***Session 8 The Glory of the Father as Vinedresser***

*Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to* ***John 15****.* ***John 15****. We’re just going to take the next few moments and look at the glory of the Father as the Vinedresser, and then also, time permitting, we’ll also just take a brief moment and look at Jesus as the vine, but in a bit more of a bigger picture as it relates to Israel and the nations.*

*Let’s pray. Father, we thank You, Lord, for Your presence this evening. Father, thank You, Lord, that through the death of Your Son, Lord, that we were able, Lord, to be in union with You, Lord, that Your Spirit lives and resides in us. Father, we ask You, Lord, for that anointing that abides in us,* ***1 John 2:27****, Lord, that teaches us all things. Father, we ask you for the stirring of that teaching anointing, Father, that dwells inside of us. Lord, that You would illumine our minds, Father, with the light of the Holy Spirit, Lord, that You would open our eyes, Father, to Your law to see glorious things. Father, I ask You, Lord, that Your Son would rise like the Morning Star. Father, we ask You for that bright righteousness, that bright light of His glory, Father, to illumine our hearts. Touch our emotions, Father, even now. Glorify Your Son in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

*Well,* ***John 15:1****, Jesus, speaking to His disciples, He declares, “I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser.” I just want to take the next few moments and talk about the glory of the Father as the Vinedresser or as the Gardener.*

1. THE NEED FOR THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER

*Roman numeral I. The need for the revelation of the Father. We are in great need for Holy Spirit unveiling to our hearts about the glory and the beauty and the majesty of who the Father is. There’s so much that the Scripture has to say to us about the Father and who He is, and there is a significant dimension of strength that comes to the church as the church continues to yield our hearts to Jesus’ ministry. He said in* ***John 17:26****, “Father, I declared Your name and I will declare it.” That’s one of the primary things that Jesus does is revealing the heart of the Father to us as His people.*

* 1. A theological premise of the forerunner ministry is focused on the Spirit’s emphasis on the end-time revelation of the Father. There is great need for understanding God the Father.

5Behold, I will send you ﻿Elijah the prophet ﻿before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 6And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and ﻿strike the earth with ﻿a curse. Mal 4:5–6

*Now, one of the premises of the forerunner ministry is focused on the Holy Spirit’s emphasis to bring the end-time revelation of the Father. There is great need. There is great understanding that the Holy Spirit has for us related to who the Father is, what He’s like, what it is that He is about, and as the days and the weeks and months and the years unfold, there’s going to be an increase of the proclamation of the glory of the Father as well as an increase of the demonstration of the Father in and through His people.*

* 1. One of Jesus’ primary aims in Jn. 13-17 is to equip His disciples to grow in the knowledge of the Father by confidently engaging with as well as receiving His Person and leadership. Growing in our understanding of the glory of the Father is essential to our faith. Jesus’ revelation of the Father is His primary strategy to equip the church in the 1st commandment.

26And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love ﻿with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. Jn 17:26

*Paragraph B. One of Jesus’ primary aims in* ***John 13-17****, one of His primary aims is to connect His disciples, yea, us as believers, to grow in the knowledge of the Father. That’s one of the main aims, is to give us insight into who the Father is and that we may know Him and interact with Him, so that we can confidently engage with Him as well as receive from the Father’s heart, His personhood, as well as His leadership. He’s equipping our hearts to know how to relate with the Father intimately and how to confidently trust His leadership by understanding the way that He interacts with us, specifically in* ***John 15*** *as it pertains to His pruning.*

*Growing in understanding of the glory of the Father is essential to our faith. It is absolutely essential to our faith, and I’ll talk a little bit more about it in just a few moments, but the understanding of the Father has almost kind of like been relegated to this elementary understanding of our faith. “Okay, we’ve got that done with. Let’s move on.”*

*No, beloved. The subject of the heart of the Father is critical to our faith. In fact, it is essential. It is Jesus’ primary strategy, according to* ***John 17:26****, to equip the church to walk in the first commandment. In* ***John 17:26*** *this is what He says, “And I have declared to them Your name,” talking to the Father, and He says, “I will declare it.” So, “this is something that I did in the past, throughout My ministry, this is something that I’m doing in the present, and this is something that I will continue to do in the future,” and I believe even in the age to come, in my opinion, that He is always going to be declaring and unfolding to us who the Father is.*

*And look what He says, “That,” or “so that,” or “because,” in doing this the love with which You have loved Me may be in them.*

