

Life on the Vine

John 15:1-8



Our challenge:

- When we talk about **abiding in Christ**
—or being **branches of the Heavenly Vine**
—or being **filled with the Holy Spirit,**
- these are ***spiritual realities you cannot see.***



John 3:8

“The **wind** [**pneuma**] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the **Spirit** [**pneuma**].”

- The work of the Spirit [pneuma] is invisible and mysterious like the blowing of the wind [pneuma]. Both are under God's control.

I can't see what
causes the tides!



- The tides of the earth's oceans are caused by a *powerful force you can't see*: the *gravitational pull of the moon*.
- The Moon is 238,900 miles away.
- Most of the day, you can't see the moon.
- Even when you can see the moon, you *can't see the gravitational force* that causes the tides.

Yet, if you've ever lived on the coast you've seen the effects of the moon's pull twice a day when the tide goes out and when it comes in.

In most places, tides are a few feet.



In Nova Scotia, the high tide in the Bay of Fundy is 53 feet. It causes 160 billion tons of seawater to flow in and out of the bay every day.

- The abiding presence of Christ in the life of a believer is a **spiritual reality** that we cannot see.
- But the power of his presence—as well as its absence—is **unmistakable**.

Life on the Vine—Your One Job

John 15:1-8



JOHN 15:1–8

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ 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. 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.

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. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” (ESV)

"I am the Vine and you are the branches."

In John 15, Jesus describes the **union** between himself and the believer as a **permanent, living connection** between a branch and the vine to which it belongs.



In that living union
between the Vine
and its branches,
the vine supplies
all the *life-giving*
sap the branch
needs to *produce*
much fruit.



The Big Idea:

**God calls you to be a fruitful
branch of the Heavenly Vine.**



1. Jesus Christ is the True Vine.

John 15:1

¹ “I am the true vine . . .

A branch owes all its *fruitfulness*, and even its very *life*, to the Vine.

- Christ means for *his life and power* to actually *flow into* and *through you*.

- Jesus didn't just **die for you**. He rose to come and **live in you**.
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Eternal Second Person of the Trinity, **took on human flesh** so that his spiritual life and power could flow into **all flesh**.
- He **ascended** into heaven so that he and the Father could **send the Holy Spirit** to live in us.

- In the previous chapter of his farewell discourse, John 14, Jesus promised his disciples that upon his return to heaven he would **send the *Holy Spirit*** to them.
- But there is much more to that promise than just his sending the Holy Spirit.



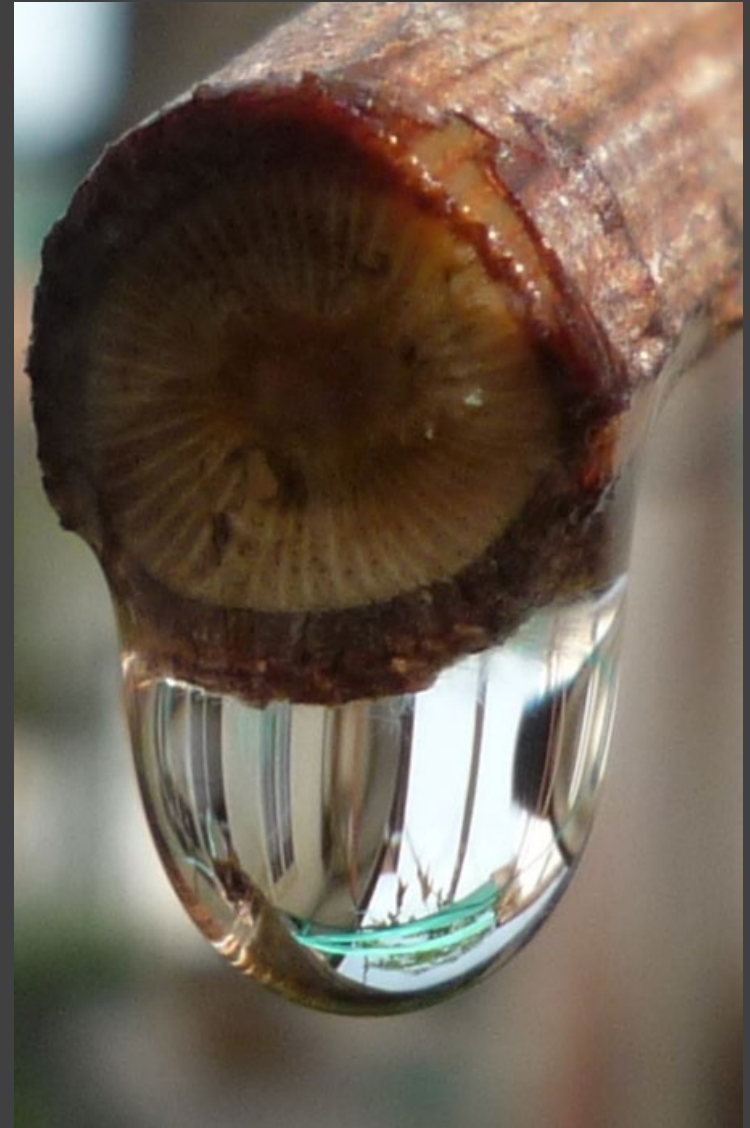
- Jesus promised his disciples that his going away would result in a *closer, more fruitful relationship* with him even than that which they enjoyed during his earthly ministry.

