

# Remain in Jesus and be fruitful

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 06 March 2022

Preacher: Nick Hallett

[ 0 : 00 ] It's John chapter 15 verses 1 to 17 on page 1087 in the Church Bibles. I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser.

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. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

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. 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. 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.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

[ 1 : 13 ] As the father has loved me so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love.

These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends for all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide so that whatever you ask the father in my name he may give it to you.

These things I command you so that you will love one another. Many of you I guess would have had a glass of wine perhaps last night perhaps over the last few weeks wine is incredibly popular not just throughout the world but throughout history for thousands of years.

[ 2 : 38 ] I'm told that there are over 10,000 varieties of grapes used to make wine. But you can be sure about this every single grape which has ever grown on a vine has been able to make wine because it was grown on a vine.

I've got a bunch of grapes here here we go they are juicy refreshing delicious all because they were grown on a vine.

You see in order for them to be fruitful in order for them to to grow to their full size not to sort of shrivel up they needed to be connected to the vine. We're looking at we're looking at John's gospel today chapter 15 and Jesus says to us we need to remain in him.

He is the vine and we are the branches we're the grapes. Jesus says if you want to be full of life if you want to be fruitful you need to remain in him.

Now I don't know how you're you're feeling this morning perhaps you're you're here this morning you're not really quite sure what to make of Jesus. Maybe you wouldn't call yourself a Christian or maybe you you used to follow Jesus way back in the past but you're beginning to wonder whether it's worth sticking with him.

[ 3 : 59 ] Maybe it's time you you cut yourself free of the vine and started to look for life elsewhere. Is it really worth sticking with Jesus? The pandemic has fundamentally changed our way of life hasn't it?

We've been disconnected from people in a way that I guess we've never experienced before. Maybe you're reassessing your friendships reassessing who you want to be connected to.

What about Jesus? Is it worth reconnecting with him? In this chapter in John 15 Jesus says remain in me there's no life outside of me grapes can't survive cut off from the vine and neither can you I'm the source of life cut yourself off from me and you'll shrivel up.

It's a bold claim isn't it? Maybe an arrogant claim but before we dismiss it let's look at who Jesus is who is this man who claims to be the source of all life?

If you've been here for the past few weeks you'll know that we're looking at the chapters in John's gospel which lead up to Jesus' death. And Jesus is sharing the last meal with his disciples from chapter 13 onward and he's preparing them for his departure.

[ 5 : 23 ] He's given them another helper the Holy Spirit and he's going to send them out into the world. Just at the end of our passage the verse afterwards 15 verse 18 Jesus tells them that sending them into the world is going to be difficult because the world is going to hate them.

How are they going to survive? How are we going to survive in a world which let's be honest hates Jesus? In a world which tells us to look elsewhere for life to cut ourselves off from the vine?

Is it really worth sticking with Jesus? Well the first point I want to see and hopefully you've got it on your service sheet at the back is this from this passage remain in Jesus and be fruitful and that's from verses 1 to 8.

Have a look at verse 1 with me. Jesus says I am the true vine and my father is the vine dresser. Jesus says that he is the source of all life an historically arrogant claim unless of course it's true. As some of you might know this is the last of the seven I am sayings from John's gospel.

[ 6 : 41 ] So Jesus says I am the bread of life I am the light of the world I am the door I am the good shepherd I am the resurrection of life I am the way the truth and the life I am the true vine.

In other words I am Yahweh the God of the Exodus who appeared to Moses way back in the Old Testament the God who's the source of all life life and here Jesus says he is the true vine.

Now the image of a vine was well known to the disciples and in Isaiah chapter 5 God describes his people like a vineyard. Imagine a vineyard it's got all kinds of things it needs and God says that he has carefully planted he's built the vineyard and he looks for grapes but there are only wild grapes sour grapes there's no fruit.

