

The True Vine & the Husbandman

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Preacher: Raymond Smith

[0:00] A series here out of John 15. You know, it's a little different to be sitting in the pew for a few weeks. But you know, it's one of those things that God gives you time to thank and to process with some things.

You know, because really the question is, is that oftentimes people begin to think they are what they do. But you know what? We are not what we do.

We are who we are in Christ. Because when we understand that difference, because you know, oftentimes today you find that people have problems of dealing with life because they don't know the reason for life.

What's attached to it? You know, what's your purpose? You know, people are seeking much in life of purpose and direction. They're trying to find things to answer the questions of life, of who they are.

You know, why are you here? You know, these are not questions that just require a generic answer. They're questions that need to be truly thought through and considered of where and what it means.

[1:17] And what God has given to us because they drive the very substance of your life. Now I want you, I understand that, you know, I've never asked myself those questions.

You might not have used those words, but you've asked yourself those questions. Might be in a little different form or thought process, but it's that idea of who am I and why am I here that makes a difference.

You know, every decision we make each day is guided by the answer that is settled in our mind on those questions. We're driven by those things.

It becomes a lens through which we see life. A lens in which things are brought in what we think is clarity to us. You know, when we find answers, this world gives a lot of answers.

The problem is a lot of their answers might bring what people think is joy and fulfillment, but in the end is emptiness. They miss the very reality of who and why they were created in the first place.

[2:27] Because a wrong answer here will ultimately lead to frustration and despair. You know, when you realize the importance of what Christ has done for us, but also the importance of who he is.

And this morning we're going to start into a series talking about the vine. And we're going to look at who the vine is because we can find many things to occupy our time and our energy.

When we understand at the end of life we're left with the same doubts and the same questions. We lay hold of something useful, something genuinely beneficial, only to discover that it will not do anything that is needed.

You know, I was thinking about that, you know, because a lot of times, especially for guys, you get a tool that guys like. You know, they'll find their favorite tool. You know? And the problem is, is that they get attached to a tool and then suddenly they try to use it for everything.

You know, an adjustable wrench, a monkey wrench is a great tool. But you know, when you try to use it on a round object, it's very useless. That's usually when it turns into a hammer.

[3:40] But you know what? The harder you try to make it fit, all it does is make life more frustrating. You know, I want you to understand as we begin looking at this, because the same is true for you and me.

Because we can look for things that give us a temporary answer, but under the weight of life it slips. It does not meet what's needed.

The weight of life, the frustration and the failure, the objects of life, the sorrow, the guilt, the death, the ideas of eternity. See, we struggle to get a grip on it.

And that's the reason Jesus here in John 15 is giving some encouragement and some direction to his disciples to say, Guys, this is where you need to focus.

This is what's going to answer those questions. This is what's going to give life purpose and meaning and direction, even in the midst of the trials and the struggles and the things that you don't understand.

[4:49] Because I want you to see here this morning as we get ready to get into John 15, Jesus didn't just give them a pat answer. He didn't just give them an answer to a question.

He gave them a who that we need to abide in. Because Jesus is the one the Father planted and tends and that we need to be attached to.

They've been given an answer. They only need stay connected to it. As we look here this morning, I want you to think on this thought. That where a branch stays, a branch bears.

Where a branch stays, a branch bears. That's going to be a thought process for us as we walk through the next few weeks, Lord willing. And I want you to think and contemplate on that because John 15 is at a very difficult moment in time.

You know, sometimes we read John 13 and John 14, you know. Oh, God's prepared for me. He's coming again. He's prepared a place for me. That's great news. I mean, that's exciting.

[5:58] I'm glad. But then John 15 kind of makes a transition. Because he gets their attention. You know, the supper is over and Judas has gone out.

And Jesus says at the end of chapter 14, arise, let us go hence. So in other words, Jesus has the 11 and he's walking and they're going to the garden. And we all know what's going to happen in the garden.

Judas is going to bring the men and they're going to arrest Jesus and they're going to take him and crucify him. You know, Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen.

He knew exactly the struggle these men were going to face. Because everything they had invested in was going to get turned upside down in their mind.

You know, sometimes when we get caught up and get our eyes off the right object, on the right person, life gets upside down and doesn't make sense.

[7:00] Have you ever thought about how the 11 disciples' life went upside down? They had invested three and a half years of their life. You are the one.

They were confident that Jesus was the one that they were looking for. That had been prophesied, that they had been told from a youth, this is the one. And he's soon to go to a cross and die.

