

I Am the True Vine

3-25-18

#6 - I AM Series

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-4 Larry: REAL Tues. Women's Retreat. Easter Volunteer Mtg. *Intro Safe Families.*
- B. Slide5 Good Friday (Communion 7am & Crosswalk)
- C. Slide6 Easter Sun Times.
- D. Safe Families - 3rd service only (see note).
- E. Slide7 Palm Sunday - in commemoration of Christ's *triumphal entry* into Jerusalem, the Sunday before Jesus' resurrection. Starts the week of passion (Lt. *pati* - to suffer). Starts w/tears over Jer
- F. Prayer: Lord, as we look at you being *the True Vine*, trim our **thoughts**, prune our **motives**, snip off our bad attitudes, then **pluck & enjoy** the fruit from our lives. May our fruit bring You glory.

II. Slide8a Intro: I AM The True Vine

- A. There was a small town in Texas where 1 year the school burned to the ground with the loss of more than 200 lives, because **they didn't have a sprinkler system**. They began to rebuild after the initial shock had passed and called in the foremost company in fire prevention equipment to install a sprinkler system. When the new school was opened for public inspection, guides **pointed out the new sprinklers** in each room, to alleviate fears of another disaster. The school operated without incident for **a number of years**, then they needed to **add on** to the existing structure. As work progressed, they made **a startling discovery**. The new fire extinguishing equipment had **never been connected** to the **water supply**. They had the latest in technology & equipment, **yet** it was **entirely useless**.
- B. Slide8b We have here in *I AM The Vine, you are the branches...an organic union and a relation of complete dependence.* R.C. Sproul
 1. God doesn't want *wild grapes*, He wants **fruit**.

III. Slide9a CHRIST AS THE TRUE VINE

- A. Not vine but **true vine**. His listeners/Jews new Israel many times in OT were the vine.
 1. But always in the negative (*Israel was a vine w/bad fruit*) [see *Is.5, Ps.80*]. Here Jesus says, *I have this*...you just be the **branch**, I'll be the **vine** supplying the *sap, nutrients & nourishment*.

- B. **True Vine** - He 1st spoke of Himself as the *true bread* (Jn.6:32), now as **the true vine**, meaning *He is the original of which all other bread and wine are only copies*. Warren Wiersbe
1. He is the **only** source of *spiritual* fruit. The **only** source of *genuine* fruit.
 2. **i.e.** the character qualities of christlikeness.
- C. **Slide9b Without Me you could do nothing** - not that they would be handicapped or disadvantaged, **but** that they were *utterly helpless, unable to serve Him* effectively at all.
1. **W/o Me you can do nothing...Lasting!**
 2. **Nothing, nothing, nothing you do** w/your *talents, gifts, money, or time*, can save one soul, **or** can bear even **one little spiritual grape...w/o Christ.** bb
- D. **Slide9c** Place yourself in the middle of one of our Temecula Vineyards. *It is an ideal picture of Jesus. It's beauty, its fragrance, it's fruit that nourishes, it's fruit that when crushed into wine makes the heart merry.* **Setting?**
1. He just instituted at the last supper...**the fruit of the vine** (ch.14).
 2. Maybe they past a **vineyard** on the way to Gethsemane (see 14:31).
 3. Maybe it was when passing **the Temple** where as *Josephus* described its gate, *"it had also golden vines above it, from which clusters of grapes hung as tall as a man's height."*

IV. **Slide10a THE FATHER AS THE VINEDRESSER ...wait for it :**

- A. Here He is pictured as a *busy, active, faithful gardener*, working in His vineyard.
1. Hmmmm maybe Jesus' *highest compliment* is when Mary thought he was a **gardener** the morn of His resurrection.
- B. He cares for the vineyard, the vine, the branches, & the fruit.
1. **Slide10b** Is.27:2,3 *In that day sing to her, A vineyard of red wine! I, the LORD, keep it, I water it every moment; Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day.*
 2. His goal is to make the branches **MOST** fruitful. The purpose of growing a vineyard is to produce **grapes**....**not foliage**. (let it grow & grow...*minimizes productivity*)
 3. **He receives glory** when you bear much fruit...see vs.8. **Reminding us, we are not created to get but to give.**

