

**The True and Transforming Vine**  
**John 15:1-17**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** We want our lives to have lasting impact on this world. Jesus does too. He shows us in John 15 how to be part of that plan: (1) by letting the Father prune us; (2) by staying close to Jesus; (3) by letting love lead us.

**I) Letting the Father prune us**

**A) vv.1-2: ...my Father is the vinedresser...Every branch that bears fruit he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit**

What is pruning?

Cutting away of extraneous branches to produce healthy fruit

An ordinary part of a healthy and productive life

**B) What we do for normal growth, God does for spiritual growth and impact**

The Father wants us to learn to do something that is not natural to us...

Some examples of divine pruning

**C) Responding to the Father's pruning**

We can waste or resist it

We can benefit from it

**D) Never forget that Jesus was pruned too—for us**

**II) Stay Close to Jesus**

**A) v.5: Whoever abides in me...he it is who bears much fruit...**

*Abide:* 10x in 10 verses

The goal is culturally transforming lives

The means is “abiding”

John 15 and being a “check list kid”

**B) How do we stay close?**

*v. 7...if my words abide in you, ask what you will and it will be done for you*

- Spiritual broccoli
- Feisty praying

### III) Let love lead

A) v. 9 *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love...*

“Abide” does not mean “climb in” or “earn”. It means “stay put where you have already been placed

B) **We must love**-deeply, broadly, sacrificially.

But why?

#### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Many things in life threaten our sense of personal significance. They may be philosophical, arising from certain views of where we came from. They may arise out of popular culture (only one person can be the American Idol at a time). They may arise out of personal experience. List and discuss as many of them as you can think of. Are they valid?
- 2) Do you have any hopes that your life will have lasting value? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 3) Discuss the following statement: “When Jesus calls himself the “true vine” (John 15:1) he is saying that he is the true Israel who has come at last to do for the world what Israel failed to do (that it, to transform it for good in all its parts). And when Jesus calls us “the branches” he is saying that we, filled with the love and joy of his Spirit, are the ones through whom he is going to begin this great work.”
- 4) Jesus speaks in John 15:2 about his Father pruning us, if we bear fruit, so that we will be even more fruitful. Pruning is painful: it involves cutting things out of our lives so that love for and trust in the Father may grow. Reflect upon or discuss together particular things that God has pruned from your life and how you have dealt with the loss of those things.
- 5) Discuss the following statement: “God’s way to an “impactful” life is often the long way around. We want a short-cut. We want to rush out and change the world—right now. And often God says, ‘Be patient. If you want to have a lasting impact your will need spiritual surgery first.’”
- 6) Reflect upon the following statement: “Jesus was ‘pruned’ too. He had everything cut out of his life—popularity, respect, safety, friends, family, life itself. And in the bitter end something happened to him that will never happen to us, precisely because it happened to him. He lost his Father. He died desolate—the love-filled man cut off from his Father in order to atone for our love-less lives. Jesus’ loss means that we will never be cut off from the Father, for they reconciled believers to the Father forever.”
- 7) We tend to be driven people—busy completing one check list after another. Jesus calls us branches, the impact of whose lives depends upon resting or abiding in him. Branches don’t rush about. They just “hang out.” Their “job” is to stay attached to the trunk so that leaves, blossoms and fruit can come to life organically, in due time. Does being a “branch” mean we should stop working and be passive? If not, then what does it mean?
- 8) There is simply no substitute for regular dedicated time alone and with others talking to Jesus (prayer) and allowing him to talk to you (in the Scriptures). How can you be steadier in these disciplines?
- 9) What is important about the fact that Jesus tells us we must “remain” in his love, rather than to “earn” it or “climb up” to it? Talk about the practical meaning of the statement: “We love because he first loved us.”