*So there really is no way in growing in the first commandment outside our hearts yielded to the Lord’s ministry, by the Spirit, to open up our understanding, through the Word, of who the Father is, and getting to know Him.*

*Unfortunately, the Father, in many ways, by people is almost kind of understood as this Old Testament God and even that understanding is erroneous because the revelation of God in the Old Testament and the revelation of God in the New Testament is the same God. He didn’t have a mood change because of the cross. He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever, but because in the minds of many people the Old Testament God is kind of like this angry God, and the Old Testament God in the New Testament is this loving God, many have relegated the Old Testament God to the Father, and they forget that* ***John 3:16****, for God, the Father, so loved the world that He gave His Son.*

*So, growing in the revelation of the Father is absolutely essential to the first commandment. In fact, in* ***John 14*** *that was one of the things that the disciples were asking Jesus for. They said, “Would You show us the Father, Jesus, and this would be sufficient for us.” And Jesus says, “Look, if you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.”*

***Hebrews 2:12****, the writer of* ***Hebrews*** *quotes* ***Psalm 22*** *saying that Jesus will be in the midst of the assembly declaring the name of the Father. I really believe that a billion years from now Jesus is going to continue to give us insight, by the Holy Spirit, about the glory and the splendor and the fellowship of the Father. In fact, I believe the book of* ***Revelation*** *is about the Father. It’s the revelation of Jesus Christ, and Jesus says that if you see Me, you see the Father.*

* 1. The revelation of the Father was the primary focus of Satan’s assault against Jesus in the wilderness when three times He questioned His identity. The revelation of the Father is supreme. It was part of the hidden mystery. God was known in the Old Testament as King, Judge, Bridegroom, Master, Warrior, Provider, Healer, etc. In the law, the prophets, and the Psalms we can see God’s fatherly attributes, however, the revelation of God as Father was not known until the Son, Jesus, came and made Him known to Israel.

1God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2has in these last days spoken to us by His Son… Heb 1:1–2

21“I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden … and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 22 All ﻿things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and ﻿no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” Lk 10:21–22

*Paragraph C. The revelation of the Father was the primary focus of Satan’s assault against Jesus in wilderness. He was questioning Jesus’ identity as a Son, but in doing so he was attacking the character and the nature of the Father. That is how essential this understanding is to the human heart, the revelation of the Father.*

*I really believe that as the days will continue to unfold that is going to be one of things that the Holy Spirit is going to do. He’s going to put a tremendous emphasis on us understanding the nature and the character of who the Father is.*

*The revelation of the Father, I believe, is supreme. It was part of the hidden mystery. The apostle Paul, in* ***Ephesians 3****,* ***Colossians 1****, and other passages, he talks about this hidden mystery. He talks about this plan that was hidden in the heart of God that the Old Testament prophets could not access. That it was for an appointed time for the Son of God to become a man and to declare it with His own lips, and then after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit give it to the apostles who put it in the word of God, and I believe that part of the mystery was the full unlocking, the full unveiling of the revelation of God as our Father.*

*God was known, in the Old Testament, as King, Judge, Bridegroom, Master, Warrior, Provider, Healer, and the in the Law and the Prophets and in the Psalms we see the attributes of the Father, and we see some mentions of the Father in the Old Testament, but most of the mentions of the Father in the Old Testament are related to Him being the Creator of all or the one who sovereignly brought Israel out of Egypt giving birth to a nation, or related to the covenant promises, but there’s a distinct difference between the unveiling of the Father in the Old Testament and the unveiling of the Father in the New Covenant. It is an entirely different reality of how God revealed Himself as Father to us in the New Covenant.*

*But again, we see these fatherly attributes of God in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, however, the revelation of God the Father in the way the New Testament talks about was not known until Jesus came on the scene and declared it to the nation of Israel.*

*The writer of Hebrews in* ***Hebrews 1:1-2****, he says, “God, who at various times and in various ways, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He’s spoken to us by His Son.” The way I like to think of it is that the revelation of God through the prophets were mere whispers, but the revelation of God through the Son was thunderous. It was final. It was complete. Everything of what God has to say about Himself He says in and through His Son.*

***Luke 10:21-22****. Jesus says, “I think You, Father, for You’ve hidden these things,” referring to the mystery, “You’ve hidden these things. Now You’ve revealed them to babes,” and one of the things that was hidden, that He now has revealed is what He says later on, “No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and to the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”*

*This understanding of who the Father is, it is absolutely essential. It is part of the distinction of the New Covenant, it is to know the Father, number one, it is to experience the Father, and to partner with the Father, having deep, intimate relationship with God as our Father.*

* 1. Understanding God as father is not merely therapeutic, rather, it is all-encompassing and transcendent. The heart of the Father is greater than filling the vacuums created by the failure of our natural fathers. The limited therapeutic perspective of the Father heart of God can leave those with great natural fathers with greater difficulty in recognizing their need for the revelation of the father. We need to resist sentimentalizing our understanding of the Father.