Their world went upside down. As we look at John 15, I want you to pay attention closely. Because what Jesus is doing is preparing his disciples for when life goes upside down.

You know what he's doing? He's also recording for us what we need to do when life goes upside down. When life goes what seems out of control to us, that God is still there.

He needs to keep our eyes focused on the right one. Because I want you to understand that as he's walking towards the Mount of Olives, he points to the vine. He's not lecturing them.

[8:07] He's giving them what they need to be steady as they watch what's going to unfold. To understand the picture of that.

So if you found John 15 this morning, let's go ahead and stand for a moment here in honor of the reading of the Word of God. And I want you to look here and think here this morning. Notice here in verse 1 of John 15, it says this, Let's pray.

Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning. Lord, we just thank you for who you are. Lord, that no matter what, we can hold to you. Lord, matter of fact, it's our responsibility to hold to you.

Lord, to grab a hold of you even though you have us. Lord, at the moment of salvation, we are in you. But Lord, oftentimes, we ignore the reality of the power that is within you.

That you give to us. That you channel to us. That you guide us and you direct us. Lord, I pray that you save your hand upon each one here this morning. Lord, you know each heart. You know each life.

[9:26] You know the struggles, the trials. But Lord, help us to understand the importance of abiding in you. The true vine.

And the vine that is pruned and cleaned by the husband and the father. And Lord, we just love you and thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

May be seated. You know, as we see here, Jesus reminds them that no matter what, they need to stay connected to the vine. Connection to the vine is important.

You know, the vine allows the husband to prune and to clean our lives that we might be fruitful. Because Jesus here is not telling them, hey, just stay connected.

You'll grab a hold for life. He says, no, when you grab a hold, when you understand that in the vine is where you're fruitful. And we're going to look in a few weeks because Jesus here isn't just talking about winning souls.

[10:29] He's talking also about Galatians 5 where you have the fruit of the spirit in your life. If the fruit of the spirit is missing, you know what? There's a connection problem.

There's a problem with connection. And we're going to look here this morning. Notice first here, Jesus tells them the true vine and the husband. He gives this picture that they understand.

A clear picture. Because there's only one way. As he looks here, notice what he says. Because I am the true vine. The vine is a person, not a program.

You know, he tells them, I am the great I am. Jesus has claimed and declared himself to be equal with God. To be God. He says, I am the vine and the father is the husbandman.

Now, I want you to understand what's taking place here. Because we need to clarify something. Because who's he speaking to here? Context in the scripture is important. Because you can never abide in the vine of Jesus Christ if there's never been a moment in your life when you understood you're a sinner and called upon him to be a savior.

[11:43] That his saving power is effectual in your life. The Bible says that you're placed in Christ. You are in Christ at the moment of salvation.

You're from one family and born again into another family. There's a distinction of where you're placed. And there's only one way and that's through Jesus Christ.

But we need to stay connected to the vine. Now, I want you to understand, he's not talking to his disciples about losing their place with him. He's talking here directly.

This whole passage has to do with fruitfulness. It has to do with dealing with life. Because we have one of two ways to go through life. You can go through life miserable. You know, we walk around in a world, there's a lot of miserable people.

Discouraged, despaired. And when life happens, we need to abide in the vine. Hang on to him. You know, it's not in who you are, but it's who you're in.

[12:44] Because he is the one that matters. To have life fulfilled, we must be in the vine. But notice what Jesus says.

He makes a statement, a very bold statement. He says, I am the true vine. The vine is a person, not a program. It's the great I am.

I want you to understand that Jesus is not just something that you participate in. Jesus is the vine. He is the one, the giver of life.

The Bible says that in him you have eternal life. You're here because he gave life. Life is essential to understand.

And Jesus tells and declares unto them this reality. He says, I am the true vine. I am the one. You know, John 8, he says this. Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.

[13:45] This before this in John 14, he says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And no man cometh unto the Father but by me. And now he says, I am the true vine.

I want you to know and understand something because if you're not in the vine of Jesus Christ, you might be planted someplace else. Because the reality is, is people will put themselves someplace. They'll be attached to a wrong vine. If there's a true vine, you know what it tells me? There's a false vine. The world offers a lot of things to get attached to. That hold our attention, hold our focus. Grab a hold of us. When we see these things, that this branch is important because it is from the vine that our life brings forth.

It's a life. It's a standing. It's a vine is what brings forth sap and it's fruitful. But you know what? When you trim a vine and that branch is trimmed off, you know what?

