

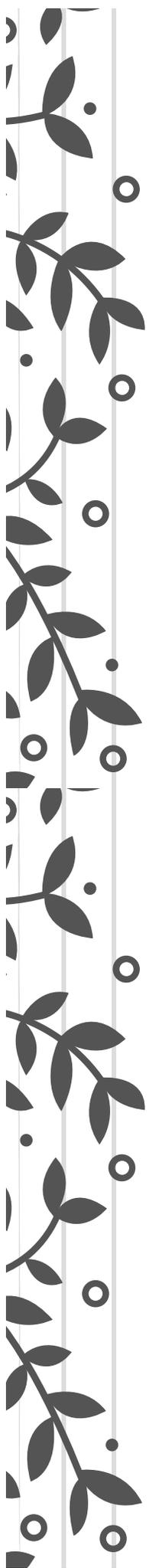
I Am the Vine I Am the Vine

Throughout the Old Testament, the vine was a symbol of Israel. God carefully protected His vine and created a nourishing environment for it to flourish. Yet, over and over, Israel rebelled. And in His wrath, God justly judged His people. But then, He provided another Vine, the True Vine. Jesus.

As the True Vine, Jesus both fulfills Old Testament prophecy and makes it possible for us, the branches, to be included in God's family. We belong not because of what we do, but because of who He is. He sustains us, providing the nourishment we need to bear fruit. He gently applies healing balm to our wounds when the Gardener prunes us so that we can become more fruitful. He supports us when the weight we carry seems more than we can bear. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. But as we remain in Him and reflect Him, we can bear unlimited fruit for His kingdom.

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Our Response of Worship

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I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

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God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

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Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

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The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

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If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You.

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(John 15:1-2; Hebrews 12:10b-11; John 15:4-5; 1 John 2:6;

1 John 3:24; John 15:7-11; Psalm 5:11)

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