13If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! Lk 11:13

*Paragraph D. Now, when we’re talking about the revelation of the Father, one of the things that has happened is not only has He been relegated to Christianity 101, He’s also been kind of pushed into the inner healing corner. Okay.*

*Right? So, the people that are hurting, so to speak, they need the heart of the Father. The rest of us can go on to bigger and better stuff. What I’m trying to tell you here tonight is that the revelation of the Father is complete. It is holy and it is supreme. It was so much on the forefront of Jesus’ mind that He says, “I have declared it and I will continue to declare it.” Understanding the Father is not merely therapeutic. Yes, there are therapeutic components for sure in terms of how it affects our emotions and the healing it can bring to us, but it is not just therapeutic. It is all encompassing. It is transcendent. It is holy in nature. We’re talking about the uncreated God.*

*The heart of the Father is greater than filling, here it is, the heart of the Father is greater than filling the vacuum created by the failures of our natural fathers. The revelation of the Father is greater than Him simply filling or making up to fill the vacuum that was created by our natural fathers. The amount of brokenness and pain that exists in the earth because of the brokenness of our fathers is vast, but unfortunately the revelation of the Father has been reduced to simply making up for where they lacked, and as a result, the limiting of the therapeutic perspective of the Father, what it can do, it can leave, now watch this, it can leave those who have had great fathers in the natural, it can leave them with great difficulty of recognizing that they need the revelation of the Father as well.*

*There’s many who conclude because they’ve had as good of a Father as you can get in the natural on this side of life they have concluded in some way that they are not in as much need of the revelation of the Father and that is because the revelation of the Father has been reduced to a therapeutic understanding.*

*We all are in need of the revelation of the Father. It’s what Jesus came to bring through the gospel. It’s what Jesus came to demonstrate, to the point that He says, “Look, if you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen Him.” Constantly pointing to the Father.*

*We must resist sentimentalizing our understanding of the Father. Again, yes, there are very powerful, for lack of better terms, therapeutic components to the understanding the Father, in terms of healing and the tenderness of the Father and the love of the Father, but there’s more to Him than, like I said earlier, than filling up that which was lacking because of the mistakes of our earthly fathers. From the greatest of dads to the best of dads, Jesus has to say this in* ***Luke 11:13****, “If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children.”*

* 1. The understanding of the Father was climatic in the mind of Paul the apostle and foremost on Jesus’ mind both in His relationship with God and His messianic mission.

1“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.” Jn 17:1

*Paragraph E. The understanding of the Father was ultimate in the mind of the apostles. It was foremost in the mind of Jesus, both in His relationship with God, as well as it pertains to His mission, His messianic mission. The thing that was on the forefront of Jesus’ mind in His relationship with God was relating with Him as the Father first and foremost, and as it comes to His mission it was the declaring, it was the displaying, it was the revealing of the Father, so much so that in* ***John 17:1*** *Jesus prayed, “Father, the hour has come. Now glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You.” He goes, “the hour of the cross has come. It is here. Now put Your Son on display because in putting Your Son on display, Father, You are the one that will be displayed as well.”*

*In fact, you know,* ***Ephesians 1:17****, probably the most prayed prayer here at IHOP, I get a chuckle sometimes, and I do the same thing, so this is not some big negative, but most of the time when that prayer gets prayed, what we’re asking for is for the revelation of Jesus, but the context of the passage is actually asking for the revelation of the Father. That’s what Paul is asking for, that the church of Ephesus would grow in the revelation of the Father, and know His plan, and know His purpose and know His inheritance and so forth.*

*Now, of course, reveal Jesus, we see the Father, so there’s no need to split hairs over it. I’m just simply making a point of emphasis. There’s a far greater emphasis in the minds of the apostles than we realize when it comes to the unveiling of the heart of the Father and who He is, again, that is beyond, for lack of better terms, our therapeutic need and understanding of who He is.*

*In fact, in* ***1 Corinthians 15:28****, the apostle Paul says this. He says, “Look, Jesus is going to come back, He’s going to reign on the earth, until everything is subject to Him. And then after everything is subject to Him, then Jesus will subject Himself, the Son will subject Himself to the Father, that God would be all in all.”*

1. THE FATHER, THE GARDENER

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.” Jn 15:1

* 1. In John 15:1, Jesus declares both His identity and His position under the Father’s leadership. The Father as the Vinedresser determined the plan that the Son of God, as the vine, would be the divine life source of the redeemed. Under the Father’s leadership, only through coming under Jesus’ leadership can redeemed humans be recipients and vessels of life flow to others.

