

## John 15:1-4 *Abide in the True Vine*

*John 15 is a rich chapter that takes place at the last gathering Jesus had with His disciples. This is at the heart of His farewell discourse – the last intimate words he leaves with His disciples before His suffering. Let's take to heart these life-giving words.*

### Read John 15:1-17

1. For those of you who took part in the 1-3 John study, what themes from 1-3 John do you also see in this short passage?
2. Before we dive into each verse, it is important to realize that verse 1 is the last of the 'I AM' statements in the gospel of John. Each statement is listed below. Underline the one that resonates with your heart most today.

*Jesus is the bread of life* (John 6:35) ... He alone can satisfy your soul.

*Jesus is the light of the world* (John 8:12)... He alone can defeat the darkness.

*Jesus is the door of the sheep* (John 10:7)... He is the only way to enter God's Kingdom

*Jesus is the good shepherd* (John 10:11)... He lays down his life to protect & save his sheep.

*Jesus is the resurrection and the life* (John 11:25)... He is the source of eternal life & through faith in Him we will also receive a new resurrected body that will never die again.

*Jesus is the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6)... He is the only means to the Father.

*Jesus is the true vine* (John 15:1)... He is the only source of life & fruitfulness.

### Read John 15:1

3. What do you notice in 15:1 about the Father? What do you notice about Jesus?
  - a. Read Isaiah 5:1-7. Isaiah is singing a song for his beloved (God) about God's vineyard. Who is the vineyard in this song? Hint: see verse 7.

Was this vineyard fruitful?

- b. Read Isaiah 27:2-6. Who keeps and waters this vineyard?

Who must lay hold of His protection and peace?

What is the promise for this vineyard? See verse 6

*Isaiah 27:6 gives us hope. God's people WILL someday take root. They WILL blossom and put forth roots. They WILL fill the whole world with fruit...but not on their own. They are utterly incapable of this on their own. Israel and Judah (and you & me for that matter) could never be the true, fruit bearing vine. But in John 15:1, we discover who is. One has come who will make it possible for us to live the fruit bearing, God glorifying lives we were created for. Let's continue on in John 15.*

#### Read John 15:2

4. In verse 1 we see that Jesus, not Israel, is the true vine. Who do the fruitless branches represent in verse 2? *Hint: In 1 John we learned that those who do not love Jesus and His people and do not follow His commands are not true followers of Christ. They might proclaim to be, but their lives expose the reality of their need to be born again.*
- Who do the fruitful branches represent?
  - What is done to the fruitful branches? Why?

What does this 'pruning' look like in the life of a Christian?

**Application:** What is the Lord laying on your heart that He desires to 'prune' from your life?

*Our God is not a God who is distant from His creation. On the contrary, our God is so loving and personal that He is intimately involved with our lives and refuses to leave us alone. It is not always comfortable, but I am grateful that He doesn't abandon us in our weakness, but rather comes around us and gently prunes us. His kindness towards us leads us to repentance. He loves us so much that He **will** bring to completion the good work that He started in us. He will make us into the people that He created us to be. We will reflect His glory.*

### Read John 15:3

5. Jesus' words to the crowds were often 'repent and believe in the gospel' (Mark 1:15). Read John 13:10-11. The disciples had already heeded this call, repented, and believed in Jesus as their Christ (Messiah). His Word had washed the 11 believing disciples. How can the gospel wash us clean?

Read Jesus prayer for us in John 17:17. How are we sanctified/kept 'clean' and growing daily?

*Through belief in Jesus' perfect life lived in our place, His sacrificial death in our place for our sins and His victorious resurrection, we are cleansed from our sins and declared 'clean' in God's sight. Every day He is making us into what we are already declared to be because of our union with Christ: perfect, righteous, and holy.*

### Read John 15:4

6. The first word in this verse is a very important theme for Jesus (and for John...just read his epistles!). Count how many times you see the word 'abide' in John 15:1-17.

The Greek word for abide is *menō*. It means to remain, to stay, to continue in. What does it mean practically to 'abide' in Jesus?

*To abide in something, it is very clear that you must first be in it! You can abide (remain) in your house right only if you are currently in your house! You must first be in it. Read Romans 11:24. We, as Gentiles (non-Jews), are the wild olive shoots that were grafted into the cultivated olive tree (that is Christ), not by our own works, but by His grace. We are in Him, along with all the people of God throughout history who have put their faith in the Messiah. We can cultivate this relationship with our Lord both privately and corporately.*

What ways can you cultivate this communion with Christ privately?

What ways can we cultivate a greater love for Christ corporately?

7. What is the secret to our fruitfulness in John 15:4?

*There is a profoundly relational reality in these words. We are not only to profess belief in Christ. We are to be in daily communion with Him. We are to meet with Him, love Him and know Him as our ever-present helper and friend. The beauty of the gospel is that **we get Christ**. We get a relationship that satisfies the deepest longings of our soul. How have you experienced this reality of Jesus as your ever present helper and friend?*

In what ways do you long to experience this reality more?

8. What 'fruit' do you think Jesus is referring to?

Read Galatians 5:22 to see the fruit of the Spirit that is produced from our union with Christ. Record them below.

*\*Please note that these fruits were never meant to nourish ourselves alone. They are meant to reflect what God is like to a broken world and to advance God's work. When we are filled with these fruit they will be used for God's glory and other's good.*

9. How much can we accomplish in our own strength (that is of eternal value)?

How can we see more victory over temptation, more joy in our marriage and/or deliverance from the emotional bondage of our circumstances? Is it through trying harder?

*If you have repented and believed in Christ, you are a true branch, united to Christ. You are forgiven, cleansed and given a new heart to live a new life. You can only live this new life through an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. You were created for relationship with Him, and you can only live the Christian life through communion with Him. Let us see this current moment in history as a time to seek the Lord this week in the Word and in prayer, ask for the grace to put sin to death, walk by His Spirit and enjoy dwelling in His presence. Let us trust in Him, the One who is in control of all circumstances in our lives, and has every day of our lives written in His books (Psalm 139:16).*

*He loves you. He knows you. He hears your prayers. Rest in Him this week.*

*\*Use this space not simply to record answers, but to respond to the LORD in prayer.*

ADORATION: How can I love & praise God on the basis of these verses? What do I see here that I can praise Him for?

REPENTANCE: How do I fail to realize this in my life? What wrong behaviour, harmful emotions or attitudes result when I forget this?

GOSPEL THANKS: How can I thank Jesus, the ultimate revelation of this attribute of God (reflected on in #1) and the answer to this sin or need of mine (reflected on in #2).

ASPIRATION: How does this show me what I should or could be or do? How would I be different if this truth were powerfully real to me?