[14:52] It cannot produce fruit. Now, I want you to understand this morning that what he's talking about here, he's talking to his disciples. He's not telling them.

We'll talk about this in a few weeks. But I want you to understand that when he's talking about cutting off from the vine, it isn't about losing your relationship with him, but losing your fruitfulness with him.

Because I believe there's a lot of Christians who aren't very fruitful. The fruit that God wants to produce in your life is absent. That fruit is what brings us through.

You know, 1 Corinthians 1 verse 30 says this. It says, but of him are ye in Christ Jesus, of whom God has made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. You know, those are the things that we require because Christ is not one help amongst many. He is the life of the branch. You know, people look today for a lot of answers.

[15 : 54] You know, it's amazing how many people look all sorts of places for answers. You know, it used to be you go down to the self-help section of the bookstore. Nowadays, people turn to YouTube and podcasts and, you know, some guru that specializes in something gives you a good speech.

And people guide their life from it and they miss the very thing. This is not going to be. It's a false branch. Because I want to tell you something. You know, a branch can look fruitful or look full. It can be full of leaves and have no fruit. A branch can look good and be empty. What it looks like on the outside doesn't mean what it's producing. Because when we understand that Jesus is contrasting this, because when Jesus says, I am the true vine, I want you to understand in the disciples' mind, they already had a vine imagery in their mind.

You know, the Old Testament tells us this. Jeremiah chapter 2 talks about Israel this way. He says, Yet have I planted thee a noble vine, holy or right seed?

How then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? You know, Israel was a picture of a vine in the Old Testament. And they needed to be in what God wanted them to be.

[17 : 14] And you know, Psalm 80 tells us this. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt. Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparest room before it and discaused it to take deep root.

And it filled the land. And down in verse 12 it says, Why hast thou broken down her hedges? That all they that pass by the way do pluck her. Verse 14 goes, Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts.

Look down from heaven and behold and visit this vine. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted. And the branch that thou made is strong for thyself. It is burned with fire.

It is cut down. They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. So I want you to understand what Jesus is giving to them is a fulfillment and a picture of even the Old Testament prophecy here.

This isn't new information. It's fulfilled information. Because Jesus says, The vine, the true vine, is not the ritual.

[18 : 17] It's not the process. It's the faith in being in him. He is the vine. Always has been.

And he's the one that we need to stick close to. Because Christ is the true vine who doesn't fail. But I want you to notice something here. Because this is a lot of times where people struggle. This is the point of struggle.

Because when you get saved, it says, I'm easy to hang on to Jesus. But notice the next phrase in that verse 1. It says, And my father is the husbandman.

Now you might have read that many times. I've spent the last five, six weeks thinking on this. You know what? The husbandman is really the problem we have. I know you're getting a strange look. The husbandman is the rub because the husband is the one that guides and directs the care of the vine. You know what the husbandman's job is? Is to do what's needed through the vine and the branches to make the plant fruitful.

[19 : 20] We like Jesus. We just don't like the husbandman. And Jesus is telling his disciples, he says, Hey, the father is going to prune you.

He's going to clean you up to make you fruitful. You know what the problem is? We like Jesus. We like redemption. But the cleanup process is rough. The cleanup process is what makes us uncomfortable.

Because you know what the problem is with that? We have to be obedient and willing to be pruned. Because take a look here at verse 2.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. Wow. Think about it for a moment. Look over to Luke chapter 13. Luke chapter 13.

Look down in verse 7. Jesus is giving a parable here. Notice what he says. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard. Who's the dresser of the vineyard? The husbandman.

[20 : 18] Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit of this fig tree. And find none. Cut it down. Thy cumberth it to the ground.

And he answered and said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also. Till I shall dig about it and dung it. And if it bear fruit well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

You know what? The problem wasn't the fluffy leaves. The problem was there was no fruit. You know, when you plant something, I don't care how leafy it gets.

You know, we attempt at planting some tomatoes every year. But you know what? You never get excited about a bunch of leaves on a tomato plant. It can be as fluffy.

I mean, we got some this year. I mean, it's probably standing this tall out of the bed. It's all well and good. But you know what? If it didn't produce tomatoes, it's what? Worthless.

[21 : 14] You know, this summer we had some dry spells. You know, you try to get out there and water it, but it's kind of tough sometimes. But you know what? The plant still produced fruit.

You know what it did? It got rid of the leaves. You saw the leaves wilt to produce the fruit.

Sometimes our problem is, is we're so hanging on to the leafies, what everybody else thinks, to think, Lord, I can't be pruned of this because of what somebody else thinks.

