us.

[18 : 20] For those on the left hand side of that diagram there there is much blessing. Why? For abiding in the vine.

but those that are apart from the vine that decide that the vine or coming to Jesus isn't for them. A very different picture very hard picture is painted for us and we can't ignore it.

You may say looking at that well I've got friends. I haven't given my life to Jesus but I've got friends. what did we look at this morning?

We looked at the friend that had been with Jesus for three years but he betrayed him. Can you truly say that you have a friend that sticks closer than a brother? That you have a friend that desires to know you and to love you each and every day and has promised to be with you to the very end of the age?

do you know that friendship? Have you experienced that friendship? You may say well I've got joy in my life. The question I have to ask you is how long does that joy last for?

[19 : 41] And when do you go seeking other fulfilment to replace the joy that you had? But coming to Jesus we are told that our life is full of joy.

a joy that we cannot express by coming and knowing Jesus. We spoke this morning about coming on the way.

You've got to think that if you do not know Jesus as your Lord and as your Saviour that as you read the word that we have tonight and the words that we have looked at in times past what God is telling us about the importance of coming and abiding in Jesus.

We can move on. We have an abiding example. We have an abiding example in that Jesus came and as the Father loved him he also loved the Father.

But what does the message say? It says that he loved us I loved you. That call comes out again and abide in my love. 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.

[21 : 08] Jesus gave us an example. Are we prepared to follow that example as he calls us? As he does in the passage, abide in my love? Are we going to follow the example that Jesus gave us?

We move on. We spoke out already about joy but Jesus speaks here, these things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.

Where are you chasing joy tonight? because your joy will only be full in Jesus. That's the truth of the word that he's given to us.

That my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. Who desires that joy this evening? Who desires to know that joy and to live that joy?

The psalmist said, you make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand our pleasures evermore.

[22 : 16] God's word is so encouraging to us. Calling us to him. Showing us the path of life. And that in God's presence there is fullness of joy.

The psalmist knew it. He wrote about it. We have it as a legacy. But we don't just leave it as a legacy. We recognize that Jesus came and he wants us to know that joy.

That joy that he has, he desires to share with us. And we can have it as abiding joy, that our joy would indeed be full.

And then we come to abiding friendship. Imagine what it says there. You are my friends if you do what I command.

No longer do I call you servants. For the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you.

[23 : 21] We shared with the children this morning how does Christ execute the office of prophet. Everything that Jesus received from his father he has shared with us through his word.

And as we come to him, as we abide in him, what does he say? I no longer call you servants. I call you friends. And I ask you, do you know Jesus as your friend this evening? Do you know him as the friend that you can come to in prayer? Do you wake up in the morning being grateful for the fact that Jesus is your friend?

And then we come to what I would have to say is one of the most amazing passages or verses that we have come across.

It's not that we chose Christ because what does it say to us? It's not that we chose Christ you did not choose me but I chose you.

[24 : 38] Not only did he choose you if you know him and love him as your Lord and as your saviour that you believe in him he appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.

That you should go and bear fruit and what does it say about that fruit? That your fruit should abide. do you desire to know what it is to abide in Christ?

And do you recognise that abiding in Christ that he has appointed you to go and bear fruit? Does that not fill you with joy? You might think I've got nothing to offer.

What can I do? do you? I'm old. I'm not fit. I haven't got the gift of speaking. But God has appointed you to go and bear fruit in whatever area of the vineyard you are in.

Not everybody that's in the vineyard gets the opportunity to say I grew that vine. An interesting part and maybe you've probably heard this before.

[25 : 49] Guy walks into NASA and he meets the man the janitor who's brushing the floor and he says to the janitor what are you doing? I'm helping to put men in space.

He had the vision that while he was working there that he had a role to play in putting men in space. God has appointed you to bear fruit. Never ever underestimate what God has appointed you to do. Never ever say I can't do it. Don't trust in your own strength. We saw what happened with Peter this morning as he trusted in his own strength. Jesus very quickly said to him, your strength is nothing. You'll be tested and you'll fail. Trust in me. Are you abiding in Christ and recognize that he has chosen you, chosen you to go and bear fruit?

And the beauty of that is that that fruit will abide. will abide forever. But he doesn't finish there. He goes on and he says, so whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

[27 : 05] He calls us friend. He's chosen us. He's appointed us. And then he tells us that whatever we ask in the Father's name, he may give it to you.

How persistent are we in our prayers? We all have burdens, we all have ones that we would love to see come as fruit. Are we truly asking God each and every day to see them come, that fruit may indeed be born?

Are we asking God to use us, having appointed us, that he will use us for his honour, for his glory, that we can indeed know what it is to bear fruit for him, by abiding in him.

Not apart from him, because we learnt through verse five and verse six, that if we are apart from him, we can do nothing.

We're thrown away, we wither, we're gathered, we're thrown in the fire, and we're burned. But if we are with him, and we abide in him, as the true vine, what joy, what blessing, what fruit there is for those who come to him.

[28 : 26] I am the true vine. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I in him, he is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, you can do nothing.

Are you abiding in the vine this evening? Are you abiding in Jesus, or are you still apart from him? You know what you must do.

You must come, and you must believe. In doing so, we've seen that the benefits to each one that comes, knowing him, abiding in the example that he gives, abiding joy, abiding friendship, and go on and see abiding fruit.

Are you abiding in the vine? I pray that you are. Let us pray. that that