

5-20-2026 – I AM – part 5

Encouragement/Soul!

The “I AM” statements of Jesus from John’s Gospel. “I AM”- God’s name.

- Last week, #1 – I am the bread of life
- #2 – “I am the light of the world”
- #3 “I am the gate” & #4 “I am the good Shepherd”
- #5 – “I am the Resurrection” & #6 – “I am the way, the truth & the life”

This week - statement #7 – “I am the true vine” 7 nuggets.

John 15 - “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² 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. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

- This is said during Last Supper. Clean not b/c of ceremonial ritual.
 - o We’re clean b/c Jesus is the Word made flesh. And the Word cleans us.

1 - Jesus – true vine– Israel, the vine that wasn’t true

Psalms 80 – “⁸ You transplanted a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹ You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.”

Isaiah 5:7 – “The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.”

- **Isaiah 5** is not a pretty picture. B/c the people didn’t respect God, He removed His protection/blessing. **They would go into exile.**
 - o **God prepared the vineyard, but found bad fruit, not good grapes.**
- While God’s people were lacking as a vineyard, Jesus is **the true vine.**
 - o Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father; He did not disappoint God like other vines. His life produced fruit!
 - o Jesus was the fulfillment and embodiment of what Israel was meant to be—a fruitful, life-giving presence in the world.

2 - "My Father" is the gardener.

- **My Father is God**, the Gardener; **Jesus aligns Himself w/ God**
 - o **Jesus is directly saying – I am the son.** 1 and only Son of God.
 - o Have no doubt. I'm the promised Messiah. I'm the one.

3 – The **Gardener** is the **keeper of the vineyard**

- The Keeper is a Caretaker. He's responsible for tending the vine;
- Gardener ensures the vine is healthy so it can be productive.
 - o This concept is given in [Isaiah 27:2-3](#) where God is depicted as the one who watches over His vineyard.

"Sing about a fruitful vineyard. **3** I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it continually. I guard it night & day so no one can disturb it"
- Keeper's task: pruning, watering, & protecting vine from pests/ disease.
 - o Imagery shows God's role to us . . . active involvement in our lives.

4 – **Reminds of God's sovereignty**. . . ensuring the branches remain fruitful.

- o "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."
 - **Greek word for "cuts off" means "To raise, lift up, take away, remove."** **God first lifts up, supports . . . patient.**
- God has **patience** with the branches; but there is a limit.
 - o **Luke 13** - ⁶Jesus told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' ⁸"'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'
 - We have **only so much time** to get hearts aligned w/ **God**.
 - o "People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
 - **Good news – still here?** More fruit to bear. Or, God/patient.

5 - **Jesus gives us a contrast** - **Fruitless** branches vs **Fruitful** branches.

- **Fruitless** - superficially connected; absence of a life changed/ Christ.
 - Some people call themselves Christians, but it's name only.
 - **Ex: Players** who wear a jersey, but sit on the bench.
 - Soldiers who pledge allegiance, don't pick up a weapon
 - Firefighter – wears uniform, never holds a hose
 - Sit in the boat, never row it. Sitting still.
- **Fruitful branches** are genuine believers—they don't just know Jesus, but call Him Lord & Savior. They follow His footsteps.
 - The true heart of a person is shown in how they live.
 - Do our lives bear the fruit of a person committed to Jesus?
 - **Gal. 5** - ²²The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.

6 – God, the **Gardner**, knows how to **prune branches**

- **Pruning isn't pleasant.** It may involve loss.
- Cuts off what isn't needed/ holds us back from growth and productivity.
 - Hint: we usually cling to those things. Don't want to let go.
 - We become like Lot's wife ... looking back
- Truth: God lovingly prunes so we can flourish / bloom even more.

7 – **Beware of Disconnect** Not 1 time event; ongoing commitment.

- Our human nature loves **freedom**. Fly free. Self sufficient. **ABIDE**
 - But we were **created** to be **dependent** on God. To stay connected
 - ⁴Remain in me, as I also 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. ⁵"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. . . . ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."
- Many people struggle -- not b/c they aren't good hearted, but b/c they're trying to bear fruit on their own.
- A vine supplies continuous, **unseen nourishment** to its branches.
 - Jesus is the true vine for us. We can't do anything w/o Him.