And God says you need to let go of your pride and the sin that holds you that you might be made clean and you might be fruitful. You think about the cause of fruitfulness or fruitlessness.

So the cause of fruitlessness isn't the lack of leaves. I think we have a lot of people in church that have a good job of looking fluffy. Know the right religious language.

They know the right things to say. They know the right things to make everybody happy. The problem is they're a bunch of leaves with no fruit because their lives are miserable because of sin.

[22 : 17] The Bible tells us that there are sins that beset us, grab a hold of us, that cause us to be unfruitful. I want you to understand when it comes to sin, but there's another direct area, and that's rebellion.

You know, we're all going to struggle with sin, but rebellion, rebellion's another level. You say, preacher, how's that another level? Rebellious attitudes of sin.

Yes, it is, but it's a different level because it says, I know what I'm doing and I'm choosing to do it anyways. Sin magnified. Rebellion takes form in many ways.

Rebellion can take place with disobedience. I think there's a lot of people not willing to submit to the truth of God's word because of their pride of what they think, of how they have processed life to say, I'm not willing to put myself under the authority of the word of God to do what I ought to do.

They don't do that because it makes me feel uncomfortable. This life isn't about how comfortable and bushy we can look. Because at the end of life, fluff gets you no place.

[23 : 26] He wants us to be fruitful. You know, let me throw one more up there. How about complacency? We live in a generation of comfort. We measure everything about how comfortable am I going to be doing it.

It makes me uncomfortable. I'm not going to do it. But when you prune a plant, I guarantee you the process doesn't always look good. You know what? Ultimately, it produces the fruit that it's designed to produce.

Notice what it tells us here as we go on in this passage here. It tells us it's very clearly this reality of understanding what's happening because God takes away those things.

Notice what he tells us here in the passage. It says, Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. Now, taketh away, I want you to understand, is concerning your usefulness and the Father's chastening his correction of his own.

It's not means that God's going to lose your salvation or kick you out. It's God's doing what's needed to help you to be fruitful. You go through this. There's people who use this passage and say, See, you can lose your salvation.

[24 : 36] That's not what it's talking about. Context is important. I believe that this passage teaches you can lose salvation. That means that apostles could lose their salvation.

And everybody that I know would think that's nuts. As you're secure in him, what he's talking about here is fruitfulness. To abide in him.

Holding on to him because notice what he tells us here. Look at the second part of verse 2. It says, In every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it that it may bring forth more fruit.

Boy, that's against us, isn't it? Because sometimes we'll be saying, Lord, look what's happening and how you're using me and what we're doing. And God says, Hold on. You need to shave some more things out of the way that you can produce more.

A lot of times in life when God is blessing and things are happening, we say, Well, God, why did you allow that? Jesus is answering that question. He says that you might bring forth more fruit.

[25:39] Fruit in your life might be something of substance. It says he purges it. That word purges means pruning, cutting away growth that's alive but unproductive so the vine concentrates on new growth.

understand that God doesn't prune you out of his anger. He prunes you because he cares. Prunes you because he has something greater for you.

Comfortable thought. Because we live in a generation that thinks that God is, he's always going to do what I think is good. Have their eyes on the fluff instead of the fruit.

fruit. God allows things into our lives that we might become more fruitful. Some of it's enjoyable.

Some of it is painful. It makes you uncomfortable. not in his anger that he does these things. We don't have time this morning but you can write down Hebrews chapter 12 verses 5 through 11 talks about his pruning of us, his chastening of us.

[26:47] God's chastening, his correction, his pruning is important because it does something for us. Look at Psalm 119. Psalm 119 in verse 67 says this.

It says, Before I was afflicted, I went astray but now have I kept thy word. A few verses down in verse 71 tells us this. It is good for me that I had been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes.

I'll ask you a question. Can you truly say that this morning? The psalmist is saying here is something very simple. Thank you for pruning my life.

Understand those things. Think about Job. Job 23 verse 10 says, He says, But he knoweth the way that I take and when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.

Like those verses, the problem is we struggle with the husbandman that produces those things in our life. By pruning us, by cleaning us up, by doing what needs to be done in our life to make us fruitful.

[27:54] Because be fruitfulness means being allowing the husbandman to guide and direct what takes place in our life. You know, think about the word does the cleansing.

Look at verse 3. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. In other words, that word clean here is the same one used earlier to prune or to purge.