V. Slide11a WE AS THE BRANCHES

- A. I think, *in me* represents 2 classes of **Christians** that are being set forth (**real** & **professing**) [like tares & wheat; sheep & goats]
1. *i.e.* the **the Judas Branch** that was just lopped off in ch.13.
- B. **It's a Metaphor** - The visual picture of the vine & branches tells us that **Slide11b** the *central idea* is about a vital **union**.
1. The thrust is **not** on **becoming a Christian** but on **becoming a productive Christian**.
 2. Here He distinguishes between our **position** *in* the Vine & our **production on** the Vine. **Fellowship, not sonship**.
- C. Jesus is explaining how they could **serve** Him in **His absence** and **bear fruit** for **His glory**
- D. **True living** comes from *fruit bearing* for Christ.
1. The branches of a vine are only good for **2 things**: **fruit or fuel; bearing or burning**.
 - a) **He does 1 of 2 things**: if a branch is not bearing **any** fruit it is **taken away**. If it bears **some** fruit He **prunes** for *more fruit*. **Cut off or cut back**.
 2. Some people are **wasting** their lives. Others are just **spending** their lives. **We** are called to **invest** our lives...in eternal things.
 3. You can see **fruit bearing** as the **rent** we pay for the privilege of living and serving God on this earth.
- E. **Slide12a** Practical truths that can help us become **fruitful** Christians & **joyful** servants.
1. **Fruit bearing** is the result of **abiding** in Christ.
 - a) (msg) *I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing.*
 - b) **Communion** with Christ begins with **union** with Christ.
 - c) **As branches** in The Vine, all believers have a **living union** with their Lord, **and** as they **cultivate communion** with him, enables them to **bear fruit**.
 - d) Note, the command is **not** to produce **fruit** but to **abide**.

- (1) When we're abiding, fruit comes **naturally**.
- (2) The fruit in view here is **not** produced by the **branch** but by **the Vine** itself.
- (a) **Without** abiding, a branch **cannot** produce even a bud of real fruit.
- (b) The **vital sap** comes from Him alone.
- e) Bearing fruit is not about **results**. **Dead machines** can produce results, and so can **spiritually dead religious people**. **Fruit is alive, and it comes out of our living communion with Jesus**.
- f) **Fruitless branches** prove they have no living connection with the vine and they must be cut off. **Fruitful branches** must be pruned so they produce more and better fruit.
- (1) **Dead wood** - **Fruitless** branches/dead branches must be ruthlessly removed. It harbors insect & diseases.
- (2) **Live wood** - When the vinedressers prune the **fruitful** branches, they cut away **living wood**, **so** the branch will produce better grapes. **It is to prevent heavy growth** otherwise the life of the vine goes into the **wood** to hold it **rather than** into the **fruit**.
- (a) He cuts away **the good**, so that we can produce **the best!**
- (3) The vinedresser must know **what** wood to cut, **how much** to cut, and at **what angle**. **God is a professional at this :)**
- g) **Slide12b** The Father prunes away **good things** from some of His servants **so** their ministries would be more fruitful **and** glorify the Lord in a greater way. *Did you hear that? This helps explain why a dedicated Christian often has to go through **suffering**.*
- (1) **He pruned from Abraham**...his city, his family, and almost his son Isaac **so that** he might be more fruitful.
- (2) **He pruned from Jacob**...many of his own plans, **so** he could build the family that would give us the nation of Israel.
- (3) You also see this **pruning in many old & new testament characters** as well as throughout **church history of men & women** who accomplished **much** for **God's glory**.
- (4) He will prune **YOU**....**if** you are **His**.

