

The seven “I am” metaphors in the book of John.

the bread of life (6:35), the light of the world (8:12), the door or gate (10:7), the good shepherd (10:11), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the way the truth and the life (14:6), **the true vine (15:5)**

Session 7: I am the true vine.

Tuesday 5 November 2024 John 15:1- 17 (NIV)

The only *I am* that adds ‘*you are*’ by more than implication. (v5)

1 **"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.

4 **Remain** 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.

6 If you do not **remain** in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

7 If you **remain** in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now **remain** in my love.

10 If you keep my commands, you will **remain** in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and **remain** in his love.

11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

14 You are my friends if you do what I command.

15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

17 This is my command: Love each other.

Potential Discussion Questions

Anything interesting from different version in the room? The message version offers Eugene H. Peterson's answer to some of these questions.

The righteous branch -the branches and the roots

When Jesus says, "I am the true vine," what is he claiming about himself? Was Jesus a righteous branch/vine? **c.f. OT quotes.**

If we are the branches, what does this mean? "**Remain**" in relational connection?

Repetition of (G3306) It's there 11 times in my GNT version of (John 15:1-17)

10 times in NIV & NASB, 'Abide' 11 times in NRSV. 'Join' is in MSG 3 times.

Strong's: ἐνώ menō (*men'-o*) *A primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): - abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), X thine own.*

The fruit

What does "fruit" mean in the lives of believers?

How can we produce "fruit that will last"? (Second commandment repeated)

How can we ensure that God gets the glory for our fruit? How can we give the glory to God instead of taking it for ourselves? (v8)

Vine branches stay attached to a trellis. Are we fully connected to God? How can we do this?

Branches need more care than the vine. Do we care and offer shade and protection for other branches? How?

Cut Off?

Pruning might be painful, but it may lead to improvement. Should we seek approval or improvement? (v2)

Can you stop being *in him* if you don't bear fruit? Can you stop being a Christian and saved? (v2 & 6) c.f. Hebrews 6:4-6 Romans 11:20-22

Key Readings

The righteous branch -the branches

Through the lens of the New Testament, we see how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy about the 'righteous Branch' of Jesus.

(Jeremiah 23:5 NIV) "*The days are coming,*" declares the LORD, "*when I will raise up for David a **righteous Branch**, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.* (Jeremiah 33:15 NIV) "*In those days and at that time I will make a **righteous Branch** sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land.*

(Isaiah 11:1-2 NIV) **A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.** *The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—*

(Ezekiel 17:22-24 NIV) "*This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; **it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar.** Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. All the trees of the forest will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. "*I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it."

(Zechariah 8:12 NIV) "*The seed will grow well, **the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew.** I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people.*

The Roots

(Daniel 4:23 NIV) "*Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its **roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven;** let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.'* (Daniel 4:26 NIV) *The command to **leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored** to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.*

(Colossians 2:6-7 NIV) "*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to **live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him,** strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*" (Recent rooted conference)

The Fruit

(Mark 11:13-14 NIV) Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "**May no one ever eat fruit from you again.**" **And his disciples heard him say it.**

(Galatians 5:22-23 NIV) But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

(Ephesians 5:8-15 NIV) For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the **fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth**) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the **fruitless** deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

(Philippians 1:9-11 NIV) And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the **fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.**

(Colossians 1:6 NIV) ... In the same way, **the gospel is bearing fruit** and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.... (v10) so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and **please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work**, growing in the knowledge of God,

(Hebrews 13:15 NIV) Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—**the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.**

Cut off?

(**Hebrews 6:4-6 NIV**) It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

(**Romans 11:20-22 NIV**) Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

Fact: faith and doubt are two sides of the same coin. There is no doubt that $2 + 2 = 4$. However, it does not take any faith to believe it. On the other hand, to believe that someone loves you is open to an element of doubt. To put your faith in God is similar to loving a person. There is always the possibility of doubt. **Without doubt, faith would not be faith.**

Heb 2: We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ²

Heb 3 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Hebrews 3:1 says, ‘... fix your thoughts on Jesus...’ Fixing my thoughts is often like herding cats. My mind tends to be all over the place. Keeping my thoughts ‘fixed’ requires consciously putting aside the ‘to do’ list and then trying to tune in to that ‘still small voice’ of God.

There is a line in the film *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*: ‘Everything will be all right in the end... If it’s not all right, then it is not the end.’

Prayer

Conclusion – Seven I am metaphors in John.

Seven - the number of completion/perfection in scripture appearing over 400 times in the NIV. I need a day of rest (Genesis 2-3) to be one of the 7 priests able to blow my trumpet for 7 days. (7 times on the seventh day) to make the walls fall. (Joshua 6:1–27)

djchannon.me.uk/david/

christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-the-biblical-significance-of-the-number-7.html

What next for the bible study?