*Turn to page 2. The Father as the Gardener. The Father as the Gardener. In* ***John 15:1****, Jesus declares both His identity as the vine as well as His position under the Father’s leadership. As the vine He is under the leadership of the Vinedresser, the Gardener. The Father, as the Vinedresser, is determined, has a determined plan that His Son, the Vine, would be the divine life source for the redeemed. Under the Father’s leadership He determined that the only way that we could be recipients and experience His presence, His lifegiving power, His grace, His mercy, and His love, is by being connected to the vine.*

* 1. The Father as the vinedresser is the only description of the Father in Jn. 13-17. We are invited to look into this description of Him and receive increased insight into the knowledge of God. Gardeners work in close proximity with seeds, soil and vegetation. The Gardener evokes the image of one who works with His hands in the dirt, thus pointing to the humility of the Father.

*Paragraph B. The Father as the Vinedresser, is the only, from what I can tell it’s the only description of the Father in* ***John 13-17****. The Father is mentioned all throughout John 13-17, but the only description of the Father is that of the Vinedresser, and I think that part of what is happening here is that the whole process from* ***John 13-17****, and several sessions ago we talked about this, how* ***John 13*** *gives us the requirement. The requirement ultimately is this, that we would love one another as He has loved us, and* ***John 17*** *is the destiny. The destiny, it is the church arriving to that destiny of* ***John 13:34-35****, and I think that when Jesus reveals the Father as the Vinedresser, I think He’s showing us that the whole* ***John 13-17*** *process, the Father’s leadership, He will manifest Himself to us as a gardener.*

*So, we are invited to look into this description of Him and to receive increased insight into the knowledge of God. I think of* ***2 Timothy 2:7*** *where Paul talks about the athlete. He talks about the soldier. He talks about the hardworking farmer. Then in* ***verse 7*** *he says, consider these things, or ponder these things. Meditate on these things, and may the Lord give you much insight. I think that is part of what is happening here. When he says the Father is the vinedresser I think that we are invited to meditate on that truth, to engage with the Father related to that church. That think that we’ve been talking about is the “Father, thank You that You are Vinedresser. Thank You that You are the Gardener. Would You show me more?”* ***2 Timothy 2:7****. May the Lord give us much understanding in these things.*

*So here’s a couple thoughts about gardeners. By the time I’m done you guys are going to go, “Man, Stuart’s got a green thumb.” No, not really. Gardeners are those who work in close proximity with the seed, the soil, and the vegetation, and so this idea of the gardener or the vinedresser, it actually evokes this image of one who works with his hands, even touching the dirt itself. Very close, intimate proximity. I think it’s actually part of the revelation of the Father, the Vinedresser, speaks of His humility. He gets down and dirty. He gets up close and personal and interacts with us and prunes us and cultivates us unto forming us to become fully His disciples and to be filled with joy and to be filled with love and to come into the fullness of the destiny of* ***John 17****.*

* 1. Some characteristics of a gardener (<https://theheartygarden.com/gardening-personality-traits/>): 1) Patience 2) Determination 3) Hope 4) Kindness 5) Wisdom and understanding.

3A bruised reed He will not break, And ﻿smoking flax He will not ﻿quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. 4He will not fail nor be discouraged … Is 42:3–4

*Now, what are some of the characteristics of a gardener? I’ve got a little link over there and you can look at that in your own time, but some of the characteristics of the gardener is that they’re patient. That’s one of the reasons why I’m not a gardener. No, it takes a tremendous amount of patience. I remember, and some of you guys may remember this as well, in grade school they always had us grow these plants for biology class. My plants never made it. I just got impatient, but I actually remember the first time I actually decided to be patient with the process, and the joy that I felt when one of my plants actually sprouted. I thought, “Man, this is really amazing.”*

*So patience. Determination. Actually sticking with it. So the Father is patient as a vinedresser. He is focused and determined.*

*Another characteristic of a gardener is that there is hope. They have got confidence that this thing is going to work out. The Father has tremendous hope in the process and the way that He relates with us as He cultivates us, as He raises us up, as He develops us. As He forms us and shapes us. Gardeners have a kindness about them just because of their interaction with nature. It just creates this different dynamic. It’s a very interesting article if you get a chance to read it. They are skillful. Gardeners have skill and understanding of the soil. Understanding of the seed, understanding of the plant itself.*

* 1. Good gardeners have thorough knowledge of the vegetation and soil they work with and cultivate. The Father is deeply acquainted with our emotional frame, ways and body.

