

"I AM THE TRUE VINE"



Warm up

How are you at getting plants to grow?

Green-fingered, hit and miss, disastrous or disinterested?

If you were describing your life as a plant, what kind of condition is it in: pretty healthy, under-nourished, dried up, stunted, thriving....?

Background

The Old Testament is rich in allusions to vines/vineyards. Check out Ps 80:7-19 & Isaiah 5:1-7 (if time, also Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 19:10-14, Hosea 10:1-2)

- How would the Jewish people have understood the imagery of vines / gardeners?
- Who did they understand the vine/s to be?
- What is the state of the vine in each of these Old Testament references?

"I am the true vine"

Jesus calls himself the True Vine in John 15, on the night before he died. He and his disciples were making their way from their Passover meal celebrations in the Upper Room to an olive grove on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. It is quite likely they passed through a vineyard on route.

➤ Read John 15:1-8

Given the Old Testament background, what claim is Jesus making for himself here?

How does the imagery of the vine and branches help us understand the relationship between Jesus and his followers?

What benefit does the vine provide for the branches?

What is the role of God the Father in this relationship?

What is the purpose of the vine?

- In the natural world?
- In this spiritual picture?

What kind of fruit does God desire to see in his followers? Check out Galatians 5:22-23

In vineyards, the vine is pruned very hard each year to promote the growth of fruit, rather than just leaves. What might "pruning" v2, look like in real life?

How does this help us understand difficult times we might experience?

What happens to fruitless branches? v2, v6

V7 talks about "remaining" (*abide, stay joined, remain joined, get your life in*). What might this look like in everyday life?

➤ Read John 15:9-16

This section is covering the same material as v1-8, but without the vine imagery. How does this help us understand what "remaining" looks like? How much is it active, how much passive?

How does the vine imagery help us understand what love and obedience look like?

What are the incredible benefits of "remaining" in Christ?

➤ To reflect

What do you find most challenging about this passage?

What do you find most encouraging about this passage?

Where does this passage challenge you to change your everyday patterns?

Where does this passage challenge you to review your everyday goals?

➤ To pray

Make sure you have time to pray together as a group, bringing to God some of the things you have discussed as well as other personal issues within the group.