

[2025-05-04 - The True Vine - John 15_1-8](#)

Pastor Matt Johnson

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we thank you that to a world that was dead and stuck in darkness because of our own sin, you gave your Son—your one and only Son—that all who believe in Him might have life and have it to the full.

We praise you, Lord, that though we deserve death for our sin, through the work of your Son, we are offered life. And Lord, we thank you that Jesus paid the price. We thank you that He died on the cross for our sins. And Lord, we thank you that He rose from the grave, so we know that what He claimed is truth.

We praise you, Lord, for sending your Spirit to open our eyes to the truth of the gospel. And Lord, we pray even now that your Spirit would be moving—that this morning, you would be opening our eyes to see and ears to hear what your Word has to say. And we pray for this time as we go into your word, Lord, I pray that you would speak to me and speak through me, that these would be your words and not mine.

We praise you, Lord, for the work of your Son, Jesus the Messiah. It is in His name we pray. Amen.

Well, good morning! If you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to John, Chapter 15. And if you're out there wondering why we're in John, Chapter 15 this week—since we've been in John, Chapter 20—it's because the passage today makes so much more sense in light of the resurrection.

Today, we are going to look at the passage in John where Jesus says the last of the seven "I Am" statements. He says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener." And I think these words have much more power for us in light of what we've looked at in the resurrection.

The last two weeks, we've looked at how in the resurrection there was so much imagery of Eden—of the Garden of Eden. When Mary saw Jesus, she supposed Him to be the gardener. When Jesus gave the disciples the Holy Spirit, He breathed on them, and it's reminiscent—it's an echo—of Genesis 2. And in all of it, we see this new life that comes in Christ. So now we're going to come back to John, Chapter 15 and look at what it means to bear fruit.

How can you be sure you are bearing fruit ?
--

And I hope you've heard this term before. If you've been around the church or Christians at all, you've probably heard people say, "Well, you have to bear fruit," or "You don't have to bear fruit," or just "bearing fruit." And our goal today is to talk about what it means to bear fruit.

First, we're going to talk about the source by which we bear fruit. Then, we're going to define fruit. And finally, we're going to talk about what we should do with this passage today.

How can you be sure you are bearing fruit?

Begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ (15:1)

As we start today, our first point in answering the question, "**How can we be sure we are bearing fruit?**"—is to **begin by seeing that the only source of salvation is Christ.**

15 "I AM the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

John 15:1 CSB

John 15:1 begins, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener."

Now, when we start this passage—if you've been here through this John series, which we've been in since the second week of January—you know that whenever we see "I AM," it's a big deal. When Jesus says "I AM," these are the Greek words *ego eimi*. And these words should immediately draw our minds to Exodus, Chapter 3. When Moses asked God, "Who should I tell them sent me?" God says, "Tell them I AM sent you." "I AM," God says, and by that, He means, "I have no beginning. I have no end. I always have been. I always will be. I AM."

Whenever you see "LORD"—capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D—in the Old Testament, it's Yahweh. And behind that is "I AM." When Jesus says "I AM," He is declaring His divinity. He is saying, "I and the Father are one." "I AM—the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Jesus is fully God and fully man.

When He says, "I AM the true vine," we now have to figure out what the true vine is. To do that, we need to look to the Old Testament. And when we do that, it'll make sense of both "the true vine" and what Jesus means when He says, "And my Father is the gardener."

15 "I AM the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

John 15:1 CSB

In the Old Testament Israel was intended to be a flourishing vine that God planted for the nations to know and glorify the Lord.

In the Old Testament Israel was intended to be a flourishing vine that God planted for the nations to know and glorify the Lord. Go back to Genesis 12, and you see Abraham. God says, "I've chosen you. Your descendants—they're going to be the nation I've chosen, and other nations will be blessed if they bless you, cursed if they curse you." The imagery, right from the beginning, is this idea that through one people, God will reveal to the world who He is in His glory.