3You ﻿comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Ps

 139:3

14For He ﻿knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Ps 103:14

7But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. Lk 12:7

*Paragraph D. A good gardener has thorough knowledge of the vegetation and the soil they work with to cultivate, so when Jesus says that the Father is the Vinedresser, He is saying that the Father is deeply acquainted with our emotional frame, He’s deeply acquainted with our ways, and He’s deeply acquainted with our physical bodies. He knows us full well, the Father does.*

*Look at* ***Psalm 139:3****. I’ve got it right there in the notes. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and You are acquainted with all of my ways. He’s acquainted with my ways. He’s acquainted with our mannerisms. He’s acquainted with the intricacies of our personalities. He is very well acquainted with the way that we are wired. He understands our thought processes very, very intimately. He understands our patterns, the way that we think and act and feel and why we think and act and feel the way that we do. He is very, very intimately acquainted, and all that factors in in the way that He interacts with us and leads us and prunes us and trains us.*

*In* ***Psalm 103:14*** *it says, “He knows our frame, and He remembers that we are but dust.” I believe that is speaking of, again, our inner workings. Our emotional frame. Our emotional makeup. He understands it. He knows exactly how much pressure to apply and how much pressure not to apply. He is deeply and intimately acquainted with our frame.*

***Luke 12:7****. But the very hairs of your head are also numbered. I mean, that’s how deeply acquainted He is. He knows our bodies. Everything about it, and has taken great concern to count the numbers of the hairs on our head, which the old joke is, which is easier for some than for others. By the way, the number is, they say that for the average person is about 100,000 hairs on their head. The Lord is intimately acquainted with them.*

* 1. The divine Gardener’s goal, through the process of pruning and taking away, is to produce the love of God in and through the people of God to those around us. The Gardener seeks to cultivate mature followers who are fully committed to His leadership. This brings Him glory.

2Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Jn 15:2

8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; ﻿so you will be My disciples. Jn 15:8

*Paragraph E. What’s the divine gardener’s goal? Well, His goal is, through the process of pruning, to produce the love of God in and through His people to those that are around us. What’s the goal of the gardener? It’s to produce the love of God in and through the people of God to those that are around us. The gardener, He seeks to cultivate, to mature followers who are fully committed to His leadership. This is what brings Him glory. Again, it’s about the magnifying of the Father and who He is.* ***John 15:8****. By this the Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit so that you will be His disciples. So He’s the Vinedresser. He prunes. He takes away the branches that don’t bear fruit, and it’s about bringing Him glory, the magnifying of who the Father is.*

* 1. The Father through the gardening process leads us towards the fullness of joy that ultimately comes from responding to His leadership through loving obedience of His commandment.

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 remain in you, and ﻿that your joy may be full. 12This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Jn 15:10–12

*Paragraph F. The Father, through the gardening process, leads us into the fullness of joy. That’s one of the promises that Jesus makes. He says, look, the Father is cultivating us. He is interacting with us in an intimate way. He prunes us, which more times than none this pruning happens through the process of our circumstances. Through our circumstances, again He knows exactly how to orchestrate our circumstances in such an intimate way for the purpose of positioning us to receive more of the love of God, and for that love to be expressed in us and through us to those that are around us.*

*Part of the progression of* ***John 15*** *is that Jesus says that we are to abide in Him, number one, that we’re to bear this fruit. So He talks about this fruit for a couple of verses, but after awhile He says, “I want you to abide in Me that you may keep My commandments.” So we find out that the fruit that we’re called to bear is the keeping of His commandments. Then He goes on for a few more verses in* ***verse 12*** *and He says, “This is My commandment, that you love one another.” And that’s the thing that the Father, the gardener is doing. He’s seeking to cultivate us, to train us through the process of pruning by causing us to experience more of the love of God. His love to be formed in us and for His love to be expressed through us to those around us, both those who are in the church and those who are outside the church.*

*The ultimate product, so to speak, is that we would have the fullness of joy that ultimately comes from responding to His leadership through the loving obedience of His commandments.*

