

**GREATER BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

Dr. Brett Snowden, Pastor

**TOPIC: I Am the True Vine**

**SCRIPTURE:** John 15:1-11

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**Theme:** Jesus reveals Himself as the only true source of *spiritual life, growth, and fruitfulness*.

**1. The Context: Jesus' Farewell Discourse (John 13–17)**

Before the cross, Jesus prepares His disciples for life **without His physical presence**. John 15 is part of this pastoral, intimate teaching.

Key themes leading into the passage:

- The coming of the Holy Spirit
- The command to love
- The promise of persecution
- The call to remain faithful

In this emotional moment, Jesus offers a metaphor explaining **how disciples will survive and thrive** after He departs.

**2. “I Am the True Vine” — Jesus as the Source (v. 1)**

Jesus does **not** say He is *a* vine.

He says He is **the true vine**—the genuine, authentic, life-giving source.

**Old Testament Background**

Israel was often called God's vine (Psalm 80:8–16; Isaiah 5:1–7).  
But Israel failed to produce fruit.

Jesus declares:

- **Where Israel failed, He succeeds.**
- **He is the faithful vine.**
- **Life with God now flows through Him.**

## **Theological Insight**

To call Himself the “true vine” is to claim:

- He is the fulfillment of Israel’s calling.
- He is the mediator of spiritual life.
- He is the center of God’s redemptive plan.

### **3. “My Father is the Vinedresser” — God as the Gardener (v. 1)**

The Father is not passive. He is actively involved in shaping the lives of believers.

#### **Two Actions of the Father (v. 2)**

1. **He removes fruitless branches** — judgment on false disciples.
2. **He prunes fruitful branches** — discipline for true disciples.

#### **Pruning is painful but purposeful**

- God cuts away what hinders growth.
- Pruning is a sign of love, not rejection.
- Spiritual maturity requires divine intervention.

### **4. “Abide in Me” — The Central Command (vv. 4–7)**

The word **abide** appears **11 times** in this passage.

It means:

- Remain
- Stay connected
- Continue
- Dwell
- Hold fast

#### **Why Abiding Matters**

- **Apart from Christ, we can do nothing** (v. 5).
- Spiritual fruit is impossible without spiritual connection.
- Abiding is not passive; it is a daily posture of dependence.

#### **How We Abide**

- Through the Word (v. 7)
- Through prayer (v. 7)
- Through obedience (v. 10)
- Through love (v. 9)
- Through community (v. 12)

### **5. The Fruit of Abiding (vv. 5, 8, 11)**

Fruit is not busyness.

Fruit is not a religious activity.

Fruit is not outward success.

#### **Biblical Fruit Includes:**

- Christlike character (Galatians 5:22–23)
- Obedience (John 15:10)
- Love (John 15:12–13)
- Witness (John 15:27)
- Answered prayer (John 15:7)
- Joy (John 15:11)

#### **Fruit is the evidence of true discipleship**

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit” (v. 8).

### **6. The Joy of Abiding (v. 11)**

Jesus ends with a promise:

- **His joy**
- **In us**
- **Made full**

Abiding leads to:

- Stability
- Peace
- Purpose

- Deep, sustaining joy

This is not emotional hype; it is spiritual fulfillment.

### **7. Baptist Distinctives Highlighted in This Passage**

- **Regenerate church membership:** True branches bear fruit.
- **Perseverance of the saints:** Abiding is the mark of genuine disciples.
- **Authority of Scripture:** The Word cleanses and sustains.
- **Priesthood of all believers:** Every believer is called to fruitfulness.
- **Christ-centered discipleship:** Jesus alone is the source of life.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does Jesus mean when He calls Himself the “true vine”?
2. How have you experienced God’s pruning in your life?
3. What practices help you “abide” in Christ daily?
4. What fruit is God producing in you right now?