The idea of Israel as a vine is also tied, of course, to Eden imagery. When you read about the promised land before the Israelites get there, it's called "a land flowing with milk and honey"—abundant in food. All of the imagery of the promised land should remind us of Eden: a place where every tree was pleasing to the eye and the food was good. And when we look at this vine imagery, it should immediately excite us—that God and His people would dwell together, and the nations would see and give glory to God.

15 “I AM the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

John 15:1 CSB

In the Old Testament Israel was intended to be a flourishing vine that God planted for the nations to know and glorify the Lord.

The vine imagery is most often negative looking at how Israel is fruitless and worshipping foreign gods and idols (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel 15, 17, 19)

But then, you look at all the examples of vine imagery about Israel in the Old Testament, and they're mostly negative—depicting Israel as fruitless and worshipping foreign gods and idols.

I chuckled when I started looking this up because the places we see vine imagery are Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel—all books of major prophets offering judgment against Israel for its falling away. And in all of the cases of the vine, what we see is not a vine bearing fruit. In places like Ezekiel 15, we're told about this vine—"What is a vine good for if it doesn't bear fruit?"

Now, you might think, "Well, it's still good for making rope!" But that's just because you watch modern movies—it's not good for that. You might think, "Well, maybe it could be used for draping on something." No. In that day, if the vine was not producing fruit, the people would not say, "Well, let's repurpose it." It was good for nothing but the fire—it was good for nothing at all.

So, the imagery in the Old Testament tied to Israel shows that it is failing to do what it was supposed to—it is not leading the nations to glorify God. And so, we see Israel go into exile. We see the vine uprooted. We see that there is no hope for the people in their own strength—that they could walk well with the Lord.

Indeed, the whole Old Testament, through the law, shows us that people will never measure up to what we are called to if we want to have a right relationship with God.

15 “I AM the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

John 15:1 CSB

In the Old Testament Israel was intended to be a flourishing vine that God planted for the nations to know and glorify the Lord.

The vine imagery is most often negative looking at how Israel is fruitless and worshipping foreign gods and idols (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel 15, 17, 19)

The imagery is positively tied to God making a place for his people that is like the garden of Eden when “the one at your right hand” comes (Psalm 80)

But there is hope.

In Psalm 80, there is imagery tied positively to God making a place for His people that is like the Garden of Eden. Then, there is the falling away—the vine has been beaten down, the nations have come in—but the hope is that "Lord, the one at Your right hand will restore things." It's pointing, of course, to the Messiah. It's pointing to Jesus.

So when Jesus says, "I am the true vine," the eleven men sitting in front of Him—this is at the Last Supper—they would have understood that He was talking about a vine producing fruit. They would have understood that He was talking about what Israel never was on its own. And they would have understood that He was talking as the Messiah.

How can you be sure you are bearing **fruit**?

Begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ (15:1)

Jesus's point at the beginning of all of this is that He is the only source of salvation. He is the true vine. If humans were created to bear fruit in the image of God—to follow God well—the Old Testament shows us that it is impossible in our own strength. But Jesus says, "I am the true vine."

As we keep reading, He will talk about how connection to Him is the way we know we have life. So how **can you be sure you are bearing fruit? First and foremost, you must begin by seeing that the only source of salvation is Christ.** If we don't grasp that, there's nowhere else to go.

It's like last week when we talked about Thomas. The other ten disciples saw Jesus and believed. They told Thomas, "He's alive!" But Thomas said, "Unless I touch His wounds—unless I touch His side—I cannot believe." Thomas could not believe in his own strength. It was only when God revealed the truth to him that he believed.

If we believe there is any other source of salvation, we do not believe Jesus is the true vine—and He **is** the true vine.

How can you be sure you are bearing **fruit**?

Begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ (15:1)

Reject baseless branch believe belief and bear **fruit** in Christ (15:2-6)

This brings us to the next point: **we must reject baseless branch belief**—branches that aren't attached to anything. Baseless branch belief is the idea that "Well, someone can be a good enough person, right? Someone can do enough good." Or, "There are people who aren't so bad—there are people who are bad, but others who aren't." You need to reject that type of thinking, because if Jesus is the true vine, only connection to Him matters.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Every branch in me that does not produce fruit, He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.
John 15:1-3 CSB

We see that as we keep reading: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Every branch in me that does not produce fruit, He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit." To the disciples, He says: "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."

