

## I am Jesus – Week 4

Today we are wrapping up a series called, "I am Jesus," taking a look at the "I am" statements that Jesus made. If you'll remember, the first few weeks what we studied, "I am the resurrection and the life."... The resurrection is not an event it is a person. "I am the Good Shepard." ... He is the Good Shepard who will leave the 99 to go after the 1. Then last week we talked about Jesus saying, "I am the light of the world." ...More importantly, Jesus would be the light of your world.

Today we are going to talk about another "I am," statement that Jesus made. In John chapter 15 if you're following along there in your YouVersion app. Take a look at what Jesus said in **John 15:5**

That statement alone is pretty dramatic if you think about it. If you stay with me and I'm in you, you're going to bear much fruit, but apart from me you could do nothing. That's pretty dramatic.

When you contextualize the statement as to when it was said, it begins to take on a whole new level of significance for us, let's talk about that. This statement is found in John 15, well in John 13, what we see is what's called the Last Supper. Why is it called the Last Supper? Because it was the last supper that Jesus had with His disciples before He went to be crucified. Which in chapter 18 we see Him get arrested. We've got 13, start of the Last Supper, 18 he goes out to the Garden, He's arrested and taken away to be crucified. What we have in between chapters is... dinner conversation.

This is the last dinner that Jesus was going to have with His disciples. Let me ask you, if I said, *"I'm going to sit you around a table with your friends and family and it will be the last time you speak to them before you die."*

Would you think about that conversation a little bit?

Would you think about maybe what you would say, what you would want them to know about how you feel about them?

Maybe even some life lessons you've learned that you want to impart to them before you check out, Right?

This is the context in which we see Jesus say, "I am the vine, you are the branches, if you remain in me and I in you, you'll bear much fruit. But a part from me you can do nothing." Very, very important. **Why is being connected to the vine so important?** I'm going to illustrate it very simply with this illustration back here.

### Tree Illustration

If you take a look at this tree here, were' going to let this represent Jesus. When you see this you see, man it's in soil, it's got some fertilizer down there. It's got some water you can look at this tree and say, "You know what, it'd bear fruit, looks good, looks like it should.

Us on the other hand look a little bit like this. We're a branch. This, not such a good thing. I don't believe a lot of fruit's going to be coming off this would you agree? Yep, so the question then becomes do we like this, or do we like this? Option A or option B? We don't want this do we? No. We want to be connected to the true vine because when we do so we will bear much fruit.

Jesus said in **John 15:1**,

"I am the true vine." Which would imply that there are false vines that we can connect ourselves to. Let me say it like this, see this little glass over here with water in it, this would be a false vine, okay. What we do is we take ourselves and go like this, "Now I'm going to produce some fruit." Now I'm no Botanist but I'm pretty sure this is not going to help this poor little branch. It's not going to produce anymore fruit. What happens is we attach ourselves to false vines. Let me just bring it down to street level on the way this looks. It sounds like this, "if I make more money next year and I can climb one rung in the company ladder, that's fruit." Jesus would say, Mmm, not so much," or it's "you know what if I could just attain a certain social status."

In other words, "I wear the right things, I got the right technology in my pocket, I have the iPhone 6. Heaven forbid I have a 5 because that's old school and now I got the new thing and you know if I get re-tweeted by the right person then I'll re-tweet who re-tweeted me just to let everybody know that I'm being tweeted by this great person over here. I'll look cool and if I get a certain number of friends on Facebook, Boom! I'm there." Jesus would say, "No, not so much." Or sometimes it even looks like the appearance of something good. We do this because we want people to think we've got it all together, so what we'll do is create this appearance of a perfect home, even though inside, the house is in shambles.

