

Let's pray.

Father, Thank you for tonight. Thank you that we can gather together here, and worship and hear your word. I pray that you're word would invade our hearts tonight, and we would allow it to do it's work. In the name of the Father, and Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

So this might come as a shock to many here, but there was a time in my life when I didn't like steak. At a young age I didn't get steak very much, and generally if I was given a piece of steak, it tasted like garbage. It tasted rubbery, and burnt, and I couldn't figure out why anyone would want to eat steak.

And I remember being at a friends house when I was in Jr High, and his parents offering me steak for dinner, which I tried to politely decline. And I remember the Dad asking me if I had ever had steak prepared properly before. I said that I wasn't sure, but I was open to it.

So I watched this guy prepare the steaks. He had actually started preparing the steaks the night before by placing them in some sort of family secret marinade. And he took them out of that marinade, prepared them properly for the grill, and then grilled them right... medium rare. Contrary to popular belief there is no other way to cook a steak.

I still remember that first bite of steak.

It was a game changer for sure. It's kinda of the moment I grew up, I mean as a kid all you want is candy. But when I tasted that steak, I thought about candy for a second, and thought to myself, "Forget that, this is incredible."

And thus began my life long love of red meat.

See I had never had a steak that was prepared properly. I was never presented a good steak. But when I was given a steak that had been

marinated and prepared properly, it was life changing, it was noteworthy.

This whole idea of marinating, of preparing properly, of being noteworthy and affecting those we're around, is oozing out of our passage tonight. Tonight we're looking at where Jesus calls us to abide in him, and so as we talk and unpack the passage and abiding think about this beginning illustration of a steak marinating.

Turn in your bibles to John 15:1, or open your bible app on your phone, or there are bibles in front of you on under the chairs.

And as you turn to John 15, we're going to answer these 4 questions tonight:

4. And What happen's if we don't bear fruit in our lives?
3. How do we bear fruit in our lives?
1. What does Abide mean?
2. How do we abide?

Let's start with verse 1 and let's hear the words of Jesus.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser."

So, Jesus is speaking here to his disciples, and they are in the upper room for his last time teaching them, and he make the last of his "I am" statements here. Anytime in the Gospel of John that Jesus makes an "I am" statement, they have connective tissue with ancient Jewish traditions (bread of life, light of the world, door of the sheep, good shepherd, resurrection and the life, way/truth/life, true vine).

"I am the true vine," Jesus says.

What Jesus is saying here is a big deal to his hearers. His disciples and Jesus himself are 1st century Jews. And this idea of the vine and the vineyard isn't something new to them. The image of the vine and

the vineyard are woven all throughout Judaism. So many times in the OT, God refers to Israel as *'The Vine'*.

Psalm 80:8-9 says:

**8** You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
you drove out the nations and planted it.

**9** You cleared the ground for it;  
it took deep root and filled the land.

To a Jew, if you would speak to them about the Vine, they would immediately make connections to Israel, the temple, and their God. At the time that Jesus is teaching this, if you were to walk to the entrance of the Temple in Jerusalem, you would have seen a massive golden vine, grapes, and leaves strewn all over the entrance of the temple.

The ancient historian Josephus claimed that some of the golden grape clusters were the height of a man. That's a lot of gold. Think about this, when the temple was sacked some 40 years later in 70 AD by the Romans, the amount of gold taken from the temple was so great that it depressed the value of gold in Syria by half.

And even more important than golden grape clusters on at the temple entrance, is that Israel was seen as 'the Vine' that would be planted and produce fruit or blessings unto the whole world.

This is the backdrop to what Jesus is saying, and instead of saying, "Israel is the vine"....Jesus says what?, *"I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser."*

Jesus is saying to his disciples I am the fulfillment of everything that the nation of Israel was supposed to be.

And this is really important to understand in light of what Jesus is about to say next to his disciples about Abiding.

After declaring himself as ‘the true vine’ and God the Father as ‘the vinedresser’, Jesus gives us our first point found in verse 2-6, which is:

Apart from Jesus, we can’t bear fruit.

