

## **“I Am the True Vine”**

10-26-14

This is a very special day! Not only is it Reformation Sunday, where we focus on the three foundations of our faith, but it's also the end of our series on the “I AM” statements of Jesus as to Who He is. This is a time of “Ones”!

Look first at Martin Luther's three ‘Ones’. As we walk through life, we need to follow Jesus Christ closely with One Faith, Sola Fide. Our faith must rest in Jesus Christ! He's the One Who suffered and died in our place, and because of Him alone we have life. Romans 1:17, *“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*

One Grace, Sola Gratia. Salvation doesn't come because of anything we've done! It's a gift of God. It's undeserved! We can't come to faith on our own. Faith comes to us because of the action of God, we're only recipients. Listen to Ephesians 2:8, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”*

One Word, Sola Scriptura. The Word of Scripture shows us Jesus Christ. Right now the world says there are many ways we can learn of Jesus, but the only way, is to be in God's Word each and every day. We need to be in it!

Jesus wants His words to abide in us. We must allow His Word to dwell in us richly. We're not pleasing God, as long as the Word of God is of no concern to us. We're responsible for ourselves to maintain the vital relationship that we need with Jesus. Ray Stedman writes, *“we must decide to do things which expose ourselves to Him and keep ourselves in contact with Him.”*

Open to John 15. Jesus has told us that He is the Light, the Bread, the Gate, the Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and now today, we hear His last words telling us, “I Am the True Vine”. What Jesus gave us as He explained Who He was, and the way He expressed it so undeniably, tells us that He is the ‘One’ of each of these and there's no other!

Look at verses 4-8, *“As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 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. 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. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*

One Vine. The vine carries the nourishment for the branches to live and thrive. Cut off from the vine, the branch will die. Period! A branch can't survive on its own. It has no root. It's unconnected to a source of life. Since an unconnected branch has no life, it can't bear fruit. It's the Vine, attached to the roots which provides life to each branch and which brings to the branches the nutrients necessary to produce fruit. Jesus comes to us and says, *“I am the True Vine.”* There is no life and no fruit apart from Him!

One Branch. If you stay connected to the vine, you're one of the branches and you're alive. You can produce fruit. Without connection to the Vine, you're dead and useless; You have no life of yourself! Death is the domain of Satan; life, of Jesus. A branch that's cut off from the vine isn't of much value just like a branch cut off a tree. A tree branch might be made into a plank, but the branch of a vine is worth little more than kindling! There's no life in a branch separate from the Vine.

One Fruit. The purpose of the grapevine is to produce grapes, not branches. As a Christian, you don't exist merely for the purpose of soaking up the blessings of eternal life in Christ. You're not here just to take it in and grow fat. You're here that you might bear fruit!

The reason you exist, the purpose God has for you in leaving you here to hang around awhile, is not merely to...hang around awhile! As Jesus Christ glorified the Father through His obedience, believers glorify God through their lives! You're here in order that you might produce fruit, for that's the end product! You have no life of yourself. Salvation comes through Christ alone!

One Savior. Jesus Christ came for you. There is no way you can save yourself! But God in His great love for you sent His One and Only Son to take your place and take your punishment so you might have life, here and now and life forever with Him in heaven. This has been God's desire all along. 1 Timothy 2:3-4, "*This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*"

One Mission. Our goal in life is to be in mission. We have a world around us where one in five Americans don't believe in a deity. Less than half of the population attends religious services on a regular basis. Why? People simply find our faith *unbelievable*.

While a person's response to Christ is ultimately a matter that rests in God's sovereign hands, and something we have no control over, a person's *hearing of the Gospel* is a matter we DO have control over and responsibility for!

From 2 Timothy 4:2, "*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season.*" From Romans 10:17, "*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*" As a song says I used to sing with my students, "*I Am the Vine, you are the Branches, ever the fruit to bear. I Am the Light, you the reflection, everywhere. So go ye now and make disciples of all the nations. Go ye now and I will be with you there*".

The mission is clear! Go! Bear fruit! Proclaim Jesus!