

Summary: This week we discussed the secret path to true joy. The majority of Christians, despite knowing Jesus miss out on experiencing the fullness of life and joy that He offers us. Jesus leads his disciples through a vineyard to offer them a teaching moment about what a life filled with joy looks like. It is found not through striving or searching in the world but through abiding and resting in the true vine.

Sermon Title: The Path to True Joy

Text: John 15:1-11

TRUE LIFE AND JOY COMES THROUGH ABIDING IN THE TRUE VINE (1)

TRUE LIFE AND JOY COMES THROUGH RESTING IN OUR IDENTITY AS BRANCHES (4-5)

TRUE LIFE AND JOY COMES THROUGH EMBRACING THE PROMISE OF PRUNING (2-3).

When we learn the beauty of abiding, this is what Jesus promises us:

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”
(John 15:11)

Discussion Questions:

1. As you read John 15:1-11, what are some of the words or phrases that stand out to you? What does it mean to “abide?”
2. Generally speaking, how would you say your soul is today? What is your “stress level” like right now? How about your joy meter? Why do you think that joy is so hard to experience in our world today?
3. Jesus shares that He is the “true vine” which implies that there are “false vines” out there that promise life but actually steal it from us. What are some of the things that you have found yourself clinging to that may be robbing you of joy?
4. Jesus says He is the vine, we are the branches. Why do you think that is significant? What does that say about our identity and what it means to be connected to Jesus?
5. Jesus says apart from Him we can do NOTHING. What do you think He means by that? Do you actually believe that? How can embracing your identity as a branch free you up to experience more joy?
6. One of the primary ways a vinedresser helps branches to produce more fruit is through pruning, through eliminating some of the busyness and even “good things” that the branches produce that are stealing away the energy that could be used to produce fruit. What are some things in your life that God has pruned?

7. We often do not like to receive the pruning shears in our lives and we can get angry with God when He cuts things out. Jesus says pruning is a reward for those who bear fruit that they might bear more fruit. Is there anything you've been clinging to in your life that God has been attempting to prune?
8. What is a season you experienced a profound amount of joy? What was different? What obstacles are in your schedule now that you have believed the lie that you "have to do" that God might be inviting you to be free from?
9. We wear busyness like a badge of honor in our culture. But busyness is not fruitfulness. What are some ways your schedule can be reoriented around the idea of abiding?
10. Spend some time now praying for one another. And we also encourage you to find some divine moments this week to simply be in the presence of Jesus. No agenda, no goal, no checklist, but simply connecting with the vine.