On the outside everybody will look at our little house and it's got the 2.5 kids, the white picket fence, the perfect yard, the manicured lawn and the dog that never barks. Yet on the inside it isn't anything like that. Jesus would say, "That's not fruit, that is a false vine, not a good thing." What we want to do is we want to stay connected to the true vine in so doing we will bear much fruit. Why is it so important to stay connected to the true vine? If you're taking notes, the first thought there is that **staying connected, produces fruit.**

You see it right there in **John 15:5**.

Here's the kicker, it's not just any kind of fruit we're talking about here. What kind of fruit are we talking about?

## Galatians 5:22-23

As we hear these words, I don't know about you, but I'm like "I'm all about that, that's good stuff, I'll take that." That's the kind of fruit that Jesus says that we will bear.

It looks something like this in my life, a few months ago my dad (Pastor) comes and says, "I feel like God's maybe pushing us to do something a little bit different," and where it ended up landing is the idea of having two services and my self being one of the pastors speaking every Sunday.

My first reaction was no way... I am not an associate pastor or Senior pastor person. So I was like... "Eh, let me think about that a little bit, I got to pray about that," so this conversation ensued between God and I, which sounded something like this. I began to give God all these excuses as to why this really wasn't really a good idea. I was like, "Okay, you've got to know I have 2 children, and one of them about to get married and the other about to graduate, that's kind of crazy. "God, you already have me working with your students, the daycare and many other things and that's a lot of work and I don't really have that much margin in time." I'm offering God all these excuses.

It's not like God is up there like surprised by all this, like "Oh, my bad, I didn't realize, you had kids that were getting older and their life was happening." I didn't see that and oh my gosh you have a growing student ministry. I didn't see that. "Oh and you also have a daycare that stays in the black and continues to have kids enroll? I didn't know that. That was good you all snuck that one in on me." He's not up there surprised by it. It's more like God saying, "Hey, who'd you think gave you those 2 kids? Who do you think authoring this work at Chandler Acres and My Masters treasures daycare? Of course I know what's going on, of course I know this."

I'm reading my Bible one day on my YouVersion Bible app and it was in Numbers chapter 11 where I was reading about the story of Moses. He was leading the Israelites out into the desert and they were complaining because they wanted meat. Moses was like "What?" and God was like, "Okay, they want meat, I'm going to give them meat, so much meat in fact it runs out of their nostrils." Moses starts going to God and saying, "Hey, god, we're out in the desert there's really not a lot of meat around, if you don't notice so I'm not quite sure how you're going to do this." He's offering God excuses, right, kind of like I was. Then God says, "Moses, is my arm too short?" Like really? When I read that verse it was like god was saying "Dan, is my arm too short really?"

That was the moment I said, "No, by no means is your arm too short." What happened is this little bitty blossom of fruit called faithfulness began to appear in my life. Just a little one, I wouldn't have called it fruit by any means, but I would say it was the start of something God was doing supernatural and special.

Maybe you find yourself there, sometimes we find ourselves staying connected but man it just doesn't seem like there's fruit. It's that friend you've been praying for a long time and it's just that you want them to come to no Christ. And it is just simply not happening, in fact they seem to be going the other way and you're like, "What is happening? God what's going on?"

Maybe it's that sense of anger that you're easily angered and it's just driving you crazy, "Why can't I just get over this?" It's that selfishness inside of you you're sick of. It's that lust problem that you just want gone, but you can't seem to get over it. You're like, I'm trying to stay connected but where's the fruit? Here's the deal, Jesus said, "If you remain in me and I in you; you will bear much fruit." If we're looking at a fruit forecast there's a 100% chance of fruit on this deal. He didn't say you may bear fruit. He said you will bear, not just fruit, but much fruit. Here's the kicker though. We have to remain.

Which in the midst of that time when our friends walk away we continue to pray for them. When we find ourselves like, "Oh I cannot believe I'm doing this God." Now it's continue to pray, continue to remain in Him. When we remain in Him and He in us, then we bear much fruit. We have to stay connected to the vine, it is critical for us to be able to bear much fruit. The second thing is the inverse which is obviously true, that **being disconnected produces nothing**. Remember Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

### **John 15:6**

Not a good way to be that branch, not a good day to be that branch. When we are not connected, it produces nothing and what can happen, when we disconnect, we can begin to look on other people and almost find ourselves in this judgmental state.