He's letting them know: You are connected to Me.

⁴ **Remain** in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it **remains** on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. ⁵ **I AM** the vine; you are the **branches**. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. ⁶ If anyone does not **remain** in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
John 15:4-6 CSB

"Remain in Me, and I in you." That word for "remain"—I think it would be better translated as **"reside"**—it means "dwell with, live with."

***"Reside** in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it **resides** on the vine, neither can you unless you **reside** in Me. **I AM** the vine; you are the **branches**. The one who **resides** in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. If anyone does not reside in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned."

The language here is very clear: For all who are not connected to the true vine, they will spend eternity separated from God in hell—that's the language of fire here.

If you do not bear fruit, you are not going to be with the Lord. And we'll talk more about what fruit is and what it means to bear it in a moment. But first, let's talk about what happens if you are not connected to the vine.

You may read this and say, "Well, Pastor Matt, it's talking about branches being removed—that sounds like they were 'on the vine.'" But that's not what this passage is about.

It seems like that to us today when we are reading it, but we need to remember the Jewish context in which this was written. If you were a Jewish person in that day, you believed that

you were saved simply because you were born a child of Abraham. You believed you were saved if you were a man because when you were eight days old, you were circumcised. They believed in these physical things. They believed that you followed after by attending feasts and festivals and doing these different things. And by following the ritual of the law, you were saved, or you had salvation when God returned—you would get to be with Him.

But we see the Jewish leaders, when they arrest Jesus and take Him to Pilate, in order to maintain their righteousness—remember, they don't go into Pilate's house so they can be clean as they murder an innocent man.

When Jesus is talking to the disciples and talking to believers or people that are starting to believe—who are Jewish leaders—He tells them, "If you are truly in Me, I will set you free, because whom the Son sets free is free indeed." And the response of the people is, "We're already free. We're children of Abraham." And Jesus says, "Your father is the devil."

The whole idea in that is that the people thought their attachment to Israel meant they were saved by that. And Jesus says, "No. It's not about how you're born—it's about being attached to Me, the true vine. That is the only way by which you may be saved."

This goes to John 1:12–13—to be a child of God is not something we do by birth, or by strength, or by our intellect, or by the will of man, but it is only by God.

This passage is not saying you can lose your salvation. This passage is speaking to the early Jewish audience, who were sure that they were saved because of their bloodline, that it is not by earthly standards that you are saved. It is a work of God through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And if you think that you are saved because of anything else, you are not connected to the true vine.

Reject baseless branch belief and bear fruit in Christ.

As we come to this, I want to take a moment to explain what we mean by "fruit" in the Gospel of John—because I've said the word "fruit" a whole bunch.

What is the **fruit** we are called to bear?

Love

Joy

Peace

In the Gospel of John, at the Last Supper, Jesus talks about fruit in three different ways. He speaks first and foremost about love, and then joy, and peace. Throughout the Last Supper, these three themes come up as the evidences that someone follows Him.

First, of course, is love. If you remember, at the Last Supper, Jesus loved those who were His, and He loved them to the end. He washed their feet, and He gave them a new command: "Love one another." And the standard for that love? "Just as I have loved you, love one another. By this, the world will know you are My disciples—if you love one another."

What is the **fruit** we are called to bear?

Love – We love others the way Christ has demonstrated his love for us

Joy

Peace

The standard of this **fruit** is that we love others the way Christ has demonstrated His love for us.

As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love.

John 15:9-10

Throughout the Last Supper, He comes back to this command again and again. In John 15:9–10: ***"As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love."***

When we love one another, we show that we believe what Jesus has said. We show that we are following His example. And we are really showing that He is working in us and through us. The way we love one another is the way we show we are bearing fruit.

What is the **fruit** we are called to bear?