1. Jesus the vineyard: hope for israel and hope for the world

*Let’s go to page 3. So, Jesus, in* ***John 15:1****, He starts out by saying, “I’m the vine and My Father is the vinedresser.” I just want to take a few moments and talk about this issue of Jesus being the vine, and again, we’ve had several sessions in terms of Him being the vine as it relates to our personal lives, but the thing that we have to remember is Jesus as the Messiah, He didn’t just come to us as individuals. He came to Israel. He came to bring salvation to Israel, to see her restored and to bring her into the fullness of God’s promises.*

2In that day— “Sing about a fruitful vineyard: 3I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it. 4I am not angry. If only there were briers and thorns confronting me! I would march against them in battle; I would set them all on fire. 5Or else let them come to me for refuge; let them make peace with me, yes, let them make peace with me.” 6In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit. Isa 27:2-6

* 1. Jesus declares Himself as the true Vineyard. This truth has many layers. It is a truth that is filled with hope and a promise of grace to come into the fullness of what the Father has planned. It is the Father’s desire to fill the world with the full expression of His power, personality and purpose. He spoke to Abraham of His plan to bless all the nations of the earth.

*Go ahead and turn in your Bibles to* ***Isaiah 27****. When Jesus declares Himself as the true vine there are layers of truths implied in that statement, I believe, because it is likely, when He says that He is the true vine, that He is contrasting Himself with Israel who is the rebellious vineyard. The vineyard that is not bearing good grapes, like it says in* ***Isaiah 5****, but rather it bears these wild fruits because it’s not yielding to the leadership of the gardener. So, when Jesus says, “I am the True Vine,” I believe that it is a truth that He is stating that is filled with hope, and it is a promise of grace that will come from the Father to bring us into the fullness of the promises that He has for the Jewish people.*

*It is the Father’s desire to fill the earth with the expression of His power, His personality, His purpose, and that’s one of the things He spoke to Abraham about. He told Abraham that he would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. The very election, the very calling of Abraham was for the purpose of bringing His blessing to the nations of the earth.*

* 1. Vineyards were commonplace in the ancient world. The Lord’s mention of Israel being a vineyard speaks of His aim to see her provided for, prospering as well being a society that is filled with great joy. This aim goes beyond Israel. It extends to the nations of the earth as well.

11“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and ﻿that your joy may be full.” Jn 15:11

3I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in ﻿you all the families of the earth shall be ﻿blessed.” Gen 12:3

6In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit. Isa 27:6

*Paragraph B. Vineyards, they are very commonplace in the ancient world. They are very commonplace in the ancient world. The Lord’s mention of Israel being a vineyard speaks of His aim to see her provided for, prospered, as well as being a society that is filled with joy. To get a little bit more of a feel for what is going on with this vineyard analogy or example, look* ***at Isaiah 5*** *and* ***Ezekiel 15****. Both of those passages you see, and there’s many more, but those are the two main ones where Israel is shown forth as a vineyard and it’s a vineyard that is not producing the fruit that God desires, and she is unable to produce the fruit that God desires because of the law, so Jesus comes on the scene and He says, “You know what? I am the true vine. I am the true Israel through whom Israel will be brought into the fullness of her inheritance and the promises that God gave her through the prophets.” And what we see here is that the aim, however, of Israel becoming this vineyard, it goes beyond Israel and it actually extends into the nations of the earth as well.*

***Isaiah 27:2****, the Lord tells the prophet, He says, “Sing about the fruitful vineyard,” speaking about Israel’s future. And the Lord says this, “I watch over it.” Here He is speaking as the gardener. He says, “I watch over it. I water it continually. I guard it.” So here, again, we see this very intentional, intimate, engagement, focused attention to the vineyard. He said, “I watch over it. I water it continually. I guard it.*

*By the way, we can personalize this, because, again, because* ***John 15*** *is also speaking directly to us as individuals. He says, “You know what? As a gardener, as a vinedresser, I watch over you. I water you continually, and I guard you day and night, that no one may harm it,” but it* ***verse 6*** *it says, “In that day, in the days to come, Jacob will take root.” In other words, Jacob will become the garden that God had designed for Jacob to be. Israel will bud and Israel will blossom, but here’s the sentence, “and it will fill the whole world with fruit.”*

*It is as though where this whole thing is going is that God wants this garden, God wants this vineyard, and He will establish it in Israel, but the idea is for that garden to be cultivated and to grow until it fills the whole earth, for the whole world to become that vineyard.*