Israel was supposed to be good grapes they're supposed to be like this they were supposed to be sweet refreshing delicious but they shriveled up because they cut themselves off from the source of life.

But Jesus says he is the true vine the true Israel he is the vine the point of a vine of course is to bear fruit and if there's no fruit of course the branches cut off.

[ 8 : 04 ] So have a look at verse 2 Jesus says every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he the gardener takes away and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes that it will bear more fruit.

I've got another bunch of grapes here or at least part of a vine but there are no grapes on it. It's as if I've obviously taken them off but it's as if they've shriveled up and they've fallen off.

This vine is pretty pointless isn't it because there's no fruit on it and if there are no grapes on it what do we do well we we throw it away we cut it off and we throw it away.

And Jesus says that his father the gardener throws away branches without fruit. Have a look at verse 6 as well. If anyone doesn't abide in me he's thrown away like a branch and withers and the branches are gathered thrown into the fire and burned.

And this is a terrifying picture of judgment. The disciples would have known from Ezekiel chapter 15 where God tells his people you're a useless vine. You're a vine with no fruit which will be burned up.

[ 9 : 14 ] But Jesus says if you remain in the vine you'll produce fruit. Have a look at verse 3. Already Jesus says you're clean because of the word I've spoken to you.

You see if you've been washed by Jesus made clean as the disciples had literally been hadn't they in chapter 13 where Jesus washes the disciples feet. If you've been washed in Jesus blood by trusting in his death on the cross you're clean you're in him.

But Jesus says verse 4 abide in me and I in you. Remain in me stay connected to the vine. And verse 5 he says without me you could do nothing.

I mean think about the vine and the branches. It's the most intimate connection you can imagine. The branch gets all its life from the vine all its nutrients all its water everything.

It can't survive without the vine. The branch is completely dependent on the vine. Why would it cut itself off? No other plant will do. It needs the vine.

[10:20] And Jesus says stick with me. Why would you cut yourself off? Stay connected to me. Or maybe you're wondering how can we be connected to Jesus?

I mean he's not here is he? After all he's not here. He left the disciples shortly after this and he's not returned. But remember from last week if you were here in chapter 14 Jesus has given us his Holy Spirit another helper.

You see through the spirit of Jesus we're connected to him. When God opens your eyes to see who Jesus is his spirit the spirit of Jesus is working in you.

He's not one plant among many he's the true vine. And Jesus said as we saw last week in John 14 verse 20 I am in my father and you in me and I in you.

In other words Jesus says that the intimacy that he has with the father is the same intimacy that he has with us like a baby in its mother's womb or I guess like a grape on a vine.

[11:30] Our very life depends on him. Through his spirit we're intimately connected to Jesus. So what does it mean what does it look like to remain in him?

Well it means to live life dependent on the vine. Just as the branches can do nothing without the vine we can do nothing of eternal significance without Jesus.

Now sure you might do some interesting things in your life maybe you've got a bucket list of things to do before you die but see none of them will last without Jesus none of them will come to anything eternally but Jesus says if you remain in him you'll produce eternal fruit fruit that will last.

Have a look at verse 5 again whoever abides in me and I in him it is he that bears much fruit or verse 7 if you abide in me and my words abide in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you by this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples I don't know if you noticed that Jesus said that he abides in us and his words abide in us he wants his words to remain in our hearts so read Jesus' words in the Bible sing Jesus' words in our songs so our words can abide his words can abide in us Jesus wants us to pray to him to ask whatever we wish and he says it will be given according to his will you see his desires will be our desires so pray to him ask him to produce fruit in your life but what is the fruit that