- (a) The branch that is *good for something* gets the **special privilege** of the **pruning knife**. :) [a *productive* vine is pruned for *greater production*]
- h) Our **union** with Christ depends totally on **Him**, **but** our **communion** with him depends on our faithful relationship to Him as **we** trust and obey.
- (1) Just like in marriage 2 come together forming a **union**, **but communion** is something that a couple has to *develop and maintain* between themselves.
- (2) **Union** is the foundation, **communion** is building on the foundation, **and** this depends on *mutual affection, attention, sacrifice, and service*.
- (a) Do we meet the Lord daily & communion with him? During the day, do we thank Him for his help and blessing? Do we trust Him to assist us in our work? Do we confess our sins immediately and keep the relationship healthy? Do we involve Jesus in the decisions we make in the relationships and tasks that confront us? **This is what it means to have communion with Christ, to abide in Him.**
- i) We **will** have **productivity** (fruit) in our life, as long as there is **connectivity** (abiding)
2. **Slide12c Abiding in Christ is the result of obeying Christ.**
- a) To abide in Christ **does not mean** to *keep ourselves saved*.
- (1) **It means to live in His Word & pray** (7), **obey His commandments** (10), & **keep our lives clean** through His Word (3).
- (2) **You are already clean/pruned** - *cleaned, justified, & grafted in*.
- b) Christ said 4 things to us: [1] *Come to Me* (as Savior) [2] *Learn of Me* (as Teacher) [3] *Follow Me* (as Master) [4] *Abide in Me* (as Life).
- (1) So, **to abide** is the highest requirement of Christ & therefore applies to His faithful disciples.
- c) Remember the old poem, *O shed a tear for Jimmy Brown, for Jimmy is no more. For what Jimmy thought was H₂O was H₂SO₄ (sulfuric Acid).*
- d) By **obeying** the fundamental laws that **science** has discovered or that **governments** have enacted, we achieve a better standard of living & a generally safe environment

(1) There are also laws that govern our **moral** and **spiritual** lives, and if we ignore or disobey them, we will *suffer* and perhaps *make others suffer*.

(2) Jn.15:10 *If you keep my Commandments, you will abide in my love.*

(3) Disobedience to his commands interrupts our communion with Christ.

(a) **Abraham** thought he could *save his life* by going to Egypt, **and** there he almost lost his wife and his own life.

(b) **Moses** thought that *killing a man* would help deliver the Jews from Egypt, **but** it only lead to his exile in Midian for 40 years.

(c) **Samson** thought he could *fight the Lord battles by day* **and** enjoy the pleasures of *sin by night*; **but** God thought differently, and the strongman only crippled himself and his ministry.

(d) **Jonah** was so sure things were going fine that he went down into the ship and went sound asleep. **But** then he began to reap the consequences of his rebellion. *False peace and false confidence that follow willful disobedience do not last long.*

3. Slide12d Obeying Christ results from loving Christ.

a) Sometimes we obey because we **have to**, and there's nothing wrong with that. *Setting aside our own plans and learning to obey is one of the essential tasks of childhood & youth.*

b) Sometimes we obey because we have **a reward in sight**. If I do this I will receive that.

c) **But the best way to obey is because we want to**, because we're motivated by **love** and *not fear or greed*. *If you love me keep my commands.*

(1) We don't **earn** God's love and blessing any more than children earn their parents love and care, **but loving obedience** builds character in them **and brings joy** to the parents' hearts.

4. Slide12e Loving christ results from knowing Christ better.

a) *Familiarity breeds contempt* is an old adage, **but** it is not necessarily true.

(1) The noted American preacher **Phillips Brooks** said that *familiarity breeds contempt only with contemptible things and contemptible people*, and he was right.

(a) Kel & I have been married 34 years & dated for 5. After **39 years**, we are very acquainted/familiar with each other, **but** we don't esteem each other any less, **because** our relationship is based in **love**.

(2) The Christian life begins with our **knowing and trusting Jesus**.

But we are also to **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. We find ourselves **learning** more about Him, **worshiping** Him, **thanking** Him, and **obeying** Him.

(3) So the more we **learn** about Him, the better we will **know** Him, the more we will **love** Him. As we grow in our **knowledge** of Jesus the Holy Spirit takes that knowledge and uses it to make us more like Jesus. **Thus** our goal of our salvation is **likeness to Christ**, not just **knowledge of the Bible**.

F. **Slide13** Now let's flip this...and see a **spiritual chain reaction**, **and** it begins with our decision to spend quality time with our Lord each day.

1. The more **know** Jesus, the more we will **love** Him.
2. The more **love** Him, the more we will **obey** Him.
3. The more **obey** Him, the more we will **abide** in Him.
4. The more **abide** in Him, the more **fruit** we will bear.
5. The more **fruit** we will bear, the more we will experience **life overflowing**.

G. **Prayer: Lord, clean our thoughts & prune our motives**. Flow through me True Vine. Let your Love, Joy Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, & Self-Control, burst forth in ripening acts of Christlikeness.

In the name of **The True Vine** we pray.