

A Word From Your Pastor

"I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I AM the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:1-5 NIV

Throughout this Lenten Season we have been going through the 7 "I AM" Statements that Jesus made, which are recorded in the Gospel of John. They are as follows:

- 1) "I Am the Bread of Life" – John 6:35, 48, 50, 51, 58
- 2) "I Am the Light of the World" – John 8:12 & 9:5
- 3) "I Am the Gate" – John 10:7, 9
- 4) "I Am the Good Shepherd" – John 10:11, 14
- 5) "I Am the Resurrection and the Life" – John 11:25
- 6) "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" – John 14:6
- 7) "I Am the True Vine" – John 15:1, 5

How blessed we are to have these statements of Christ recorded in Scripture! In each one we see Jesus claiming His Deity! Also notice, these statements do not focus on what others thought of Jesus, but rather on Who He truly is, the WORD made flesh!

I especially love what Jesus said in **John 15:5** – ***"I AM the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains (abides) in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do NOTHING!"*** What can we do without Christ? NOTHING! What can we accomplish when we abide IN HIM, the VINE? **Philippians 4:13** says, ***"I CAN DO ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens me!"***

The key to bearing much fruit is abiding (remaining) in the Vine – Jesus! I was given an article some time ago from Turning Point Ministries, Dr. David Jeremiah, with an Acrostic for the word ABIDE. I would like to share that with you as it is so very appropriate for all of us! Nothing takes the place of abiding in Christ, for everything depends on Him!

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A-B-I-D-E

(From Turning Point Ministries, Dr. David Jeremiah)

"A" – stands for absolute surrender. We have to come to Him just as we are, confessing our sin and saying, "You are the potter and I am the clay."

"B" – stands for believe. We have to trust Him completely to do with us, for us, and around us what is very best while we stand on His promises.

"I" – stands for insight. We have to pour ourselves into His Word each day, learning His ways and gaining His insights for living.

"D" – stands for dedication. We have to persevere over time, separating ourselves from sinful habits and from people or places that may hinder our purity.

"E" – stands for enthusiasm. We go about His work in the power and energy He provides.

John 15:2,3 says, ***"He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you."*** We know that our Heavenly Father is the Gardener! He is the One who does the cutting off, and He is the One who does the pruning! It seems at times that the branches want to "prune" each other, rather than letting the Gardener, our Heavenly Father do that work through the power of the Holy Spirit and His Word!

I am
the
vine;
you
are
the
branches.
John 15:5

As we continue to abide in Christ, the fruit of the Spirit will continue to grow and become more evident to those around us. Our Father's will is that we, as Believers, bear much fruit! Our lives should be "dripping" with the Fruit of the Spirit. What is that fruit? Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control! (Gal. 5:22,23)

Abiding in the True Vine,
Pastor Mike