

## A Christ Centered Community John 15:1-17

*Church Verse for the Year - John 15:5*

**Jesus said,** "I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;  
apart from me you can do nothing.

### **I AM**

Read the seven "I AM" sayings of Jesus in John's Gospel

*Bread 6:35; Light 8:12; Gate 10:9; Shepherd 10:11; Resurrection and the Life 11:25; Way, Truth and Life 14:6; True Vine 15:1*

"I AM" is an important phrase. Jesus reflects the "I AM" saying of God in Exodus 3:14. Jesus is the true revelation of God. If you want to know what God is like look at the character, lifestyle, sayings and salvation of Jesus.

So often we project our own image, interpretation, perspective and understanding of who God is and in doing so we can so easily misrepresent God. The true revelation of God is found in the person of Jesus.

What does the phrase 'A more Christ-like God' mean to you?

### **THE (true) VINE**

In the Old Testament Israel was described as the vine of God. Read Psalm 80:8. Israel was God's chosen vine, taken out of Egypt and planted in the promised land. The purpose of the vine was to bear fruit and reach the nations with the good news of God (Isaiah 49:6) but Israel failed to bear fruit and failed in her witness to the nations (Isaiah 5). Jesus came as the true vine who would be the good news for all.

### **YOU ARE THE BRANCHES**

Each one of us is like a branch that is individual, unique, known by God, shaped and formed to be connected to the vine. The vine gives life-blood to the branches to make them flourish and grow.

### **IF YOU REMAIN IN ME AND IN YOU...**

Some branches wither, fall away, disconnect and no longer bear fruit. The challenge, however, is to remain connected to the vine, to Jesus. To be resilient in faith and following him. To be determined, persevering and keep close to the vine even during the hard seasons of life. Sometimes the branch needs to be pruned and trimmed back and there is pain but much to be learnt and whilst it hurts there is growth and a deeper connection to the vine and therefore the opportunity for new fruit.

Can you share a time when you have remained close to Jesus, trusting in him, even when things around you have been difficult?

What does it mean to know that Jesus chooses to remain close to you too?

### **YOU WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT.**

The consequence of remaining connected to the vine is that the branch will bear much fruit. Something good will come from this.

Not just one or two grapes but an abundance! Lots! Sometimes our expectation levels are too stingy. Sometimes our vision of God's provision is too small! Our God is a generous giver who longs for everyone to know the abundant life that Jesus brings. Read John 10:10 & 14:12. Is this really possible? What does an abundant life look like?

What does God want to do in and through you this year so that you will be a blessing to others?

What does God want to do in and through Pavilion Church this year so that we will be a blessing to others?

The purpose of the vine and the branches is to be good news to the world. To bless the world. List some ways we can do this...

### **WITHOUT JESUS WE CAN DO NOTHING**

It is good to remember this. So often we do things in our own strength but it is Jesus' presence and power that works through us. Without Jesus everything is meaningless. With him anything is possible!

