

I AM THE  
TRUE VINE

*John 15:1-11*

**Week 7**

*Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-16, Galatians 5:22-23*



# Holy Week

*Prepare Your Heart*

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As we enter Holy Week, let's reflect on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The crowds welcomed Him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna!" expecting a conquering king. Yet, He came on a humble donkey, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9: "Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey."

This week leading to Easter invites us to consider: What kind of king is Jesus? His "I AM" statements reveal His identity and mission as revealed throughout the Old Testament.

## **"I AM the Bread of Life"**

Jesus satisfies the deeper hunger of the soul, offering eternal life. Do we seek Him for temporary relief or lasting nourishment?

## **"I AM the Light of the World"**

While the people sought a political leader, Jesus provides light in the darkness of sin. Will we follow His light, even when we feel exposed?

## **"I AM the Gate"**

Jesus invites us into His kingdom through faith, not military might. Have we recognized our need for His grace?

## **"I AM the Good Shepherd"**

Instead of seeking power, Jesus cares for us and lays down His life for His sheep. Do we trust Him to lead, guide and care for us?

## **"I AM the Resurrection and the Life"**

Jesus knew of His impending suffering but also the victory beyond the grave. Do we live with this resurrection hope?

## **"I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life"**

Jesus is the only way to freedom and eternal life. Are we embracing His truth and following His path, rather than our own way?

## **"I AM the True Vine"**

Our connection to Jesus is vital. Are we relying on Him daily and bearing fruit in our lives?

As we begin this week, let's prepare our hearts. Jesus, the humble King, came not to meet our expectations but to fulfill our greatest need. Will we follow Him beyond the celebration and into the cross, knowing that through Him, we find true life?

# Day 1 - Monday

*John 15:1-11, Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-19*

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## The True Vine

Jesus didn't just say He was a vine; He said He was the true vine. In a world full of substitutes, false hopes, fleeting pleasures, and temporary sources of strength, Jesus clarifies that He alone is the source of abundant life.

The imagery of the vine wasn't new to Jesus' audience. In the Old Testament, Israel was often described as a vineyard or a vine planted by God. Psalm 80:8-9 says, *"You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land."* God had chosen Israel to bear fruit, to be a light to the nations. But time and again, the people turned away, producing wild grapes instead of the good fruit of righteousness (Isaiah 5:1-7). Jesus enters this story and makes a bold claim: He is the fulfillment of what Israel was always meant to be. Where Israel failed, Jesus remained faithful. He is the true vine, and through Him, we are given the opportunity to bear lasting fruit.

Jesus continues in John 15:4, *"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine."* Think about a branch on a vine. It doesn't have to strive to bear fruit—it simply stays connected. The same is true for us. When we remain in Jesus, His life flows through us, producing in us the fruit of Spirit. The call to abide in Jesus is not about mere survival but flourishing. When we remain in Him, we are nourished, strengthened, and empowered to love as He loves. Apart from Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5), but with Him, our lives will overflow with fruit that brings glory to the Father.



### Reflection

What are the "false vines" in your life that you've relied on for strength or identity? What would it look like for you to intentionally abide in Jesus today?

# Day 2 - Tuesday

*John 15:1-11, Matthew 7:16-20, Galatians 5:22-26, Hebrews 12:5-11*

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## Bearing the Fruit of Righteousness

This passage highlights the intimate relationship between Christ and His followers. The imagery of the vine and branches conveys dependence on Jesus for a life that bears fruit. This imagery isn't all beautiful and easy, it contains some harder images as well, vine dressers often have to prune the branches in order for them to grow. Pruning is a significant part of spiritual growth. God, as the vinedresser, removes what hinders growth, sometimes through trials or discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11), so that believers may bear more fruit. Verses 9-11 emphasize the result of abiding: experiencing the fullness of Christ's joy and love.

Pruning can feel like a loss, like cutting away what seems good. But a gardener prunes with purpose—to produce more fruit. Maybe you're in a season where God is pruning distractions, comforts, or even relationships. Trust that His hands are wise and loving. He is making room for something greater. Warren Wiersbe comments that "abiding" is not a one-time event but a continuous, conscious dependence on Christ. He writes:

*"To abide in Christ means to keep in fellowship with Him so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit. Fruit-bearing is not the result of human effort but of abiding in Christ and allowing His life to flow through us."*

Wiersbe also notes that pruning can be painful, but it is necessary for spiritual maturity:

*"God is never nearer to His people than when He is pruning them. Sometimes He cuts away the dead wood that might cause trouble, but often He cuts off living tissue that might hinder growth. This does not mean God is angry with us; rather, He is preparing us for greater fruitfulness."*

Ultimately, John 15:1-11 teaches that true spiritual vitality comes not from striving in our own strength but from remaining deeply connected to Christ. The more we abide in Him—through His Word, prayer, and obedience—the more His love, joy, and life flow through us.



### Reflection

What distractions or "branches" in my life might God be pruning so I can grow closer to Him?

# Day 3 - Wednesday

*John 15:1-11, John 6:56, John 14:23, 1 John 2:24*

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## Remain in Me

It is important to remember when Jesus says this I AM statement in John 15:1-11. His path to the cross is growing nearer to its end, so He takes a moment with His disciples to share one more I AM statement. He is the True Vine. He repeats over and over for us to “remain” in Him. I love this word. Like everything with Jesus, it is a gentle word of comfort. In Greek, the word remain can also be translated as abide or dwell. Jesus is here, calling for us to stay with Him.