Jesus is talking about here is it serving at church on a Sunday and during the week is it telling other people about Jesus is it sticking with Jesus when life is hard well yes it's all of those things isn't it any evidence in your life that you're connected to the vine perhaps you're here this morning and you want to be connected to Jesus but you're not sure if you're producing any fruit you look at your life and you if you're honest you feel like you're you're withering you find it hard to tell your friends that you're a Christian that the weight of the pandemic seems to have crushed you you've lost the joy of being connected to the vine remember Jesus' words from chapter 6 verse 36 Jesus says whoever comes to me I will never cast out Jesus does not want to cast you out no he wants you to remain in him and think about it fruit does not all look the same lots of different types of grapes and it takes time doesn't it to grow just as there are over 10,000 types of grapes fruit in the

[14:30] Christian life will look different for different people for all of you here it may look like keeping going through suffering not cutting yourself off from the vine so is there any evidence in your life that you're holding on to Jesus then you're in the vine but stay there not just today or tomorrow but for the next 10 years 20 years 100 years remain in him and you'll produce fruit and perhaps you're here you've been a Christian for a long time and maybe you've become a bit complacent about being in the vine you say to yourself well of course I'm in the vine of course I'm in the vine I don't need to produce fruit I don't need to serve my church or love others sacrificially I'm fine I can come and go as I please well you can you can you're free in Christ and Jesus says in chapter 10 verse 28 that no one can snatch his sheep from him if you're in the vine you're safe safe forever but make sure you're in the vine because if you are you will produce fruit

I mean that's the whole point of the vine isn't it to produce fruit think about Judas we read about him a few chapters back Judas looked like he was in the vine didn't he of course he did for three years he'd seen Jesus' miracles heard Jesus' teaching and loved Jesus' disciples and yet he betrays Jesus he didn't stay connected to the vine because I guess he was never really part of it in the first place and Jesus says verse 6 if anyone doesn't abide in me he's thrown away like a branch and withers and the branches are gathered thrown into the fire and burned see many disciples did turn away from Jesus but as Peter says in John 6 68 to whom else would you go I mean outside the vine there's only death nothing else will give you life where are you looking to for life where are you putting your roots down what's your security your house your children's education your family your money your career your health none of them will give you life none of them will last

Jesus is the true vine apart from him you can do nothing of eternal significance remain in Jesus and be fruitful well that's the first thing I want to see the second thing I want us to see from this passage is that we should remain in Jesus' love and love one another and that's from verses 9 to 17 in some ways the second half of this passage is an explanation of the first half of verses 1 to 8 what does it feel and look like to be in the vine and produce fruit well it means to be loved by Jesus with an everlasting love a love that won't let you go a love that makes you feel safe have a look at verse 9 with me Jesus says as the father has loved me so I have loved you abide in my love and we know from John's gospel don't we that Jesus is going to give his life for the disciples he's going to give his life for us by dying on the cross we know that we have life if we're bound up with him the true vine but we may ask well does he actually love us is he just following orders from his father well no he loves us because the father has loved him you see the love within the trinity within the the godhead the father son and holy spirit overflows to us having children is one of the most amazing things in the world it will turn your life upside down but it should also bring a joy like no other many people cannot have children for all kinds of reasons and there's many other people to love of course besides loving your own children but the joy of having children is an overflow of the love within a marriage parents are not sort of following orders no the love of their marriage overflows to their children and Jesus has loved us with an everlasting love because of the overflow of the love within the trinity and here in particular between the father and the son for all eternity they've loved each other for this love to now overflow to us you see in one sense it's no surprise that Jesus died for us because he loves us as a father has loved him so remain in his love a child doesn't walk away from its parents lightly does it you see the more loved the child is the harder it is to walk away in fact I guess it becomes impossible doesn't it why would they leave when they know they're loved remaining in the family is to remain in their parents love to remain in Jesus love you could not be safer how do we remain in his love have a look at verse 10 with me verse 10 if you keep my commandments you will abide in my love just as I've kept my father's commandments and abide in his love it's the same as Jesus said in 14 verse 15 if you love me you'll keep my commandments and verse 11 these things