In verses 2-6, Jesus states this point 4 times:

- **2** Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,...
- **4** ...As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.
- **5** ...for apart from me you can do nothing.
- **6** If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

Apart from Jesus, you and I cannot bear fruit.

And that leads us to first of our four questions we talked about in the beginning of the message:

What happens if we don’t bear fruit in our lives?

Well Jesus is clear here. In fact right off the bat he says it in verse 2:

**2** *Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,...*

Jesus further unpacks what happens when we don’t bear fruit in verse 6:

**6** If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

As I thought about this idea of bearing fruit and the disciple versus the nominal follower, I thought to myself, “Every week there are

people who sit in the seats, and who think, by sitting in those seats, by partaking in religious activity, that they are bearing fruit by sitting in those seats.”

But hear me out, you are no more a disciple of Christ by sitting in these seats on Sunday anymore than if you were sit in a garage and declare you're a car.

If we don't bear fruit in our lives, Jesus makes clear that the Father will cut us off and throw us into the fire.

When I was a Frammer, I worked with a friend who came on the job and was a laborer. and in-between large jobs, my friend heard that they were building houses on JBER and paying David Bacon wages.

Something to know about my friend is that he was just a laborer. He wasn't a carpenter yet.

So he talked his way onto getting hired on this job on base that was looking for skilled framers even though he was just a laborer. And one day the supervisor came to him and asked him to build something. And my friend looked at his boss and said, “I can't, I don't know how.” My friend was then fired.

You see my friend could wear the carpentry bags, he could wear the hard hat, he could talk the talk, but when it came down to it, he wasn't a carpenter...he was just a laborer. He lacked the fruit to show that he was a true carpenter.

And I wonder for how many of us is this true. How many people sit here on whatever day of the week it is and we play the part. We say the words, and we look the part, but upon closer inspection of our lives, there is no fruit to show.

This is the idea that Jesus is getting at here. If you have no fruit, you aren't abiding in him, you aren't really a disciple, you're just a nominal follower. And without fruit, the Father will cut you off.

Maybe that's you. Maybe you come here to check a box. Maybe you're here and you can talk the talk, and on the outside you look the

part, but when it comes down to it, you just don't have any fruit, and if you don't have fruit, Jesus says you're not a disciple.

Jesus fleshes this out in verse 8:

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

The proof is in the pudding, a disciple of Jesus Christ bears fruit, and according to Jesus, much fruit.

Jesus says something very similar in Matthew 7:19-20:

**19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

What about your fruit? Are you bearing fruit? Are you recognized as a Christian by your fruit?

This leads us to our second question that we talked about at the beginning of the message:

2. How do we bear fruit in our lives?

And that question leads us to our second point for the message:

When we abide in Jesus, we bear fruit.

We bear fruit in our lives when we abide in Jesus.

Notice I didn't say we bear fruit when we try harder or pull our selves up by our bot straps. No:

We bear fruit in our lives when we abide in Jesus.

We see this clearly in verses 5, look at it:

**5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit,

Notice here that abiding is a 2 way street. We abide in Jesus and Jesus abides in us, and then we bear fruit.

So, as disciples of Jesus, the only way for us to bear fruit is through Abiding. And that leads us to our third question:

What does it mean to abide?

This word abide in the passage is found 11 times. That's a lot. This word abide here means this:

to *stay* (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy):—abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand

An incredible picture of what abiding looks like can be found in Jeremiah 17:7-8:

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.

He is like a tree planted by water,  
that sends out its roots by the stream,  
and does not fear when heat comes,  
for its leaves remain green,  
and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

To abide in Jesus, to be a disciple of Christ means we are marinating in Jesus. We are firmly planted in Christ. To be a disciple of Christ means that if they were to prick your finger with a needle, what would come out is Jesus.

Here's the other thing about abiding in Jesus, either you are or you aren't. Either your abiding in Jesus and bearing fruit, or your not

abiding in Jesus and you're not bearing fruit, there's no in-between here.