*So,* ***John 15:1*** *is a tremendously powerful messianic hope that’s being stated right there. He says, “Because Israel has failed as a vineyard. She’s unable to produce the fruit that I have commanded her to produce, but the same is true for the nations.” Jesus comes on the scene and He says, “I am the true vine. My Father is the vinedresser. If you abide in Me, Israel, you will bear much fruit. If you abide in me, O individual, you will bear much fruit. If you abide in Me, O Israel, you will bear much fruit. If you abide in Me, O nations of the earth, you will bear much fruit, and you will be filled with tremendous joy,”* ***John 15:11****.*

* 1. John 15 is properly understood through the lens of our individual discipleship. I believe this to be its primary application. However, the passage likely has eschatological applications as well. Jesus declares Himself as the True Vine in contrast to the vineyard called Israel.

1Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard ﻿On a very fruitful hill. Is 5:1

6“Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 7and ﻿I will set My face against them.’” Eze 15:6–7

*Paragraph C.* ***John 15****, if properly understood, is properly understood, again, through the lens of individual discipleship, so there is the individual discipleship, the individual focus on* ***John 15*** *is very, very appropriate. That is the most clear, direct, and obvious reading, but I think there is more going on, because the Jewish messiah, talking to this new leadership in Israel, these apostles, and they are filled with a messianic expectation about what God would do for the nation of Israel, and so when Jesus says, “I am the True Vine,” He is in that stating, “I am the hope of Israel. I am the one who will bring the vineyard that is prophesied about in* ***Isaiah 5****, I will bring it to the fullness. I will bring it to the fullness of fruit, and I will bring it to the fullness of joy.”*

*Again, this individual interpretation of* ***John 15*** *is the primary application and it’s the appropriate application of* ***John 15****, however, I think this passage likely has eschatological implications as well, as Jesus declares Himself to be the True Vine in contrast to the vineyard, or the unfaithful vineyard called Israel.*

* 1. In Isaiah 1-5 the prophet gives a summary that gives an overview of the major covenantal themes, God’s commitment and discipline of His people and the eschatological purpose of Israel. In Isaiah 5 as well as Ezekiel 15, Israel is portrayed as a vineyard that is under divine judgment unable to respond to the God of Israel in order to come into her covenant promises.

*Paragraph D. Let’s have the worship team come up. Paragraph D.* ***Isaiah 1-5****, what is happening there is the prophet, he gives a summary that gives an overview of the major covenantal themes, God’s commitment to Israel and the fact that God will even discipline Israel to bring her into the fullness of her end-time purpose.*

***Isaiah 5*** *as well as* ***Ezekiel 15****, Israel is portrayed as a vineyard that is under divine judgment, completely and entirely unable to respond to the God of Israel in order to bring her into her covenantal promises. What we see in* ***Isaiah 5*** *and* ***Ezekiel 15*** *is Israel’s dilemma. She cannot obey the Lord, which again is the dilemma of all of the human. We cannot follow the Lord unless we abide in the Vine. Unless we agree with the Father’s leadership, the Vinedresser, that the only way we can bear fruit is if we abide in the Vine, Christ Jesus, through whom the lifegiving power of God touches our lives that we can bear the fruit that He requires from us.*

* 1. When Jesus declared that He was the True vine, He is pointing back to the passages where Israel is prophetically called the unfaithful vineyard. Jesus is the true Israel through whom the Jewish people will inherit full covenantal promises. Israel will abide in Jesus the True vine.

7For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice… Is 5:7

*Jesus is the true Israel through whom the Jewish people will inherit the full covenantal promises. Israel will abide in Jesus. Israel will abide in the True Vine. Amen.*

*Alright, well let’s stand. You know, one of the prayers that we can pray is the prayer that was prayed by the apostles in* ***John 14:9****. Lord, would You show us the Father? Would You show us the Father? I really feel that there are some of you in this room the Lord is really putting His finger on that. He’s saying, “I want to speak to you about the Father. I really do. I’m not just merely here to make up the vacuum created by the errors of our natural fathers. I’m greater than that. There’s something bigger going on in terms of the revelation of Who I Am.” There really is no way forward in love aside from understanding the revelation of the Father. The gospel of John, it’s interesting that we’re looking at* ***John 13-17****, because the Father is spoken of more in the gospel of John than any of the gospels, in particular as it pertains to the revelation of His love, how He feels about His Son, how He feels about His people, how He feels about the nations of the earth.*

