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Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> 2025

Scripture: John 15: 1-17

Sermon Title: Growing in Grace

John 15:1-17

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Jesus the True Vine

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes[a] to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed[b] by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask

for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become[c] my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants[d] any longer, because the servant[e] does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so

that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Share a song with you... Inspired by our Scripture and my life verse

John 15: 9

As the Father has loved me

So have I loved you.

As the Father has loved me

So have I loved you.

Abide in my love.

Abide in my love. (Repeat)

You will bear great fruit,

As I abide in you.

I will be your strength in everything.

I will be your friend.

I'm with you til the end.

And heaven waits for you.

Heaven waits for you. ( Back to start)

I want to share three key thoughts from our passage today that relates to growing in God's grace.

1. Grace begins as a gift of God's love from Jesus. We are invited to abide in the love of Jesus daily. Jesus gave his love out of the love he received from God. Our love flows also from grace.

2. The purpose of life is to grow in love or one might also say that our purpose is to grow in grace. The image of the vine and branches remind us of this growth process. Jesus is our vine and we are the branches. As we abide or remain in Jesus we bear the fruit of love and compassion in the world. When we are hurting or struggling we need more grace not less. The journey of self love and receiving grace for yourself is the deepest form of spiritual formation. God does not want us to beat ourselves up when we fail or struggle, God wants us to allow grace to heal our wounds and bring us into peace and wholeness.

3. Jesus wants us to love one another. The world is in tension and I am noticing Christians are in tension with one another. We are struggling to define what the Gospel looks like in our world. I think it begins with an understanding of God's grace and God's nonviolent nature and unconditional love that cares for the

most vulnerable. The Christian Gospel is both an invitation to deep spirituality and deep justice.

I want to share one more song with you that inspires me this day as I think about growing in grace. It comes from my time as a counselor at a Christian camp. The last year I was on staff we fell in love with a simple song about growing in grace. I want to share it with you now.

My Friends may you grow in grace...

Let us grow in grace together as a church community. Remember when you are hurting you need more grace not less. Growing in grace together will lead us to both become healthy and whole individuals and growing in grace will enable us to care for our world in great need. Remember our church is a grace place to grow.

Let us pray...