

Prayer Night. Instruction 5.

1. A Pattern and Place of Prayer. Regular Practice.
2. Praise. Psalm 100:4 'we enter His gates with praise'
3. Confession. Psalm 66:18 'if I have regarded iniquity in my heart' (Ten Commandments)
4. Enemies. Matt. 5:44-45
5. **True Vine. John 15 'ask anything'**
6. Spiritual Warfare. Eph. 6

John 15:1-11 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the ranches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **If anyone** does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, **ask whatever you wish**, and it will be done for you.

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

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.

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.'

Q: How long does It take for a fruit tree to grow? In general 3-5 years. Peaches are the fastest and it takes about 3 years.

We are often far too quick in our assessment of prayers and God's development of circumstances.

BUT, the assessment does remain at the beginning; Have I planted the right seeds? Am I pruning in the proper way? Are the proper measures being taken in order to produce more fruit?

What needs to be asked for?

I am the true vine.

This is one of Jesus' 7 I AM statements. Where He identifies who He is as likened to a vine (parallel to OT Israel)

My Father is the Vinedresser.

God the Father is going to shape up His vineyard. God is going to directly address the branches of the vineyard.

This is really where the heart of your prayers needs to become active in petition and supplication.

Q: Where is it that the fruit is not being produced? Brother David, we need to see more grace. Brother David, we need to see more joy. Brother David, we need to see more love. Whatever it is that the vineyard needs to produce the Vinedresser must attend to and achieve in us.

In this, 'ask anything.'

'in Me' – Union with Christ. Union with Christ is really our great access to God in prayer. Union with Christ is not conjured up by clever concepts or new vocabulary or rituals or feeling better about yourself. Union with Christ is secured by saving faith. Faith is how we have union with Christ. Union with Christ is how we have access to God in prayer. Access to God in prayer is how we have answer to prayer.

Warren Wiersebe 'our union with Christ is a living union so we may bear fruit, it is a loving union so that we may enjoy Him, and it is a lasting union so that we need not be afraid.'

The branch that does not bear fruit and the branch that does bear fruit.

Here is the great distinction. This is the great separating mark. This is where the Gospel divides. Bearing fruit.

There are people that go to church for years and season by season they never show any fruit.

Q: How in the world can a person go to church of years and never once have a bumper crop?!

But, here's the other side, if you bear one fruit, God is faithful to produce more.

Two different branches in the same Vine.

One branch is discarded. One branch is kept.

One branch is rejected. One branch is accepted.

One branch is ignored. One branch is investigated.

One branch is left to its own devices. One branch is under Divine watch.

One branch can do whatever it wants. One branch can only do what God wants.

One branch is dismissed. One branch is disciplined.

One branch is burned up. One branch is pruned up.

He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

Q: Why does God prune our life? So that we bear more Christian fruit.

Principle: God actively inspects the lives of Christians and cuts out the things that are working as spiritual hindrances to their life. God intervenes directly in the Christian's life and cuts out whatever is not profitable for the kingdom work through them.

Principle: God's disciplining of us is not punishment. God's disciplining of us is an active of love to bless us, mercy to protect us, and forcing us into the freedom of the Holy Spirit. So many people claim to be Christians but are actually still in bondage to sin and Satan.

We will look at this next Prayer meeting on **Spiritual Warfare** but if a Christian is not fighting the battle against sin, the flesh and the devil, then it doesn't seem likely they are a Christian.

God's prunes our life.

Let's look at **Malachi 3** briefly. **The Purifier.**

Malachi 3:1-7

'a refiner's fine and like a fuller' soap'

'when a purifier would sit before the crucible, he would fix his eye on the metal, and take care that the fire not be too hot, and kept his eye on the metal, only until he knows the dross to be completely removed by his seeing his own image in the reflection' *Commentary on Malachi, David Brown.* (i.e. point being, God knows exactly what to do to get exactly what He wants to get out of you and me)

Heb. 12:4-6 'You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCROUGES (grk: whips, for the pursue of correcting) EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES" – The theme of Pressing on to Maturity in Christ.

Some people never have their life maturity in Christ because the Vinedresser never prunes them. That is an alarming reality.

James 1:2 'Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounters various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**' -Trials are necessary to make you perfect and complete. Trials, discipline, the refiner's fire, the fuller's soap – these are all synonymous with The Vinedressers Pruning.

NOW, about this in prayer. I'm not explaining this to mean about salvation, even though you could pray about your salvation or someone elses. This is about prayer.