Our last question, and really probably the most important question is this:

How do you and I abide in Christ?

How do you and I as disciples of Christ abide in Jesus?

In some ways abiding in Jesus is really a status that we are in Jesus, that we are dwelling in Jesus, that we are remaining in Him, that we are marinating in Him, but in another way, there are very real and practical ways that if we are disciples and not just nominal followers of Jesus that we can Abide, we can remain in him.

I've distilled how you and I can Abide in Jesus into three general categories.

The first way you and I abide in Jesus is through: **Obedience**

Jesus says in verse 10:

**10** *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,*

To abide in Jesus means we obey Jesus.

When Jesus says love others, we obey Jesus.

When Jesus says tell others about me, we obey Jesus.

When Jesus says love your enemy, we obey Jesus.

When Jesus says make disciples, we obey Jesus.

When Jesus says be different from the world, we obey Jesus.

At the core of Abiding in Jesus as a disciple is obedience to Him and his word. **The disciple of Jesus is obedient to God's word!**

The second way that you and I abide in Jesus is through:  
**Dependence**

Jesus makes this very clear in verse 5:

**5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

What Jesus is saying here is, "Without complete dependence on me, you can do nothing. I am the source by which you get life and bear fruit."

I see the fingerprints of dependence on God all of the life of King David. In Psalm 63:1-4 he writes this:

- 1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no  
water.
- 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.
- 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.
- 4 So I will bless you as long as I live;  
in your name I will lift up my hands.

Are you so dependent on Jesus, that you thirst for him, that you crave his words and presence?

How often are you in his word? How often are you talking with the Lord in prayer?

Do you depend on the presence of Jesus in the same way you depend on food and water? How long do you go without food and water? An hour? Two? Maybe?

### **The disciple of Jesus is utterly dependent on Jesus!**

And the last way you and I abide in Jesus is through: **Love**

By the way, this is probably the hardest for a lot of us.

Jesus says in verse 9:

*<sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*

And in verse 12:

*<sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

And in verse 17;

*<sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

Jesus says the word love here in these verses 9 times.

Is your life characterized by love?

Do people around you, christian and not, look at the fruit in your life, and see love? Or do they see judgement? Or Do they see hypocrisy? Do they even see Jesus?

Do you love God in ways that when you see things that break the heart of God, your heart is broken too?

Paul David Tripp, makes this connection with Abiding in Christ and love:

Do you love God that much that you can't wait to be part of what He's doing in the place where He's put you? Do you love people that much that you want all of the people around you to experience the magnificent grace that has rebuilt you? Or is your Christianity externalistic, self-righteous, condemning, judgmental, and inactive?

The greatest charge, maybe, that Christ made against the Pharisees is that they were devoid of that love. And being devoid of that love, it demonstrated their lack of connection to a God of love. Christ said to the Pharisees, "You bind loads on other people that you are unwilling to bear. You won't even lift a finger to help them."

It's love; it's love; it's love. It is the single most powerful force of transformation in the universe, the love of God. Apart from that, we would have no hope, and Christ's call is, "Live a life of love. That's the fruit I want you to bear. Deeper than the fruit of theological knowledge, deeper than the fruit of participation in ministry, deeper than the fruit of Biblical literacy, I want you to have all of those things so that you would grow in My love."

**The disciple of Jesus lives a life that is saturated in love!**

A nominal **follower** of Jesus, is someone who shows up to check a box.

A nominal **follower** of Jesus is someone marks “Christian” under the religious views section of their Facebook profile but nothing in their life points to them abiding in Christ, they have no fruit.

A nominal **follower** of Jesus wears a God badge around with pride and is happy to judge other and be about as unloving as it comes.

But a disciple of Jesus...A disciple of Jesus is different.

**The disciple of Jesus is obedient to God’s word!**

**The disciple of Jesus is utterly dependent on Jesus!**

**The disciple of Jesus lives a life that is saturated in love!**

Are you abiding in Jesus?

Wrestle with this question for the rest of the week.

Let’s pray.