Now I do this many, many different ways. One way is kind of silly but I do it sometimes, is I look on at dudes that drive minivans. I think, "Man, somebody needs to clip a corner of you man card. It's going to be an oval by the time we're done." Because I'm like dudes shouldn't drive minivans.

That's what I thought for years then I rode with a co-worker who had one and I was carrying some boxes of supplies and they handed me the keys to load the stuff up. I had the keys in my hand and I pressed the button on the key fob. and I'm going to tell you what, the doors on that thing opened. By themselves, and when that happened, I'm not sure, but I think I heard the angels in Heaven start singing. I was like, "Are you kidding me?" I'm standing there like in disbelief, and I pushed the button again and the doors closed. I was like, "Oh my gosh, I've got to get me one of these! This is awesome!" I couldn't believe it, first I was like "Who would drive one of those?" Then I'm like, "I got to get one of those."

I would have been the first one in line to grab one, but we can look on and make judgments about something. Then find ourselves right in the midst of it, and that's kind of silly but man there's a lot of stuff we do that's not silly.

For instance we say, "Oh, I'm never going to have an affair like old so and so did that's terrible," and then boom. You find yourself right up in the midst of one. It was like, "Whoa what happened? How did I get here?" Or you say, "You know what my kid's never going to act like that." Yeah, every parent is like mm-hmm (affirmative). Or we say, "I'm never going to put my job before my family like so and so does. I can't believe he does that or she does that." The next thing you know, you've missed so many ball games you cannot remember the name of the team your kid plays for and you're like, "Man what is going on? What did I do? How did I get here?"

Let me tell you something, I've been in ministry for 20 years and what I'll tell you is this, one of the things I've learned is that anybody is capable of anything when you're disconnected from the vine. Me, Dan Sr., the person to your left and your right, everybody. You're capable of anything when you're disconnected from the vine. You've got to stay connected, it's important, but we get that right? We say, "Yeah, okay that's important, I'll go with you on that." The big question is this, **How do we stay connected?**

Now before we get started in this I'm going to give a little bit of a caveat and I'm going to say this to you. There's a lot of ways to stay connected. **Reading Gods word.** Is that a way to stay connected? Absolutely, absolutely it is. **Prayer,** is that a way? Yeah, absolutely. How about a **worship song?** That you sing? Yep, absolutely. How about a **coffee with a friend** when they speak truth in your life right when you need it? Yep, absolutely. How about a **sunrise breaking over the mountains in the distance** is that a way? Yeah, absolutely. How about **holding that new born baby** of yours in the middle of the night and you look down at a baby sleeping and you're just thanking God that He blessed your family with this new little life? Yup.

There's a lot of different ways, to stay connected. The problem is that many times we lack the motivation to do so. What we're going to talk about is what does God say fundamentally to get us to stay connected... and it looks something like this. If you're taking notes, it's this, first thing, is you've got to **do what Jesus says.** You have to do what Jesus says.

### **In John 15:9-10**

I love the way that Francis Chan illustrates this, when he talks about it's like a parent who asks their kid to go clean their room. Kid leaves and comes back, "Did you clean your room?" "I memorized what you said about cleaning the room." "Well that's great, but did you clean your room?" "I got it tattooed right here on my arm in Hebrew what you said for me to go clean my room, so I could be reminded and everybody know that I should clean my room." "Yeah but did you clean your room?" "I got 4 friends together and we went to a coffee shop and we talked about what you meant when you said clean your room, and we studied the word clean in the Greek and it's Clean-io which means to like clean in haste and clean with much fortitude." Yeah did you clean your room?"