He would *actually come live in* and
through them by the Holy Spirit.

“You know him, for he *dwells with*
you and *will be in you.*”

—John 14:17

- Every spring after pruning, **grapevine sap** oozes from the cut stems, making it look as if the vines are weeping, hence the poetic name: *tears of grapevine* or *bleeding grapevine*.
- Since ancient times, people have believed that grapevine sap possesses incredible curative properties.



John 7:38-39

³⁸ “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Just as the sap from a grapevine *flows from the vine* to the branches, giving them *life* and *producing fruit*, so the *Holy Spirit* flowing into you is your only *source of spiritual life* or the *power to bring forth fruit*.

A Vital, living union

- This living connection to Christ is like the difference between **holding a tool** in your hand and **your hand**.



- You are **not** a tool, an instrument, or a utensil in the Master's hand.
- You are **a living part of his body**.
- You are **attached** to him as a hand to a body—as a branch to a vine—in a **vital, living union**.
- His life flows in you and through you.

Listen every day to the Master as he says to you: *“I am the true vine. All that the vine can ever be to its branch, I will be to you.”*

2. We are his branches.

- *All that the vine possesses belongs to the branches.*
- The vine does not gather nutrients from the soil for itself.
- All that it has is at the disposal of the branches.
- Then consider *this high honor* Christ has bestowed upon you: *all the fruit produced by a vine comes through its branches.*

- Christ has *chosen to work through you.*
- He's in *heaven.*
- You are on *earth.*
- *Whatever fruit he now produces* on earth comes through those of us who are his branches!

- *The branch does not exist for itself*, but to bear fruit that can proclaim the excellence of the vine: it has no reason to exist except to be of service to the vine.
- So **your one job** in life is to bear fruit for the Heavenly Vine Jesus Christ.

What a glorious image of our calling: *as Jesus gives Himself for us*, so we *give ourselves over to him*.

Every *power* of our being,
every *moment* of our life,
every *thought* and *feeling*
belongs to Jesus, so that *from Him* and
for Him we may bring forth fruit.

3. The object of this union is: fruit, more fruit, and much fruit.

John 15:2, 8

² Every branch in me that *does not bear fruit* he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear *more fruit*. . . .⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear *much fruit* and so prove to be my disciples.

The reason this is the first message in our series is to begin with the end in mind:

You were made to **bear fruit.**

More fruit.

Much fruit.

It's your one job!

What is fruit?

Part of the fruit we bear is seen in our *Christ-like life and character*.

Galatians 5:22–23

²² 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.

Here's the best part:

- God does not demand that you bear fruit without providing the means to do it.
- God *gives what He asks*, and *works what He commands*.
- God has set His heart on producing fruit, more fruit, and much fruit in us.

Christ waits to work it in us.

All He asks is,

that we *set our heart's desire* on it,
entrust ourselves to His working and
care,

and *joyfully look to Him* to do His
perfect work in us.

I Am the True Vine

- SENTENCE 15 "I am the true vine,
SENTENCE and my Father is the vinedresser.
SENTENCE 21 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,
SENTENCE and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes,
SUB-POINT that it may bear more fruit.
SENTENCE 3 Already you are clean
BULLET because of the word that I have spoken to you.
SENTENCE 4 Abide in me,
SENTENCE and I in you.
SENTENCE As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself,
SUB-POINT unless it abides in the vine, neither can you,
SUB-POINT unless you abide in me.
SENTENCE 5 I am the vine;
SENTENCE you are the branches.
SENTENCE Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit,
SUB-POINT for apart from me you can do nothing.
SENTENCE 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch
SENTENCE and withers;
SENTENCE and the branches are gathered
SENTENCE , thrown into the fire,
SENTENCE and burned.
SENTENCE 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish,
SENTENCE and it will be done for you.
SENTENCE 8 By this my Father is glorified,
SUB-POINT that you bear much fruit
SUB-POINT and so prove to be my disciples.

There are only two imperative verbs—**two commands** in our passage:

“**Abide** in me.”

“**Ask** whatever you wish.”

Your part is to be **attached** to him.
His part is to **live**
his life through
you.



Application

- You have been grafted onto Jesus Christ the True Vine.



- **Abide** in him.
- *Sink your roots* down into him.
- **Trust** him.
- **Obey** him.
- **Detach** yourself from everything that hinders your attachment to him.
- **Your part** is to be attached to him. **His part** is to live his life through you.
- Claim his promise

John 15:7

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.