

The Vine and the Branches

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 15:1-6

Jesus used the illustration of a vine and its branches to teach His apostles (and us). He was explaining something about Himself, the Father, and His disciples. There are important lessons for us to learn in Jesus' illustration.

The Vine: Jesus

- “I am the true vine...” (v. 1) – Jesus was speaking; we can learn several things about Jesus from this illustration
- He is the source of LIFE – He was the creator and giver of life (John 1:1-4); more than just PHYSICAL life, He provides SPIRITUAL life (John 5:24-29) through His word (John 6:68)
- He is the source of STRENGTH / NOURISHMENT – nourished on His word (1 Timothy 4:6); Jesus taught that we are to take of His flesh and blood (John 6:53-56); this referred to His word (John 6:63); the word of God provides strength (Acts 15:32) and is able to build us up (Acts 20:32)
- He is the one who binds the branches together – we are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28); despite differences in race (Ephesians 2:12-16), social status (Philemon 10-12, 16), or politics (Matthew 10:3-4); more than just a social club, we have all come together IN Christ (Galatians 3:26-29)

The Branches: Christians

- “I am the vine, you are the branches” (v. 5) – referring to individuals, not churches/denominations; His disciples are the branches (v. 6)
- Branches must abide in Christ (v. 4) – if we do not do this, we will be cast away (v. 6); this means having His WORDS abiding in us (v. 7; cf. Colossians 3:16), which requires listening (Luke 8:8) and study (2 Timothy 2:15); also means OBEYING His words (v. 10; cf. 14:15; 15:14), respecting His authority (Matthew 7:21-23; Colossians 3:17)
- Branches must also bear fruit (v. 2) – this can only be done by abiding in Christ (v. 4-5); not always about some measurable result, but about being faithful in all things (Matthew 25:19-28); we will naturally bear fruit as we faithfully follow the Lord (Galatians 5:22-23)
- In the immediate context, Jesus was talking to His apostles; yet this applies to ALL Christians – we must do what they were told to do; abide in Christ (1 John 2:28); bear fruit (Colossians 1:10)

The Vinedresser: God the Father

- “My Father is the vinedresser” (v. 1) – understanding the vine and the branches, we can come back to this; God the Father is in this role, not any man or group of men
- He cuts off the unfruitful branches (v. 2) – those who are not remaining faithful to Him; we will be judged by our deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10); it is possible to become unfruitful and be cut off (1 Corinthians 9:27), but God is the one who determines this; this is not subject to the judgment of others (1 Corinthians 4:3)
- He prunes the fruitful branches (v. 2) – cleanses/purges them so they can bear more fruit; they were “clean” because of His word (v. 3); this is the same root word; we are sanctified by truth (John 17:17); the more we conform to the word, the more fruitful we will be (2 Timothy 3:16-17; cf. John 15:8; Matthew 28:19-20)
- However, to continue this analogy, God is able to graft in new branches (Romans 11:17-24) – those outside of God’s people can be brought in (v. 17; Ephesians 2:13); salvation is open to all (Titus 2:11); those broken off can be brought back (v. 20-21, 23); He wants all to repent (2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:32)

Conclusion

- Jesus is the true vine – only in Him can we find life
- We must be fruitful branches in Him – continue in faithfulness
- Anyone can be part of this – those outside can be grafted in