Love – We love others the way Christ has demonstrated his love for us

Joy – We have joy in Christ despite persecution in this world

Peace

The next is joy. At the Last Supper, Jesus starts to tell the disciples about what He's been telling them—we see it in the other Gospels—"I'm going to die, and three days later, I will rise." He tells them, "In the moment, you're going to have tears and weeping, but they'll turn to joy."

We see that in Mary—when she's crying outside the tomb, and then she realizes He's alive, and she clings to Him.

We have joy in Christ, and we have that despite persecution in this world. Throughout John 13–17, as Jesus says, "You'll have joy," He says things like:

I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.
John 15:11 CSB

"I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete."

You go to the beginning of the book of Acts, and as the disciples start to share the gospel, they are beaten, they are imprisoned—and they **rejoice** again and again, to be sharing in the work of God, to be counted as followers of their Savior and their King. And we see that joy in people all over the world, as they seek to follow Him—despite how hard their circumstances may be.

What is the **fruit** we are called to bear?

Love – We love others the way Christ has demonstrated his love for us

Joy – We have joy in Christ despite persecution in this world

Peace – We have peace because we know Christ has overcome the world

And lastly, we see peace. If you were here last week, you heard Jesus say, in John, Chapter 20, three times to His disciples as He reveals Himself to them: *"Peace be to you. Peace be unto you. Peace be unto you."* And we have peace because we know Christ has overcome the world. Near the end of the Last Supper, Jesus says:

³²Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. ³³I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

John 16:32-33 CSB

Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.

The promise Jesus gives is: *You're going to have strife in this life, but have peace in this life because you know that nothing in this life is greater than I Am. My authority is over it. I have conquered the world.* And indeed, we have that peace—because if death could not hold Him, what can?

What is the **fruit** we are called to bear?

Love – We love others the way Christ has demonstrated his love for us

Joy – We have joy in Christ despite persecution in this world

Peace – We have peace because we know Christ has overcome the world

Peace. We have peace because we know Christ has overcome the world.

This is the fruit we're called to bear: love, joy, and peace. Now, you might say, "Well, Pastor Matt, there's like a whole list in Galatians 5," and there is. But we're in the Gospel of John today. And you might say, "Well, Pastor Matt, there are other places that talk about this," and there are. But in John, these three are the ones focused on in the Last Supper.

I want to tell you a story from this last month. Wendy Tutulis—I don't know if she wants to wave. Hi, Wendy. So, Wendy sent me an email about a month ago, and the email starts, "I have a praise report—there was sewage in my sink." And I start reading, and I'm like, "Where's the praise report?"

I read through her email, and through the first two paragraphs, it was about how she's in a condo and there are issues. It's happened before, and sometimes it's hard to get ahold of the condo board. I'm paraphrasing, but essentially, I start reading this email and I'm like, "Where is the praise report?"

And at the end—or near the end—it says, "And it's not resolved yet." Then, at the bottom, it says, "But in the midst of all of it, I have peace. In the midst of all of it, I didn't get upset." She was rejoicing in God and rejoicing in her family—the church. And I read the email, and I was so energized and so excited because it was an instance where sewage in a sink is a reason to be upset.

And your peace and your joy and your willingness to share it filled me with joy. And that's fruit—when we share the way God is transforming us. You mentioned that you've been upset at the maintenance guy before, and this time, it sounds like you were much kinder to him—loving and just. I would have been ticked the whole time.

And so, I just rejoice in your story, and I rejoice in stories where people are sharing their fruit—where they are sharing the way that they show love, joy, and peace in a world that is anything “but” a world where we should have love, joy, and peace.

And this fruit we are called to bear—there's one other thing about it. We're not called to bear it in secrecy. This isn't about going out and bragging. Wendy wasn't bragging to me—she was sending me an email to simply rejoice in something that had happened. But as we bear fruit, we are called to tell others about it.

And much more importantly, if you read carefully through the Last Supper, Jesus talks about how as the world sees you do this, they will know that you are His. "Our testimony to the world is the way we love each other, the way we have joy and peace in this world. Our testimony to the world is the way we live transformed lives."

