The True Vine and Its Branches

Zanesville, OH | July 1, 2018 | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** John 15:1-17

**Intro**:

* In John 15, we encounter Jesus’ final *“I AM”* statement. Jesus boldly declares: *“I am the true vine”* after which a most engaging and thought-provoking message ensues. The short statement that paves the way for the rest of the chapter is a loaded one finding its roots in the Old Testament.

**Old Testament Significance of The Vine**

1. **A symbol of peace and prosperity:** 1 Kings 4:24; Psa. 128:3; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10
   1. The vines of Palestine were celebrated both for luxuriant growth and for the immense clusters of grapes which they produced, which were sometimes carried on a staff between two men (Num. 13:23).
   2. During Solomon’s reign, a time dominated with much peace and prosperity, metaphors of vines are used to describe the golden age (1 Kings 4:25).
   3. Under the covenant, if the people kept God’s commands, they were blessed with an overabundance of grapes (from vine) which yielded wine. This was a sure sign of peace and prosperity (Lev. 26:5).
2. **A choice people planted by God:** Psa. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; 5:10; Hos. 10:1; Ezek. 15:1-8; 17:5-10; 19:10-14
   1. The Old Testament scriptures is dominated with a wide variety of passages that emphasize Israel as a choice vine planted by God.
   2. Israel as the vine, was called to bear fruit for God. As Palestine was known for its immense clusters of grapes, so too Israel was to bear immense clusters of fruit.
   3. However, when the image of the vine in Old Testament is considered, the faithful reader will note that it is always in a negative light the vine metaphor of Israel is used (Jer. 2:21; Hos. 10:1). Israel tainted themselves by committing sin and forsaking God.

**The True Vine and Its Branches**

1. **Jesus is the true and faithful one:** Lk. 23:41; Jn. 15:1; Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 3:5
   * Israel was planted by God with the intention of them abiding in His will and bearing fruit, but it never happened. Jesus’ bold statement that He is the true vine suggests that where Israel failed, He succeeded. He kept the father’s commands, bore fruit, and accomplished His will.
2. **He is the source of all life:** John 1:4; 6:35, 48, 50-51, 58; 4:13-14; 11:25-26; 14:6; 15:1, 5-6.
   * Jesus as the source of life everlasting is an essential theme in John’s Gospel. Through Him, although we may die physically, we can live again. Nothing else matters but living in Jesus and through Jesus. To truly be alive is to be in Jesus. In Jesus, we can have true peace and prosperity.
3. **We are the branches called to bear fruit:** John 15:2, 4, 6
   * Branches get their source of strength from the vine and thus if we are followers of Christ, it is of utmost importance that we seek to bear fruit in keeping with such a calling with a sense of urgency.
4. **Fruit is borne by abiding in The Vine:** John 15:4-7, 9-10
   * If we abide in Jesus and His commandments, we are more than equipped to bear fruit worthy of being called His disciples. In the immediate context, such fruit is loving one another (John 13:34-35).
5. **Branches are pruned by The Vinedresser:** John 15:1-2
   * The relationship between the vinedresser and the branches is an intimate one. He knows how the branches of the vine are faring from year to year and which ones are more productive or vigorous than others. The vinedresser cares for each branch, pruning it the appropriate amount at the appropriate times. God (the vinedresser) has a close relationship with us (branches) and from time to time we need pruning (Heb. 12:11).

**Final Analysis**

1. Every branch not bearing fruit is thrown into the fire.
2. Every branch that bears good fruit glorifies God and will be rewarded.