Sometimes, I feel needy. I will call a friend to talk, I will hold my spouse, I will tell a parent what I’m struggling with. The greatest gift the people in my life give me is their presence and comfort. Jesus calling us to remain in Him is a call for us to give Him our presence, to stay with and near to Him. He is the Vine (the source of life), and we are the branches (the results of His love and favor). He tells His disciples this message at a critical time. His time with them is almost up, but He wants them to remain faithful to Him after He is gone. He wants them to draw near His presence to experience His life and comfort. The same is true for us.

No matter what trials or long, lonely roads we may walk in this life, we have a comforter who remains with us and invites us to remain in Him.



### Reflection

Reread John 15:1-11. Highlight how many times Jesus says “remain in me”. Next, either write down or silently repeat Jesus’ words “remain in me.” Finally, take a moment to sit quietly and reflect upon these words. When you are ready, pray and thank Him for this good word for our hearts.

# Day 4 - Maundy Thursday

John 15:9-11

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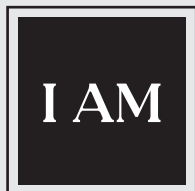
## I Love You

John 15:9-11 is the culmination of the I AM statements of God. It culminates not so much because of the metaphor (as discussed in this study, most of the I AM statements generally point to the same truth about Jesus) but because of what He says about the metaphor. Verses 9-11 of John 15 are some of the warmest, most heartfelt, and most spiritually impactful words we have recorded from Jesus. *"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"*

He expresses the great depths of His love for us by relating the love that the Father God has for His Son Jesus Christ. A love so deep and mighty that it flows and permeates into all of creation. The love of the Father is so great for Christ that it frees us from sin and saves us from Hell. Jesus makes it clear that the shared love that the Father has for Christ is the same measure of love that He has for us. How powerful is that?

One of the greatest gifts we can experience in this life is love. For many of us, that gift is taken for granted, but what Jesus encourages here is that not taking Christ's love for granted means following Him and His ways (commandments). When we pursue the ways of the Lord, we take His love and live it out. Another way to say this is that we take His love and invite others to experience it when we seek the Lord. Jesus makes clear what this leads to: joy! "You will be filled with my joy." The joy of the Lord is what we experience when we don't take His love for granted and instead live in it.

To sum it all up, to live in the love of the Lord is to remain in Him.



## Reflection

Today, live in the love of the Lord by actively seeking to love others like Jesus. How? Reflect the characteristics you know of Jesus. Be sacrificial. Be kind. Be patient. Be true. Be loving. See how this work brings greater joy to your day.

# What is Good Friday?

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Often we wonder why the day of Jesus' crucifixion is called "Good Friday", Isaiah 53:5 gives us an indication of why it is good: "But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed."

## **Eugene Peterson paraphrases Isaiah 53 in this way:**

*The servant grew up before God-a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum. But the fact is, it was our pains he carried-our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him-our sins! He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed. We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.*

HE was beaten, so WE could be whole. HE was whipped, so WE could be healed.... that is good news!

May we spend today reflecting not only on the good news but also grieving the weight of our sin and the suffering it caused our Savior. May we spend today reflecting again on these seven I AM statements that Jesus gave to us about who He is, what He was doing, and what He ultimately fulfilled from the Old Testament and our eternal future.

**John 6:35** - "I AM the bread of life."

**John 8:12** - "I AM the light of the world."

**John 10:7** - "I AM the gate."

**John 10:11** - "I AM the good shepherd."

**John 11:25** - "I AM the resurrection and the life."

**John 14:6** - "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

**John 15:1** - "I AM the True Vine."



# Day 5 - Good Friday

Choose one Bible account or read them all:

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

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JOIN US TODAY FOR GOOD FRIDAY REFLECTION TIME

## The Ultimate Act Of Love

Following Jesus' betrayal, arrest, desertion, false trials, denial, condemnation, beatings and mockery, Jesus was required to carry his cross to "the place of the skull", where he was crucified with two other prisoners. Jesus' body was placed in the tomb before 6:00 p.m. Friday evening, when the Sabbath began and all work stopped.

Jesus volunteered for His sacrifice. And He didn't face the pain of the cross unknowingly. Why would He willingly suffer this fate? Because He loves us. He feels compassion for us. Instead of staying away from us, He runs toward us, embraces us, and pays the cost of our sins - even though it meant deep pain for Him. Today, reflect on how much worth you have in God's eyes. So much worth that He endured the cross, with joy, so that you could be forgiven, known, and loved.



### Reflection

Today is an ideal time for personal reflection to silently and prayerfully contemplate Jesus' death and resurrection.

*Father, today I celebrate the life I live in your freedom. Because of the sacrifice of your Son and because of the gift of His life, I can walk this earth knowing that I am fully known and accepted by you. Let my celebration of this life be something worth talking to others about in the days to come. Amen.*

# Day 6 - Saturday

*Reflection Day*

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## Reflection Notes and Questions

As we wrap up this week's study, reread John 15:1-11.

Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke, "I am the True Vine." and what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change how we see Him and how we live.

Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
  
- What is something you learned this week that you want to remember? Why?
  
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from the Lord?

# Day 7 - Resurrection Sunday

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Join us for our Easter Services today and prepare your heart to engage with next week's study of God and His word. Use your time today to rest, pray, and reflect on this week's readings.