You're purged by the word of God. You're pruned by the word of God. You're clean by the word of God. Jesus is the living word. It tells us in John in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

John 1:14 says the word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory and the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. The problem we often have is we don't like the cleaning process.

The cleaning process and the pruning process isn't very enjoyable. I had an accident on a bike. You know when you're young you do foolish things.

[29:00] I was over in Japan and we were all trying to keep ourselves busy so me and some other guys bought some mountain bikes and we went out mountain biking. And so one of the guys was pretty good and he jumps over this wide trench.

You know we're scooting down this steep hill and you get enough speed and you jump the bike and you go over the trench. Well I'm like I can do that. Sarah went in the trench. We're Marines we don't wear helmets we don't do that I mean we're men we bike like men.

The side of my face scraped up. April remembers getting pictures of this. It's one of the reasons of many that she tells me not to grow a beard because she says it'll look spatchy.

I did down where we went there was coral rock. It's alive. I have a coral in my face. Sponges they use at the doctor's office with little plastic bristles.

I got the privilege of getting my face scrubbed one of those bristles until they got all the coral out. The story is this it was not comfortable the cleansing was beneficial because if the cleansing didn't happen the coral would stay alive and begin growing within you.

[30:15] the same reality is for us when it comes to our life Jesus is the vine and God is the husband that cleanses us through the word of God and sometimes that cleansing is painful sometimes it's very difficult to deal with needed that we might be fruitful to get rid of those things that hinder us.

you know Jesus just a little later here tells him this sanctify them through thy truth thy word is truth Psalm 119 says wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways by taking heed thereunto

according to thy word with my whole heart have I sought thee let me not wander from thy commandments thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee James tells us wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls need to abide in the true vine but allow the husbandman to prune and to clean our lives be fruitful need fluffy leafy Christians that are comfortable God wants fruitful Christians talk about that here in the weeks to come because as we understand first being the vine and then the branch understand there's today there's many who are false fluffy branches see a lot of people who follow after false fluffy branches they think there's fruit so they follow when the vine is the devil that's attached to attached to the vine and we have done that happens when we're in Christ at salvation because this morning there's three branches in this room everybody falls under this category first the branch that was never in the true vine a false branch you're still in a vine because every man

I want you to understand is attached to something Jesus gives another example of this of what is going on he says you have your father the devil you know God talks about in Deuteronomy he says their vine is the vine of Sodom you can be in a false vine vine can grow and look fluffy and have leaves for a lifetime but never once bore fruit that God would want to see and there's only one way to change that and that to come to the true vine that is to trust Jesus Christ as your savior when he says for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved because you need to move from a vine that's false and leads astray and leads to hell to a vine that gives life and fruitfulness a vine that gives purpose and direction security different you know second we find that

I think there's branches with leaves with no fruit there's a fruitless branch you know this morning there's going to be those that are attached themselves to a false branch there's going to be those who have attached themselves to the vine at salvation but they're fruitless because they're holding on to things that cause a stumbling block in their life and God says it needs to be dealt with to move forward to be fruitful you know if your spiritual life is stuck you need to start asking why you're rebelling against the one who wants to prune and clean you that you might be more fruitful that might mean giving something up it might just be a matter of obedience to know what I ought to do to do it you know James tells us he hath knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin it's direct disobedience tells us he that covereth his sin shall not prosper for whosoever confesses and forsaketh them shall have mercy you know this morning

I hope you don't leave this building without it settled to put away those things to let the same word that convicted you of what God wants to do in your life to that the word has put through you that the word might cleanse you that you might come to him and call upon him but there's a third branch here this morning that's it's bearing and being cut it's being pruned a pruned branch have you ever wondered why the pruners have been in your life remember pruning is not in God's anger towards you but because of his care for me that I had been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes faith comes and is active when things are trying have a hold of you know we need to stop resisting the hand that's making you fruitful and yield your life to him if you contemplate on this

[35 : 50] I want to take a moment here you know I want you to stop and think about yourself preacher don't tell you that much think about yourself but there are times we need to think about ourselves what kind of branch are you if there's a need that God is speaking to you I encourage you to get that taken care of this morning as heads are bowed and eyes are closed today I want you to think here just for a moment what kind of branch are you don't settle just for the foliage if God has spoken to you won't you come as the piano plays and just call out to him whether that's a need of trusting him for salvation confession confessing something that says

Lord I need to let go of my pride and say Lord I need to take that step of obedience that step of faith and yield to him you don't walk out the same way you came in because you can be connected to the vine you can allow him to begin pruning your life Thank you.