"Oh we went to a conference and we talked about what it meant to clean your room and then somebody told us how to clean more effectively." "Did you clean your room?" God may say, seriously, "Did you clean your room Jack?"

That's what I'm talking about. Many of us just simply need to go clean our room. God's been telling us to do something for a long time, He's been conferring it through His word. People have been telling you over and over, "You should do this, you should do this," and you're like, "I can't do this." God's saying, "Clean your room, come on, quit talking about it, quit praying about it. How many times do you need me to confirm this thing to you? Clean your room."

You're like, **"I don't know"**,... how many times has your Pastor maybe asked you, "Hey church members, we need to start small groups, you need to step up and do something. You're like, "Oh I don't know what I'm going to do ." God's saying, "Clean your room." Maybe it's you need to spend more time with your kids and invest in them, before they're gone. Because you're going to blink and they're gone, and God's saying, "Hey, clean your room. Invest in these kids that I've given you." Maybe God's put on your heart to be just to be a little selfless and outside of yourself and God says, "Clean your room, you can do this. Come on." We've got to do what Jesus says. You want to stay connected to this vine, do what Jesus says. He says, "If you keep my commands, you'll remain in my love."

The second thing, it's simple but we're going to raise it up a notch, this is where Jesus kicks it up a little bit. You've got to **love like Jesus loves**. Jesus said this,

### **John 5:12-13**

You see, here's the deal, when He added that "as I love you" thing, that's where it just kicked it up. Because if He just said, "Hey, I just want you to love each other." That's kind of like subjective because it's just a matter of how I feel like I should love you and how you should love your neighbor and whatever and it's just kind of whatever we think. He didn't say that.... He said, do it as I loved you.

See Jesus had a problem, His disciples for years have been wondering who was going to be the greatest. They've been talking about it over and over again, on the way to Jerusalem, for the Passover meal they were arguing about who's going to be the greatest and Jesus is like, "Guys, hey listen, the greatest among you is the one who serves." In other words, it's the one who loves. Then when they get to dinner, Jesus puts a towel around his waist and washes their feet. He actually shows them what it looks like. Then in dramatic fashion over dinner He says, "Guys, I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you'll bear much fruit, but apart from me, you can do nothing. "

He raised that standard way on up there didn't he? "Love each other as I have loved you." Here's the reason He did that, and He didn't give some long list of things you've got to do. He just said you do this, why? Because we can't do that. You're incapable, I'm incapable of loving like Jesus loved, apart from being connected to the Bible. It's not in our nature and we cannot do it, but when we stay connected, all of a sudden fruit starts to happen. We can begin to love each other as He loved us and as we do that it drives us back to the vine. Then it happens again, and He says to love someone a little deeper and then boom, it goes back to the vine and this cycle completes itself.

As it does, little blossoms become fruit, Remember I was telling you about how my father came to me in regards to becoming the pastor for the second service... we'll obviously I am standing in front of you today.

My problem was selfishness and love of comfort. I am very comfortable when it comes to working with the youth. I have been doing it for so many years it became comfortable. My selfishness came when I said that I am not that person, but I have learned over time, that God can and will do what he wants to do, not me. God produced something perfect, fruit. A little bit of love here a little bit of joy, a little bit of patience, some kindness. Lord knows we need patience and kindness, and self-control and faithfulness and gentleness. All these things begin to produce themselves as I stayed connected to the vine. Before you knew it I was standing here on a Sunday morning prepared and ready to serve.

My question would simply be this... what fruit is being evident in your life? Love, joy Peace, patience? Because as Jesus said when we remain in Him and He in us we will bear fruit, much fruit. As we do that and we love each other what happens is God takes our loneliness and He replaces it with His comfort. He takes our desires and He replaces it with His desires. As we love each other and we remain connected, we find ourselves one day in the middle of a miracle. God doing something in us and producing fruit!

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you'll bear much fruit, but apart from me you can do nothing.