

I AM...the True Vine

I AM

John 15:1-11

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Our I AM series concluded this week with Jesus' declaration, "I Am the True Vine." Over the last few weeks we've considered these core announcements that Jesus makes about Himself and what they mean in our every day lives. Most importantly, Jesus emphasizes that He is not simply one of many choices we have, but the **ONE** option - the Light of the World, the Gate, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Bread of Life, and the Way, the Truth, and the Life. **Thinking back, what resonated for you throughout this sermon series? What do you need to remember most?**

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples during the Passover meal, when they were troubled over what was apparently coming next. The imagery of the vine was a significant part of Israel's culture and history, and therefore would have been very familiar to them. This union He describes between a branch and a vine describes a relationship so close that it is hard to see where one ends and the other begins. Instead of tirelessly trying to live the Christian life, all that is necessary for us to do is *abide in Him* to receive the grace and love that cause us to grow and ripen in our faith. **How does this truth take the pressure off of us from trying so hard to do good in our lives?**

We can manage many things in our lives without Jesus -- sincerity, good works, relationships, generosity -- but on our own we wither and lose the joy God has for us. Essentially, we can't truly love the way we are meant to love unless we remain in Him. Jesus knows we have a longing in our life for true life and that we can't accomplish anything without Him. **How do we remain in the vine so that He will prune our branches of bad habits such as self-centeredness, bad attitudes, and lack of kindness? What habits and discipline will draw you closer to Him - staying in the Word, prayer, fellowship, worship, faith?**