

*From Pastor's Desk...*

### **I AM THE VINE: YOU ARE THE BRANCHES**

This is the seventh and the last of the "I AM" statements of Christ recorded in the Gospel of John. The cultivation of vine and vineyards was a part of life and a main avenue of income for Israel. A golden wine adorns the temple of Jerusalem. Jesus was using a very familiar image every Jew to explain the indivisible, living, lasting and fruit-bearing relationship between him and his followers.

The seven "I AM" statements of John

1. I am the Bread of Life (Jn 6:35) - sustains us
2. I am the Light of the World (Jn 8:12) - leads us
3. I am the Gate (Jn 10:9) - gives us access to God and His Kingdom
4. I am the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11) - cares for us
5. I am the Resurrection and the Life (Jn 11:25-26) - gives us hope
6. I am the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6) - keeps us alive and right to the destination
7. I am the vine (Jn 15:5) - bears us

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5)." What does Jesus mean by this statement? He meant He alone is the source for an indivisible, living, lasting, and fruit-bearing Christ-like characteristics. As a branch will wither and die without the sustaining life of the vine, so all our attempts to produce a Christian character will be futile and frustrating apart from a constant remaining in Christ and his teaching.

The principle of relationship - Remain in the vine who is Christ. Branch is not a guest in the Vine family but an integral part of the family.

The principle of reproduction - Remain in the vine to grow mature. The branches are not designed to produce fruit, but only to bear it.

The principle about fruit - It is the predominant evidence of branches remaining in the vine. For fruits to reach maturity, the branch must remain to draw life from the vine.

"The branch of the vine does not worry, and toil, and rush here to seek for sunshine, and there to find rain. No, it rests in union and communion with the vine; and at the right time, and in the right way, is the right fruit found on it. Let us so abide in the Lord Jesus." (Hudson Taylor)

God bless you.

**Rev. K. M. Varughese**

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### **THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES**

Abraham Mathew, Tenant Relations Manager & Asset Controller

Imagine a branch separated from a tree! That branch will quickly wither and die. Likewise, Adam the first man severed his relationship with God by his disobedience. Romans 5:12 reminds us that by one man, Adam, sin entered the world and it passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Jesus the son of God came into the world to restore the lost relationship between God and man.

Jesus declared "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit: for without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). In what Jesus declared here, one could experience Christ's promise of a special relationship if we remain plugged in him.

Firstly, if a person abides in Christ then that he/she is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17), a complete new and whole person in all respects. Secondly, when the person decides to abide in Christ, He promises us His strength. Philippians 4:13 says we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Finally, we need to continue walking with Christ, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith (Col. 2:6-7).

Our Pastor K.M Varughese often shares that "repentance is the change of mind that leads to a change in action." The analogy of the "vine and the branches", by Jesus is a firm reminder to us, his followers, to bear fruit worthy of repentance (Luke 5:8) so that we the branches remain in the vine Jesus Christ to bear much fruit for God's glory and to realize...

