

*The True Vine*  
John 15:1-11  
Reading: Mark 4:14-20

LORD'S SUPPER

Bethany Baptist Church  
January 9, 2022

...pray...

How many of you plan to *put out a garden* this spring...?

When I think of gardening at BBB, I think of *Earl & Betty, Stan & Debbie, Russell Vinson, Josh & Rachel, Dan & Regan*, and of course I **must** mention my dear wife's *back-porch flower, fern, & fauna extravaganza!*

And many of us can still remember *Roy Hagerman*, one of Sedalia's *certified master gardeners*.

Gardening is *hard work*, but it can be *fruitful work* (most of the time)!

There is a *lot* to good gardening (soil preparation, seed selection, fertilizer, timing).

I recall my father starting **65** *tomato plants* in the spare bedroom early one spring.

And some years, *despite all your efforts*, something fails – *barren branches...*

They might as well have been **no** *branches at all*.

Jesus has a story about *tending a garden* – more spec., *a vineyard*.

**Join me as I read John 15:1-11.**

This is Jesus' *Allegory of the Vineyard*.

The lesson here is simple: ***abiding in Jesus is the key to the Christian life.*** 2X

The context is immediately after Jesus & His disciples have shared the *Last Supper* and *His Upper Room Discourse* (chap 13&14).

It's been a *long and challenging* night; now the *cross* is less than **12** hours away.

**14:31** – *“I do exactly as the Father commanded me. Get up, let us go from here”.*

**Just as Jesus is about to go away, He teaches His disciples to stay close!**

1. **The allegory (vv.1-6).**
2. **The application (vv.7-11).**

**The first six verses of John 15 form an *allegory* (illustration).**

1. Jesus was a *remarkable* teacher. He didn't simply put *points on a marker panel*, He told stories and used illustrations that brought truth alive!
  - a. *OT history, current events, parable, metaphor, simile, allegory.*
  - b. An *allegory* is a somewhat complex story that teaches a moral truth.
    - i. As we examine Jesus' *allegory of the vineyard*, we'll see that the story has *several moving parts*.
  - c. In contrast, Jesus' *parable of the lost sheep* (99 & 1) has *few* moving parts: *determined shepherd*, the **99** *safe sheep*, and the **one** *wandering sheep!*
2. Let me introduce the three characters (categories of characters) in Jesus' *allegory of the vineyard*. I'll mention them in the order they first appear:
  - a. V.1 - **Jesus**, the *true vine*. Indeed, "*I Am the true vine!* Here is the **7/final** of Jesus' "*I Am*" declarations in John (repeated in **v.5**). Jesus is claiming *deity*...!
    - i. The *vine* is the source of everything in a grapevine. It reaches down into the soil for *moisture and nutrients*, produces *lifegiving sap*, and pushes it **up** the *main vine* and **on out** into the *branches*, which eventually produce *fruit*.
    - ii. By *true vine*, Jesus, Jesus is claiming to fulfill and perform the redemptive tasks that God had once charged to Israel:
      1. God claimed Israel to be His vine that He had plucked up out of Egypt and *planted* in the Promised Land.
      2. God had constituted Israel with a *redemptive purpose*; to *declare His glory among the nations!*
      3. But over the centuries Israel proved to be a *fruitless nation*.

4. It failed to reflect God's glory abroad! Israel was *apostate*.
- iii. But through *faith* in Jesus, God's Son provides a way to enter God's kingdom.
    1. He is the *one and only*, the *divine*, the **true** source of life.
    2. In Jesus is *life*, and the *life is the light of men*! He is *the way*, and the *truth*, and the *life*...
- b. **V.1** – Second, the **Heavenly Father** is the *vine dresser*.
    - i. The *vine dresser* ("*farmer*") takes care of the *vineyard*, its *vines*, and its *fruit*.
    - ii. His duties include *planting*, *fertilizing*, *watering*, *removing the fruitless vines*, and *pruning the fruitful*.
  - c. **V.2** – And growing out from the *vine* are the many **branches**, wishing to *identified with Jesus* and required to be *fruitful for Jesus*.
  - d. There is only **one true, life-giving vine**, there is only **one divine vine-dresser**, .... but there are many *branches*, and you can sort them out into **two** categories.
    - i. In **vv. 4-5**, Jesus points to the **fruitful branch**.
    - ii. In **vv.4 & 6** our Lord warns us of the **unfruitful branch**
      - **Follow in you NT as I read vv.4-6.**
    - iii. **Why** do you plant *two rows of sweetcorn* or *six tomato plants* or a *vineyard full of grapevines*...? You want the fruit!
      1. God wants you and me to be *fruitful*.