I've spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full how do you feel the day after you get engaged well you might feel absolutely terrified might you but hopefully you'll also be filled of joy because your love is the love that won't let you go someone has promised to love you no matter what so you don't need to prove yourself anymore you're safe you're safe in their love so how do you respond if they then ask you to do something do you mind doing some washing up oh yes sure no problem well should we prepare dinner together yes of course would you be able to buy something from the shops this afternoon for me yes of course anything you need see if you're safe in their love you're more than happy to obey their commands how much more with Jesus he loves us with an everlasting love a love that makes all the engagement parties and all the weddings and all the human marriages pale into insignificance compared to him he's a good husband you're safe in his love it's a joy to be connected to him it's what we were created for and this is his commandment verse 12 that you love one another as I have loved you

Jesus is building here on the old testament command in Deuteronomy 6 to love God and the command to love your neighbour in Leviticus 19 but now he tells them to love each other with a brotherly love repeating John 13 34 Jesus tells disciples if you love me obey my commands and love each other as I have loved you and how has he loved them how will he love them verse 13 have a look with me greater love has no one than this that someone lays down his life for his friends Jesus has loved us by dying for us the love of the father has overflowed to the son and overflowed through him to us and he asks us to overflow the same love to one another so look around you I don't know if you thought about where you were going to sit when you came in this morning but look around you at your brothers and sisters at grace church do you love them in the way that

[ 22 : 58 ] Christ has loved us by dying for us loving people means seeking their good it means forgiving them when they wrong you it means pointing them to Christ now I guess we all love the idea of love don't we we all like the idea of being loved it sounds wonderful doesn't it I mean being part of a community of people loving each other seeking each other's good everyone likes the idea of love until they have an actual person to love because it's hard work sometimes we don't really want to love others we'd rather look after number one we'd rather not come early to set up we'd rather not talk to that person on their own that needs welcoming we'd rather not go to our growth group on a Tuesday evening to encourage each other to live for Christ because it's hard work loving others can be hard work and I guess if it wasn't Jesus wouldn't have had to tell us to do it but

remember the motivation love one another as I have loved you and see who it is who calls us he's the true vine the source of all life and look at what he calls us in verse 14 have a look down with me you are my friends if you do what I command you friends if you remain in Jesus' love you are his friend only Abraham and Moses in the Old

Testament were called God's friend but now we can all be friends with God by remaining in Jesus' love it's not that by obeying him makes you his friend but if you are friends you'll do what your friends ask because you're friends that's how friendship works Jesus says I no longer call you servants verse 15 because servants don't really know what their masters thinking but Jesus has revealed his heart to us he's called us friends many of you I'm sure will have watched the American sitcom Friends which became internationally famous throughout the 1990s and early 2000s Rachel Monica Phoebe Ross Chandler and Joey's friendship took the world by storm why well because in real friendship we see something beautiful don't we we see something that we that we want friends who love each other who seek the other's good friends who share their lives together well we don't have to look any further in Jesus we have the greatest friend we could ever long for everything that the father has made known to Jesus he's made known to us he shared his heart with us and in case we're feeling pleased with ourselves for remaining in the vine for remaining in

Jesus love for choosing Jesus as our friend have a look at verse 16 with me you did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide if you've been grafted into the vine if you're remaining in the vine it's because Jesus chose you to be his friend he chose you to be part of his family to be in his love so there's no place for arrogance or self righteousness but without him you couldn't produce any fruit at all but he's chosen you to produce fruit he's not just saved you to stop you being thrown into the fire he wants you to produce fruit fruit that will last for eternity ultimately that you point the world to him so it's by loving each other that you prove yourself to be his disciples because the father's love overflows through Jesus to his church who then overflow with love for each other and to the world will you stick with Jesus will you remain in the vine or will you wither there's no life outside of him there's no life anywhere else and see how he's loved you you couldn't be safer remain in his love remain in the true vine and you will produce fruit food for the use to pour down to the Cannon for the gänger at the end unemployed then continue to ■■■■■ into