The first person in the Gospel of John that we see mentioned bearing fruit is the woman at the well. When she races back, she tells the people, "Come and see a man who knows everything about me. Could this be the Messiah?" And as Jesus and the disciples sit there while she brings the whole town back, Jesus tells the disciples to open their eyes to the harvest at hand. He says, "Sower and reaper are rejoicing together for bearing fruit for eternal life."

He's talking about the woman at the well—who is bringing people to the King. And what do they say at the end of John 4? They say, "**Truly, this man is the Savior of the world.**" It is Samaritans who first declare who He is. That is bearing fruit.

And bearing fruit should lead to multiplication—it should not lead to stagnation inside the church. We're not trying to make fruit preserves. We're trying to go into the world and show the world what we are doing. And as we do it—as the world sees our transformed lives—we get to rejoice as we see more and more people come to know the Lord. More and more branches bear fruit!

How can you be sure you are bearing **fruit**?

Begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ (15:1)

Reject baseless branch believe belief and bear **fruit** in Christ (15:2-6)

Trust **the true vine** to keep transforming us (15:1-8)

So, **how can you be sure you're bearing fruit? We begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ. We reject baseless branch belief and bear fruit in Christ.** And this brings us to the third point: **We trust the true vine to keep transforming us.**

As we read through this passage again, Jesus says:

I AM the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. Every branch in Me that does not produce **fruit**, He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces **fruit**, so it will produce more **fruit**. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

John 15:1-3 CSB

To the disciples, He says: **You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.**

Now, when it talks about pruning here, I am immediately reminded of my mother—when Levi was born. It was summer, and we had planted these trees at our house a year before Levi was born. They had started to grow, but they looked like bushes. And I thought that's

just what trees do for a while—they grow out, and then up. I don't know—that's what I thought.

When my mom was visiting, she grabbed pruning shears—without asking—and just went out. These trees—there were two of them, about this tall—and she just started snipping things. And I was ticked.

We were also not sleeping much, because it was when Levi was first born. And I don't remember what I said to her, but I don't think I said much, because I was like, I—I don't even know... The damage is done.

And then in October, I remember—while I was mowing—I looked at the trees, and I was like, they're twice as tall. And I was like, "Mom, Mom."

She'll listen to this, so I know, but in that moment, I remember being like, "Oh, that makes so much sense." If all the resources are going to what it's supposed to do—because we wanted it to have shade in our yard—but instead, we had a bush forming because we weren't pruning.

Pruning is painful, right? Pruning is something that you don't want to do. You'd rather just kind of keep doing whatever you want. But the imagery of the Father as the gardener—He prunes away that which gets in the way of bearing fruit. Because if you read throughout this passage, the goal of this passage is not just that you produce "one" fruit. He prunes every branch so that it will produce "more" fruit.

If you're a believer today and you say, "Well, there was a time in my past when I produced fruit, so I'm good," stop thinking about raisins and "start bearing fruit."

I'm serious about this—because if we rest on what we've done in the past, we miss the point.

I'm grateful that one of the most fruitful seasons of my life was when I was a youth pastor before going to Moody. I got to see ten kids come to know the Lord in about six months. I got to see my grandma come to know the Lord at that time. But I don't look at that time and say, "I did my part." I pray to see more and more* of that, and I pray that the Lord would prune me so that He can produce more fruit in me and through me.

Pruning is the Lord taking that which distracts us from following Him—taking those things that we don't need and helping us work through them. This is discipleship. This is why we need each other. This is why we need the study of the Word. This is why we need accountability.

This is why we need to **not** settle for something so small as to say, "I bore one fruit in my life." We need to see that the Father's will is that we would bear much fruit in His name.

Jesus goes on:

⁴ **Reside** in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce **fruit** by itself unless it **resides** on the vine, neither can you unless you **reside** in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who **resides** in me and I in him produces much **fruit**, because you can do nothing without me. ⁶ If anyone does not **reside** in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

John 15:4-6 CSB

Reside in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it resides on the vine, neither can you unless you reside in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches.