That **we can participate in God's pruning of our lives in prayer.** * Jam. 1:5-6 'if any of you lacks wisdom (for example of where he needs pruned) let him ask of God, who gives to all generously without reproach. **BUT, he must ask in faith without any doubting.**'

Malachi's point to the Israelite priests was that they had lost their way. They had become unjust. So Malachi says, if you don't fix this stuff, God is going to fix it but it's going to be too late then.

There's a time to be refined and there is a time to be judged. The after life is not the time to be refined and judged for the saved person.

The Lazarus of Jesus' parable knew that. He gave the great apologetic against purgatory. **Luke 16.**

The point is our life has to be refined now. Our life has to be pruned now. And the reality is its never over. It is seasonal. It comes in seasons.

Seasons.

Life has seasons. Pruning is a season. Harvest is a season. Storing up the harvest is a season. 'let him ask for wisdom' and understand the season that you are in.

Practical aspect of Pruning.

Progressive Sanctification vs. Ultimate/Entire Sanctification.

'if we say we have no sin we deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.' 1 Jn. 1:8

If the 'truth is not in us' then we wouldn't be abiding in Christ.

The general Christian position on Sanctification is progressive sanctification, Nevertheless there are still people who believe you can achieve entire sanctification in this life.

John Wesley. Christian Perfectionism.

What it is not: Not freedom from ignorance, mistakes, infirmity (non-moral imperfection), not freedom from temptations

What does it mean: A Christian is free not to commit sin/set free from sin/slavery to sin, freedom from evil thoughts and attitudes (harboring malice, unforgiveness etc.).

Now, either side a person lands on, they need prayer and pruning as an active aspect of their life to remain in a life free from sin and sinful attitudes.

Whether you land on Progressive or Entire, you cannot deny there is a thing called **Real Sanctification or Actual Sanctification.**

There are actual changes that occur in actual people. These are real, noticeable differences in a person's life.

Principle: I do think it is very important to pray for God's help to grow in producing more fruit and also the removal of sinful thoughts and attitudes that ultimately develop into sinful behaviors.

So why do trials come? Why do difficulties arise? Are we surprised?

Do trials serve no purpose?

v. 3 'You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.'

The wonderful thing about the Christian faith is that God accepts us, not on the basis of us making ourselves clean but on the basis of Christ. And Christ has told this to the disciples and the point is that He has made us clean/righteous.

We can be confident of this. That Christ has made us righteous/clean. But we can also be confident of this, now He is going to begin working all the more to make that truth known to ourselves and everyone else.

That God is going to change us from the inside out. This is the on-going work of the Christian's life.

v. 4-5 'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.'

Abide in Me.

Union with Christ.

Can do nothing.

We literally cannot do anything in our Christian life without our union with Christ. In Christ, we can do all things. Outside of Christ, we can do nothing.

v. 6 'If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.'

Jesus is talking about eternal damnation in Hell.

v. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Well, well, well – what have we heard? Is this a genie in a bottle. Is there three wishes and you're done?

What does this mean? This is the 3rd time in two chapters Christ has said, if you ask anything in my name it will be done for you (14:13, 14:14, 15:7)

Let's look at this in more detail.

If you. Εάν μείνητε. If you abide. If you stay, wait, remain. **(3x)**

1 Kings 3:5 'one night at Gibeon, the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "Ask, and I will give it to you!"

Matt. 7:7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.'

'the promise given is in essence that we cannot ask anything of God except in the name of Christ' Ellicott

We can ask anything, so long, as it is anything in Christ.

Q: Let's look at this. What should we be asking for based off the True Vine promises?

7 Practical Outcomes of Praying in the True Vine Discourse.

1. Union with Christ. Abide in Me.

Q: Have I come to saving faith in Christ?

2. Obedience to Christ. That is evidence of Abiding.

Q: Do I have a desire to obey Christ's commands?

3. Producing Fruit.

Q: Where am I currently producing fruit?

4. Endurance during Pruning. Heb. 12

Q: Where am I weak in my spiritual life?

5. Wisdom during Pruning. Heb. 12, Ja. 1

Q: What fruit do I need to be producing?

6. Joy in the outcomes of Pruning.

Q: Can I see the harvest at the end of the pruning? Hope.

7. Glorifying God by bearing fruit.

The way we bring God glory is by bearing fruit. The way we bear fruit is by abiding in Christ. The way we abide in Christ is by keeping His commandments. The way by which we should pray/ask anything is that we abide in this state of grace.

My Father is glorified by this, that you **bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples.

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

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.

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.'