- iv. What is the *key* to being a fruitful branch? Do you see it in v.4 & v.5 ? ***Abiding!***
1. Just as the branch abides in the vine, the Christian must *abide in Jesus* to bear fruit.
  2. What does it mean for the Christian to *bear fruit* and what does it mean for the Christian *abide in the true Vine?*
  3. We'll see that in the second half, as we consider the *allegory's explanation.*
- v. What is the *downfall* of the *unfruitful vines*? They failed to ***abide*** in the one true vine...the only source of life.
1. What happens to the *unfruitful*?
  2. Do you ever use a pair of *pruning shears* or a *lopper* in your garden?
  3. The unproductive vine is *cut off. thrown away, dried up, gathered up, and burned up.*
  4. They **aren't** fruitful so they **don't** belong.
- vi. So there is the *true Vine*, the *Vinedresser*, and there are *abiding* and ***unabiding*** vines; *fruitful* and ***unfruitful***.

3. Before we *drill down deeper* into the parable's explanation I want to chase a *Greek language rabbit* (vv.4,5)!
  - a. **V.5** - we read, "*he who abides in Me.*" Jesus takes the Greek verb *abide* (*remain*; Gr. **μῆ.νῶ**), turns it into a verb-form called a *participle*, then introduces it with the Greek term for *the*.
    - i. So in the Greek text (v.5) the expression underlying "*he who abides*" is simply '**ο μῆνω** – "*the abider.*"
    - ii. It's almost like a *title*! Wouldn't *you* like to wear that title?
    - iii. Look, there he goes, *the abider*! Do you know her, she's one of those *abiding ones*? Those people in that church, they just can stay away from Jesus; they are *all in abiders*!

Now let's hear Jesus' explanation of what it means to be "*an abider.*"

**(Read vv.7-11).**

1. As I've just pointed, to *abide in* is to *remain in* or  *dwell in*. A branch growing out of the *vine* is an effective illustration of abiding!
2. I'd like to further point out that Jesus is now detailing the *fruitful life* of the believer who *abides in Him* and *bears good fruit*.
3. And the *fruit* God is looking for in you can be broadly categorized as ***spiritual virtues*** (Gal 5:2; *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*); ***spirit & truth worship*** (Jn 4; Heb 13:15; *Through [Jesus] then, let us constantly offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the **fruit** of lips that give thanks to His name; **new souls in the Kingdom** (Matt 28:19 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations....”).*
4. Here. in Jesus' story, our Lord seems to highlight a harvest of *spiritual virtues* (similar to Paul's *Fruit of the Spirit list* in Galatians 5).
  - a. In **v.7**, Jesus teaches on the fruit of *prayer* and the necessary condition of *abiding*.
    - i. This time, not only are *you* to abide Jesus, Jesus' *word* (His Scriptures) are to *abide* in you.
    - ii. After all, we are commanded to *pray according to Jesus will*, and Jesus' *will* is found in Jesus' *word*.
    - iii. Beloved in the Lord, God answers the prayer of the *Scripture-soaked abider!* ☺ That's good *fruit!*

- b. In **v.8**, God is looking for *much fruit*!
- i. **Andreas Kostenberger** points out that God evaluates *quantity*!
    1. Our verses refer to *does **not** bear fruit, **bears** fruit, bears **more** fruit, bears **much** fruit.*
    2. This reminds me of Jesus' *remarkable Parable of the Four Soils*. Only the fourth, fruitful soil pictured the *true believer (yielded a crop)*, and even the true believer demonstrates *various degrees of productivity*(30,60,100).
  - ii. Lots of *fruit* produces lots of *glory* – for God! Because when your life begins to demonstrate *much* fruit, it's because **God** is at work in your life. **You can't produce the Fruit of the Spirit!**
  - iii. *And...lots of fruit produces lots of assurance. Only a real Christian demonstrates real virtue, worship, and evangelism.*
- c. In **vv.9-10**, God is looking for you to *abide* (remain) in the *love* of the Father and the Son. *But how do you abide in their love...?*
- i. According to v.9 you *imitate* Jesus by living in obedience to the *commands* of Jesus: *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*
  - ii. I'm always tempted to make this so *esoteric*, so *abstract*! What a *relief*! If you *love* Jesus you'll *obey* Him; if you are *obeying* it can **only** be that you *love* Him and **He** *loves* you!
  - iii. After all (10), that's what Jesus says **He** does!



- d. Finally, **v.11**, Jesus promises the fruit of *full joy*.
- i. Will you *abide* in Jesus?
  - ii. Stay in the *Word*?
  - iii. *Pray* to the Father?
  - iv. Keep Jesus' *commandments*?
  - v. *Love* Him – be loved *by* Him?
  - vi. Will you *bear much fruit*!
- e. **Joy! Do you want it Do you see it? (Read v.11.)**

***Are you “an abider”?* I pray this morning that Jesus *grant you joy, and your joy be made full!***

***...pray...***

**Lord's Supper**