

The Great I Am

I Am The True Vine

(Je 2:20-22)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on "The Great I Am."
 - a. Keep in mind Jesus Himself is the "Great I Am."
 - i. **Jn 8:58** "...Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."
 - b. We have studied all six previous "I am" statements of Jesus in the book of John.
 - i. Everything from Jesus saying, "I am the Bread of Life" to "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."
 - b. Today we are going to look at our final "I Am" statement of John.
 - i. "I Am The True Vine."
 1. **Jn 15:1** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser."¹
 - ii. This choice Vine was from pure seed.
 1. **Je 2:21** "Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed..."
3. Through the years this section of verses has been used to perpetuate many a doctrine or idea.
 - a. Today I want us to weed through some of the false doctrines and then focus on the main thrust of what Jesus is saying.
4. Let us look now at what Jesus said concerning Himself, "I am the True Vine."

I. Misconceptions About Jesus' Illustration

- A. This authorizes denominationalism
 1. Many have used these verses as "proof texts" that Jesus is ok with denominationalism.
 2. However this falls short in context and ultimately truth.
 - i. **Jn 15:3-4** "Already **you** are clean because of the word that I have spoken to **you**. 4 Abide in me, and I in **you**. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can **you**, unless **you** abide in me." (emphasis mine)
 - ii. **Jn 15:5-6** "I am the vine; **you** are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in **him**, **he** it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me **you** can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me **he** is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned." (emphasis mine)
 - a. Notice all the pronouns. This is not talking about different denominations.
 - b. Jesus is applying it directly to the disciples He is speaking and thus it is dealing with individuals not denominations.
- B. This is only talking about evangelism
 1. Many a sermon in and out of the church have used if not exclusively almost exclusively concerning evangelism.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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2. If, though, this is done this illustration is stripped of its complete meaning.
 - i. Remember, as mentioned above, that the branches are the disciples.
 - ii. If this is the case then the branches are producing fruit not more branches.
 - iii. What is in consideration here is "Christian fruit."
 - a. Holiness
 1. **Ro 6:20-22** "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life."
 - b. Good works
 1. **Co 1:10** "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."
 - c. Praising of God
 1. **He 13:15** "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."

II. Fruit Bearing Demands Branch Abiding In The Vine

- A. There is an expectation of the branches to be connected to the True Vine
 1. First Jesus makes it abundantly clear that the branches must be connected.
 - i. **Jn 15:5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."
 - a. If the branches are not connected they are not a part of the Vine.
 - b. In other words one has to be a Christian first ie be connected to the Vine.
- B. There is an expectation of the branches to be more than just connected to the True Vine
 1. Branches have to be more than just connected to be worth something to the vine.
 - i. There are many branches that are connected to the trees around my house but they are not abiding in the tree as they are dead.
 - a. It doesn't take much for them to be broken away from the tree.

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2. Christians must be more than just connected in name to the Vine, they must be abiding in Him.
 - i. This means Christians are living in the vine and receiving instruction from the Vine.
 - a. **I Jn 2:4-6** "Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."
 - ii. This means Christians are living in the vine and producing the fruit of the True Vine.
 - a. **Ga 5:22-23** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

III. Fruit Lacking Demands Branch Severing

- A. There will be those that are connected but not abiding
 1. Unfortunately there are far too many that are by name Christian (connected) but are not living up to that name and are not abiding in the True Vine anymore.
 - i. These are those that have "fallen from grace."
 - a. **Ga 4:5** "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace."
 - ii. These are those that are in need of restoration.
 - a. **Ga 6:1** "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."
 - iii. These are those that are impossible to force to come back to the True Vine.
 - a. **He 6:4-6** "For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt."
- B. If one is only connected and not abiding that one will be severed from the True Vine
 1. Remember what Jesus said.
 - i. **Jn 15:2a, 6** "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away...6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."
 2. If Christians are only connected and thus not bearing fruit they will be dissuaded not pruned.
 - i. Illustration: Work day the Moses family and brush clearing.

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CONCLUSION

1. Brethren there are three things Jesus makes abundantly clear in this illustration.
 - a. First we must be connected to Jesus ie Christians.
 - b. Second we must be abiding in Jesus ie faithful.
 - c. Third we must be producers of the Jesus' fruit ie the fruit of righteousness.
2. Question: Are you connected to, abiding in, and producing as you should?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**