

Series: I Wish I'd Asked That; *Sermon:* “How do we bear good fruit?”
Delivered on March 31, 2019, by **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor,

Bible text explored: John 15:1–17

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I 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. ⁶If 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. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.
[ESV]

Review and application:

1. What had the grapevine and the vineyard traditionally represented to the people of Israel? (See *Ps. 80:8-9*.)

But how had God, through his prophets, highlighted their shortcomings in the covenant relationship? (See *Isa. 5:7* and *Jer. 2:21*.)

2. In another “I Am” declaration (*v. 1*), how does Jesus’ use of the word “true” to significantly shift the focus of this familiar image?

How (*v. 5*) does Jesus spell out this intimate and organic “abiding” relationship?

3. How (*vv. 2-3*) does the Father, as the farmer, tend his vines?
(*Note:* The Greek word for *prunes* also means *cleans*.)

Pastor Moody compared God’s Word infusing our lives to the sap that flows from the vine to its branches, producing clusters of grapes.

4. What (*v. 8*) confirms that you are a true disciple?

If you remain in this connected mode (*v. 7*), why can you be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon?
(See also: *2 Chron. 16:9a*.)

What is the danger (*v. 6*) of allowing this vital relationship to atrophy?

5. How (vv. 9-10) can our love for Christ be modeled on his love for the Father?

What state of mind (v. 11) will maintaining this intimate relationship foster?

To whom (v. 12-13) are we instructed to let this love flow?

To whom in our fellowship could you offer an expression of that love? (Just do it, Pastor Josh said; the feeling may come later.)

6. Why (vv. 14-15) should we be moving beyond thinking of ourselves as servants to seeing ourselves as friends?

How (vv. 16-17) should remembering that it was Jesus who chose us deliver us from any fear of rejection?

What results is Jesus expecting this mutual relationship to produce?

How can we develop a mindset of abundance rather than of scarcity?