

The Vine and the Branch

Last time I preached I focused on the Gardener and the Vine.

- **Jesus said:** 'My Father is the Gardener' and he has always been so
 - Genesis to Revelation: He walks, he knows, he inspects because he cares.
 - He is a cultivator of glory. **And so are we.**
- **Jesus said:** 'I am the True Vine'
 - Jesus is the true Vine and there are lots of false vines

John 15:1 "I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. 2 He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit in me. He prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it will bear more fruit. 3 You are clean already because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so 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 – bears much fruit, because apart from me you can accomplish nothing.

Jesus was thinking of **one false vine in particular.**

- The image of the vine referred to Israel again and again (Isaiah 5, Jesus speaks to the Pharisees a parable of a vineyard)
 - Jesus is not just saying he is the true vine, he is saying I am the true Israel
 - The true representative of God. '**Plug into me and be a part of all the blessing, all the promise**'

Jesus says I am the True Vine, I am the True Israel, I am the True Nation of God and I invite you to be a part of me.

- It's not about genetics. **It's about relationship/connection with Jesus.**
 - 'Just because you're Jewish, that means little, I am the True Israel, become part of my nation.'
 - Just because **you're in church**, your **parents are Christian**, **you're a staff member**, that means little, plug into me
- It doesn't matter who you are, the promises of Israel are your's if you are in Jesus.
 - Promise of peace, blessing and provision but most importantly, **presence and participation.**

Jesus demonstrates this promise for us (presence and participation)

- Jesus is true God but he's not just true God: he is also true man.
- As the true Vine he's not just the vine he is also the true branch

Isaiah 11¹ *A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.* ² *The Spirit*

of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD

Jesus demonstrates the promise of presence and participation, that is ours now.

- Jesus shows us humanity's potential: full of the Spirit of God (presence). Empowered by the Spirit of God (participation).

I've always looked to belong. I've always looked to be significant. It's what we all want.

- Not the world's way. It didn't work.
- Jesus as True Vine, True Israel brings the real promise of belonging and significance through presence and participation via the Spirit.

This isn't about speaking in tongues

- This isn't about a one off experience.
- **The whole point of this metaphor (Vine and Branch) is the ongoing relationship.**
 - Jesus is saying is "Abide in me and be fruitful in my Spirit."

Conclusion

God the Father, the gardener, saw the devastation of his garden.

- And set out to fix it - he planted a vine that would bring life.
- That vine was Israel, but it failed.
 - Except for a branch that shot out and became the True Vine, the True branch, the true Israel. Jesus is that branch that became a vine.
- **Jesus gives us what Israel was meant to!**
 - Presence. Participation. Belonging. Empowering. Through Ongoing relationship.

On going relationship

- Belonging (presence). Empowering (participation): it's what humans want.
- Had two birthday parties this week: can a birthday party be a place of belonging and empowering? Yes!
- Can a lunch with a colleague, friend be belonging and empowering?

This is who we are. Go out from here and make time to connect to Jesus and to connect Jesus to others this week.