I know many believers who recognize the truth of the gospel—that is, “I cannot get here on my own.” It’s a work of the Holy Spirit. It’s a work of God. I am a sinner—I cannot stand before the Lord on my own. But praise the Lord for the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit to open my eyes to the truth of the gospel!

I know many believers who believe that. And then, on the other side, they start to say, "All right, now it’s my job to figure this out." That’s not your job! Your job is to turn to the One who can produce fruit in you and through you. You are connected to the “true vine.”

Don’t go out and live like you’re the one doing all of it. He works in us and through us.

The one who resides in Me, and I in him, produces much fruit—because you can do nothing without Me. Anyone who does not reside in Me is thrown aside like a branch and withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

How can you be sure you are bearing **fruit**?

Begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ (15:1)

Reject baseless branch believe belief and bear **fruit** in Christ (15:2-6)

Trust **the true vine** to keep transforming us (15:1-8)

Trust the true vine to keep transforming you.

There’s a moment when you become a believer, and after that moment, there’s the joy of growing—it’s sanctification—as God transforms us more and more into the likeness of His Son through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the pruning. This is how we bear fruit.

I was really encouraged today. I was telling someone before first service a little bit about what I was going to say, and I mentioned a story from my past.

I said, "You know, when I was a youth pastor, I once told a group of students—we were talking about the way we speak to one another. And I said, 'When I was a younger man, I

was a jerk. I did everything I could with my words to make fun of people, to cut at people, to be sarcastic with people."

And one of the students started laughing and said, "No, you didn't."

I was like, "No, I did."

And he said, "Prove it." Then he started to say, "Matt, you probably called someone stupid, and you think that's really bad."

And I said, "No, I was "vicious" with my words."

And he said, "I could never see that."

And then today, I was telling that to Rich Odisho over by Hannah's bake sale, and we were talking. He said, "I could never see that."

And I was standing there thinking, "Okay—that's **fruit**." Because I **promise** I was a jerk. I promise that people didn't know how to talk to me because I was so rude with my words.

On Sundays, when I was at Bible study, I would do everything I could to look like a "good Christian." Then, I'd go out with people—and I'd "mock" them. I was **relentless** in it. I was a jerk to family and friends. And I look back, and I praise the Lord that He has not left me that way.

And I hope you have stories like that. Because when I hear someone say, "I could never picture that," it fills me with joy—because I promise I know what I was like. And this is the joy of being connected to the true vine—of seeing the Father prune us, of seeing the Holy Spirit transforming us.

Trust the true vine to keep transforming you—to keep bearing fruit, to keep growing in your faith.

How can you be sure you are bearing **fruit**?

Begin by seeing the only source of salvation is Christ (15:1)

Reject baseless branch believe belief and bear **fruit** in Christ (15:2-6)

Trust **the true vine** to keep transforming us (15:1-8)

Give God glory and ask him to keep producing **fruit** (15:7-8)

And lastly, give God glory and ask Him to keep producing fruit.

In the final verses of where we're going to end today:

⁷ If you **reside** in me and my words **reside** in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much **fruit** and prove to be my disciples.

John 15:7-8 CSB

If you reside in Me and My words reside in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this—that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.

Now, when it says, "***Ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you,***" it is, of course, referring to asking whatever you want about bearing fruit. And be prepared—because if you ask, "Lord, I want to bear more fruit," well, what does it take to bear more fruit?

Pruning. It's not an easy thing.

There's a funny thing I hear in churches all the time—someone will say, "I prayed for patience, and look how the Lord rewarded me!" And the Lord puts moments in your life where you have to be patient—and then you learn in that. That's pruning. That's how the Lord works.

He puts things in front of us and helps us grow. And again, it's through the study of His Word, through the church, through the way we sharpen one another, and through the way we seek to follow the Lord. And the promise is this—if you're out there today and you're thinking, "I don't really bear much fruit," do you know what the **application** of this sermon is? Ask the Lord that you would bear fruit. Ask the Lord that you would bear more fruit.

