

DON'T QUIT! HARVEST IS COMING!

The single-most important desire of the Vinedresser (Heavenly Father) is that the glory of the Vine (Jesus) would be that He sees the branches (Christ-followers) bear much fruit. If the fruit is little, then Jesus' glory is limited on the earth. It is the zeal of the Father to bring glory to His Son in this age on the earth. This is the will of the Father and the glory of the Son. Take heart. The Father always has your good in mind as He works in our lives. We will see the fruit of His Kingdom in our lives as we remain in Him.

John 15:1-2 *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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."*

I. THE TRUE VINE

- A. **John 15:1** *"I am the true vine..."*
- B. Jesus is teaching this parable as an allegory to strengthen and encourage His followers just hours before His arrest and crucifixion.
- C. *"All earthly things are shadows of heavenly 'realities' the expression, in created, visible forms, of the invisible glory of God."* **(Andrew Murray- The True Vine)**
- D. It is hard for us to imagine but, this life is but a shadow of a greater and more permanent life which is coming soon. Everything in our reality is temporary and the life to come is eternal.
- E. **2 Peter 3:11-13** *"Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹²looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."*
- F. *"A season is a period of the year that is distinguished by special climate conditions. The four seasons—spring, summer, fall, and winter—follow one another regularly. Each has its own light, temperature, and weather patterns that repeat yearly."* **(National Geographic)**
- G. **The 4 Horticultural & Farming Seasons:** *(General principles for North America)*
 1. **Spring-** The seeds take root and vegetation begins to grow as the ground warms and wetter weather starts.
 2. **Summer-** Plants receive their full amounts of rain, sun, and optimal environment for growing to maturity, and for the purpose of reproducing.
 3. **Fall-** The weather cools plants have grown and reproduced their harvest to be received and seeds to be spread for more growth.
 4. **Winter-** As the weather become the coolest of the other seasons, the plant-life rushes back into retreat and hibernation. Trees shed their leaves as to preserve their internal nutrients for the harsh outside weather conditions. Many plants become more flexible in the freezing tempe in order to maintain their internal health.
- H. As Disciples of Jesus, when we cannot see any outward/external signs of growth and life, we can trust that there is an internal process of growth and life happening.
- I. **The True Vine** contrasted- fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretentious (artificially created intelligence)
- J. All that is our current life is but temporary and to be enjoyed only temporarily. The things of eternity can be accessed and enjoyed in this life only through Jesus Christ. Even as Jesus spoke to the Samaritan

woman at the well He expressed that the water of this world was only temporary but the water of Heaven was eternal. This is the search of every human heart. We can believe and declare this Truth with confidence.

- K. The True Vine is more than a concept and a Name/Title for Jesus. This is His emotional and relational expression to those who would wait before Him long enough to receive a revelation of this reality. It's not truth for us personally until we experience it for ourselves.
- L. The Vine is the source of life-flow and nutrients for the rest of the plant. Water is also transported through the Vine to the entirety of the plant and ultimately for the purpose of producing fruit.
- M. Purpose of the Vine:
 - 1. Transports life-nutrients and water to the rest of the plant and branches.
 - 2. Branches are completely dependent on the Vine for life.
 - 3. The vine's purpose and role is to release life and nutrients while the branches role is to fulfill their role of receive the nutrients so that fruit can be produced from the branches. The fruit becomes a glory and celebration for the vine.
- N. *Interesting Fact: Maribor, Slovenia* hosts and boasts as the oldest grape vine in the world, dating back to over 400 years old. They are world-wide known for their quality wines produced.

II. THE VINEDRESSER

- A. **John 15:1** *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."*
- B. Another description for the Vinedresser would be that of a Farmer in today's western culture.
- C. The Vinedresser or the Husbandman is the one who has the care of a vineyard and whose responsibility it is to nurture, trim and prune, and defend the vine, and who of course feels a deep interest in its growth and welfare. The Husband is constantly thinking about ways to get the greatest yield from His vine and branches.
- D. The roles of the Husbandman are as follows:
 - 1. Oversees the vine, branches, and fruit that is to be produced.
 - 2. Manages the pruning process, which is an imperative part of bearing a plentiful harvest.
 - 3. Protects from other animals and diseases from spoiling the vine and its fruit.
 - 4. Assures that the vineyard receives plenty of sunlight, fertilizer, water, and that the vines are planted in the best possible portion of land.
- E. The greatest joy of the Husbandman is to celebrate the harvest that is produced from his prized vine and its branches. There is great celebration surrounding the harvest seasons, especially in Israel's history. It was a sign of God's faithfulness and fruitfulness to His people.
- F. As it has been said before, *"When we cannot trace His hand, we trust His heart."*

III. THE BRANCH

- A. **John 15:2** *"Every 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."*
- B. Let's not make the mistake of reducing this portion of the parable to branches representing ONLY individual people. "1 branch doesn't equal 1 person." The branches can represent people, unbiblical thinking and practices, faith, unbelief, etc.
- C. As we remain in the Vine, we are receiving the life-flow to feed and bring to maturity all that is planted in our hearts and lives. We will reap what we sow! Jesus describes that there is light and darkness at work within our lives. He says in **Lk. 17:21**, *"Behold, the kingdom of God is growing within you."*

- D. **Genesis 1:21-22** *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*
- E. It is the job and role of the branches to “receive” from the Vine. Jesus is describing two types of branches in this parable; those who bear no fruit and those who bear some fruit. So too, there are many Christians or Christ-followers who receive regularly from the True Vine and some who neglect to take the time to receive. Those who neglect to receive life from the Vine bear no fruit. Those who receive life from the Vine will bear fruit. It’s just what naturally happens.
- F. There are some in Christian circles who imagine that the Christian who spends too much time and energy simply “receiving” life from the Vine will neglect to bear fruit unto the harvest. The reality is that ONLY THOSE WHO RECEIVE from the True Vine can bear fruit, unto eternal life.
- G. There is a difference between human Christian activity and co-laboring with the Lord of the Harvest.
- H. **Matthew 7:22** *Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’*

IV. NO FRUIT

- A. **Matthew 13:24-25;30** *Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them together in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”*
- B. **Wheat & Tare**- The wheat represents all that the Father, the Lord of the Harvest plants and the tares represents all that Satan sows in the field of the harvest.

V. MORE FRUIT

- A. **Revelation 3:16-19** *“So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked- ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich: and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke (discipline/prune). Therefore, be zealous and repent.*
- B. This is the glory of the “Father of Glory”. As God reveals His Son, we are captured in love and then bear the fruit of love back to Jesus and for others.