

**I AM**

**The Vine**

**8-18-24**

John 15:5 (NIV)

I AM the vine; you are the branches.

**In the first 14 chapters of John, God has opened up all things concerning God, eternity, heaven, and revealed how God has given all things to us who love HIM. All these things are beyond human understanding, and we should be in absolute awe of the majesty of God and HIS love for us. Because the fullness of God and what HE has done is incomprehensible, Jesus in Chapter 15, gives us an analogy to help us understand and live out this miracle relationship with God the Father.**

John 15:1 (NIV)

I AM the true vine, and MY Father is the gardener.

**The statement “I AM” cannot be overlooked. Now for the 7<sup>th</sup> time in the gospel of John, Jesus declares that HE is the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14. Another fact that should not be overlooked, Jesus is telling us about the church. *In the church age, Jesus is the Vine is the source of life, and the Father is the gardener responsible for cultivating the things growing from the vine.* *This analogy helps us understand our walk with God.***

**Jesus continues:**

John 15:2 (NIV)

The Father “cuts off” every branch in ME that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, HE “prunes” so that it will be even more fruitful.

**The Father, the gardener, cuts off fruitless branches and prunes junk growth on fruitful branches.**

**The Father takes action to secure the fruitfulness of the church corporately and each believer individually. God “removes” the dead wood from HIS church and HE “prunes” fruitful believers. Left to itself a vine will produce a good deal of unproductive growth. Pruning ensures that more fruitfulness takes place. The action of the Father, the gardener, guarantees fruitful growth from the vine. Every believer should expect pruning. Jesus continues:**

**John 15:3 (NIV)**

**You are already clean because of the WORD I have spoken to you.**

**Very clear that Jesus is talking to believers. The WORD has already made Jesus’ disciples clean washed in the blood. Our home in heaven is secure. This is important because this helps us understand that God’s work within the church and within the believer is not punishment but discipline training. To grow spiritually the believer must persevere through pruning.**

**John 15:4 (NIV)**

**Remain in ME, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in ME.**

**Already made clean, we now must “remain” connected to the vine gaining our strength from the vine. No branch can bear fruit by itself. As a branch remains connected to the vine so that the life-giving sap may flow from the vine to the branches so also must we remain connected to Christ -- so that –**

**the life-giving sap, the Holy Spirit, may flow from Jesus to us. Fruitfulness comes from the sap flowing from the vine to the branches. No branch bears fruit in isolation. The effectiveness of the believer depends on his receiving the constant flow of life from Christ. Paul understood the need to stay connected to Jesus the vine.**

Colossians 1:29 (ESV)

For this I toil, struggling with all HIS energy that he powerfully works within me.

**Remaining in Christ is a prerequisite for fruitfulness. Jesus continues:**

John 15:5 (NIV)

I AM the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in ME and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from ME you can do nothing.

Brothers and sisters, here is another verse to put on your refrigerator, John 15:5, “Apart from ME you can do nothing.” Memorize it and meditate on it. ***This is an emphatic declaration of human helplessness apart from Christ.*** The great missionary Hudson Taylor wrote, “The branch of the vine does not worry, and toil, and rush here to seek for sunshine, and there to find rain. No; it rests in union and communion with the vine; and at the right time, and in the right way, the right fruit found on it. Let us so abide in the Lord Jesus.” ***We can do nothing apart from Christ, but we can do all things through Christ.***

Philippines 4:13 (NIV)

I can do all this through HIM who gives me strength.

**Jesus closes this section with a warning and a promise.**

**Warning to Christians, who live as if Christ doesn't exist.**

John 15:6 (NIV)

If you do not remain (do our own thing) in ME, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; “such branches” are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

**Promise to Christians who love Jesus with all their heart.**

John 15:7 (NIV)

If you remain (continue) in ME and MY “Words” remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

**The literal meaning for “Words” is rhema meaning specific words. We must continually walk with Christ and hear specific Words HE continually speaks to us. Then whatever we wish will be done for us.**

***We are in another kingdom and apart from Jesus we can do nothing.***

Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV)

For HE has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son HE loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.