If you're out there today and you're bearing fruit, and you think, "I'm doing pretty well,"—the Father wants you to bear much fruit. So keep asking. Keep praying. Keep praying to the Lord for more opportunities to bear fruit.

Keep praying that the Lord would keep pruning you—that whatever gets in the way would be shed, and that you would look more and more like Christ. That you would more and more bear fruit as you remain connected to the true vine.

Give God glory and ask Him to keep producing fruit.

The beauty of this is that as we seek to glorify the Father, we are doing exactly what Jesus told His disciples at the resurrection.

Remember—He breathed on them, and they received the Holy Spirit, and He said: "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you."

The mission of the Son was to glorify the Father.

And through the Father sending the Son—through the Son’s death and resurrection, and through the sending of the Holy Spirit—we join that mission and we get to do the same thing. We get to bear fruit and give glory to the Father. It is such a wonderful thing.

You want to apply this passage? Pray that God would help you to bear more fruit. Pray that whatever needs to be pruned, He would start pruning. And then—brace yourself. But pray that He would do that.

And praise the Lord when He does.

I used to be so vicious with my words. I used to be so focused on myself. And I praise the Lord for how He has transformed me in that way.

As we close, I want to tell you—I can’t share all these stories, but I want to tell these stories. In two weeks, we have a baptism service on May 18th at 10 a.m. And one of the greatest joys this week is that I’ve had three meals with people who have made recent faith commitments—two of whom are definitely getting baptized, and one who isn’t in town.

But in all of the conversations—and in past conversations over the past couple of months—I have been hearing stories. Stories of people who are bearing fruit and who are connected to the true vine. And in hearing those stories, one of the greatest joys is this—I’ll be talking to the person, and they’re sharing their story. And then they mention, "Well, I know someone." And they point to the church.

"I know so-and-so. And when I started struggling, I reached out to them, and they pointed me to the gospel."

Again—these are not my stories to tell. But when we started preparing for this baptism service, I thought, we’ll have three and now—we have nine!

And we praise the Lord for that. And we get to praise the Lord for the new life we get to see—for what the Lord is doing. It’s a marvel—because I didn’t expect that. But I’ve been praying that the Lord would be working in our midst. And now, I am seeing Him work in our midst.

And we are praising the Lord. And I am praying for that Sunday—that the friends and family who come—who don’t know the Lord—will come, and they will encounter the gospel. And then, when we get to November—when we have our next baptism service—we’ll say, "We have too many baptisms!" We don’t have too many baptisms—we have so many baptisms again!

But the point is this—the Lord is working. The Lord is bearing fruit. The Holy Spirit is transforming lives. The true vine—the Father, Son, and Spirit—there is transformation happening.

The question is—do we believe it? And are we trying to bear fruit? And if we are—we're not doing it on our own. We are crying out.

If you want to apply this sermon well—If you are not a believer, cry out to Jesus to open your eyes to the truth of the gospel.

And if you are a believer—pray. Pray that you would start bearing more fruit. There's room on your branch. And it's not because of what you do—it's because of what He does in us and through us.

Praise the Lord for that.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we thank You for what we get to celebrate—the work that You do in us and through us. We thank You for the work of Your Son—that we can bear fruit because we can be connected to Him—because He died and rose and reigns.

We thank You that Your Holy Spirit has opened our eyes to the truth of the gospel—for all who believe. And we thank You that we can be counted as children of God—not because of anything we could do, but because of what You have done.

We pray, Lord, that as we leave, we would be those who are seeking to bear fruit. I pray, Lord, that for those who know, even now, what You want pruned—I pray, Lord, that Your Spirit would be digging into them, helping them see the need to let You prune what needs to be pruned.

And I pray, Lord, that we would not be a people who are stubborn, like Israel in the Old Testament—but we would be trusting in what You have done—and in what You are doing.

We praise You, Lord, that You take dead branches, You make them alive in Your Name, and You bear fruit in us and through us. We praise You, Lord, for the work You are doing—

And we praise You that it is in the Name of Your Son that all of this is done.

It is in Jesus's Name we pray.

Amen.