*Behold what manner of love,* ***1 John*** *says. This love that is beyond understanding, Paul says in* ***Ephesians 3****. That we would know the Father’s love, the width, the length, the depth, the height. The Lord wants to mark our hearts just in a fresh way with the holy love of the Father that would bring us into, yes, our hearts being healed, but beyond that it would then bring us into the Father’s love for His Son. That would bring us into the Father’s love for His people, that would bring us into the Father’s love for the world for whom He sent His Son to die that they would receive the gospel and enter into the love of the Father.*

*Father, I ask You in the name of Jesus, Lord, that You would increase the manifestation of Your Spirit even now.*

*Just right there you’re standing, just stand before the Lord and ask the Spirit, “Show me the Father. Show me the Father and it will be sufficient for me.” Stay focused on the Lord. There’s so much about spiritual fathering that is being talked about. Beloved, there is no way forward in true spiritual fathering, true New Testament fathering aside from the biblical, New Testament, apostolic understanding of who the Father is, lest we just reduce it to filling in the gap created by our natural fathers, and yes that gap gets filled, but it’s beyond the filling of that gap. We are in desperate need of the revelation of the Father. He really is a good Father. He’s a kind Father.* ***Ephesians 2:6*** *tells us that He raised us up all together to be seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the ages to come we might know the exceeding riches of His kindness, the Father’s kindness, that is towards us in Christ. That’s one of the things that awaits us in the age to come is the wealth of the kindness of the Father. There are very profound dimensions that await us in this age, but, beloved, what awaits us in the age to come, Paul says it is the exceeding riches, greatness of the riches of His kindness that is found in Christ.*

*Father, I ask You, even now, Lord, awaken that Abba cry by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, deep down inside of us. Abba. Holy Spirit, unveil the Father to us. Jesus, declare the Father’s name. Even now, Lord. Even now, Lord.*

*Just speak His name. Reveal the Father. Touch us Lord, even now. Father, I ask that You would increase Your presence. Let’s not be in a hurry. Let’s just wait on the Lord. More, Lord. More, Lord. Jesus, would You do by the Holy Spirit what You enjoy the most? Reveal Your Father in us. Speak concerning Him, Jesus, by Your Spirit. Father of glory, the spirit of wisdom. Revelation. Lord, would You illumine our minds, Father, even now, in an increased way. I ask you for divine illumination by the Holy Spirit. Open up the eyes of our understanding, Father, concerning You. To know You more, to know You better. To be more acquainted with Your ways, Father. Father, we agree with Your Son’s prayer, for this is good and precious in Your sight, to make Yourself known. Make Yourself known, Lord, even now.*

*Release Your fire, Lord, deep on the inside. Father, we plead the power of the blood right now against the accusations of the evil one to our minds concerning the goodness of who You are. IN the name of Jesus, Father, through the power of the blood, silence the accuser in Jesus’ name. Father, we say that You are good and Your mercies endure forever. Father, You are good. Your lovingkindness, Father, over all Your works. You know our frame, and as the Father has compassion on His children, so, Father, you have compassion on us because You know our frame and You know that we are but dust. Father, show Your kindness. Make it known, Lord, Father bring a shift in our minds and in our hearts, Father, even in the way that we read the Word, Lord, bring a shift concerning You.*

*Jesus, we ask You that by Your Spirit that You would continue to establish in an increased way the supremacy of the Father in our hearts and in our minds. By the Spirit we cry out, “Abba.” Abba, here we are. We are Yours. Abba, Father.*

*If you’re feeling the Lord just resting on you in a specific way and you want to receive prayer I just want to invite you to come to the front. The Lord is touching different ones of you. Let’s just continue to wait on the Lord. Beloved, this is Jesus’ primary strategy to awaken the first commandment in our hearts, is to declare the name of the Father. Lord, increase the revelation of the Father by the Spirit even now. Even as you’re standing there continue to interact with the Lord.* ***John 14:9****. Show us the Father, and it will be sufficient for us.*

*Yes, the Father will heal the vacuum created by our natural fathers, but beloved, after that it goes way beyond that. Way beyond that. More Lord.* ***Ephesians 1:18****, Lord, would You release the light of the Spirit and illumine our minds? Illumine our minds, Lord. Release Your light, Lord. Even now, would You increase light on our hearts. Light on our minds concerning You, Father. Lord, just increase Your presence now, even now, Lord. All across the room. Touch our minds, touch our hearts. That spirit of adoption by which we cry out, “Abba.” Lord, would You awaken that Lord, in an increased way? Even this week. Even this month. Lord, just an increased sense of belong to You, Father?*