

Pt. II: Cleansing and Purifying

Pt. III: Abiding and Remaining

Pt. IV: Bearing Fruit

Pt. V: Love and Joy being made complete

Congregational Reading

Matt. 18:15-20 'If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFORMED. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.'

Prayer.

Responsive Reading.

Q42: How is the Word of God to be read and heard?

A42: With diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Q43: What are the sacraments or ordinances?

A43: The sacraments or ordinances given by God are instituted by Christ, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper, are visible signs and seals that we are bound together as a community of faith by His death and resurrection. By our use of them the Holy Spirit more fully declares and seals the promises of the gospel to us. (Rom. 6:4)

John 15:1-11. Read All.

Intro.

Focus today is on v. 1-2. We are going to look at this over a number of weeks. Next we'll be giving a special message on Mother's day so it will be a little over a month that we will be looking at this True Vine discourse.

Exegesis.

John 15:1-2 '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 bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.'

Syntactic Diagram. Identity/Action. Means/Result.

v. 1 "I am"

v.5 "I am"

Then

v.6 "If anyone"

v.7 "If you"

What I want to show you here with this is two things. 1. How to view the truth of the passage and 2. How to read Scripture.

Looking at this; Jesus is making an identity statement twice. "I am the true vine"

7 I AM statements in John's Gospel

1. I am the Bread of Life. Jn 6
2. I am the Light of the World. Jn 8
3. I am the Door of the Sheep. Jn 10
4. I am the Good Shepherd. Jn. 10
5. I am the Resurrection and the Life. Jn. 11
6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jn. 14
7. I am the True Vine. Jn. 15

Jesus tells us each of these things and then next He shows us how He is things thing.

Persons in the Passage.

True Vine – The Vinedresser – the unfruitful branches – the fruitful branches –

Actions in the passage.

'takes away' – 'pruning'

What does the passage mean? It means:

The True Vine.

Jesus Christ is in control of the True Church. Those who are true Christians remain in Christ at the true church. Those who are not, apostate believers, are removed from the True Church. They are moved, not by circumstances, not by emotions, not by clever insights, they are removed by God for the purpose of keeping His church pure. Then you have the true Christians, they remain in the church and God prunes them so that they bear more fruit.

But I guess we have to ask ourselves; How does that work?

It works the same way that it has always worked. The Word of God is preached and the human conscious responds. The Word of God is in complete control of the world, its creation and eventually its destruction. God works through His Word. God takes away and prunes by the work of His word.

Christ in Union, is the Word. 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' John 1:1

If you attend a church/true vine, where the word of God is taught clearly, the person who leaves is not leaving because they understand something better than you, they are not taking advantage of a budding new opportunity, they are not inclined to an astute insight about church ecclesiology and church polity, they are simply in rebellion to God's Word spoken and they are removed for the purposes of their own destruction.

'beloved, do not let this one fact escape your notice, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.' **2 Pet. 3:8-10 – The point comes down to either, repentance or removal.**

Taking away is the abandonment of God, and excommunication of God from the true church. Because a person is unwilling to repent in their prideful arrogance, they are removed and the burden, the weight of the Word of God upon their conscious ejects them out of the church. The

Taking away is the judgment that purifies the church, and **pruning** is the blessing of God that builds the church.

Ex. 9:21 -During the 10 Plagues of Moses to the Egyptians it says that 'he paid no regard for the word of the LORD'

Deut. 13:16, 29:25, 29:26 (God abandons certain Israelites for their rebellion and disobedience, their unfruitfulness) '

Deut. 31:17 God's anger 'will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' -Friends **the blessing and the warning** go hand in hand. The way to navigate to the top of the mountain, comes along with it the road sign of how to not drive off the side of the mountain.

The True Vine – this is Christ represents the true Church. And God at the true Church is always removing unfruitful branches and pruning fruitful ones.. Christ is the True Vine.

Setting.

Christ and the disciples have left the Upper Room and are walking to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prays (**Jn. 17**) and then Jesus is arrested.

This is the **final 24hr** day before Jesus is crucified. It is sometime between the evening meal/Last Supper and the time period, early in the morning the next day when Jesus is arrested.

It is suggested by some historic scholars that Christ and the disciples are **walking by the temple in Jerusalem and at the temple** there would have been a symbol of a vine. And it is at that point that Jesus takes the distinct opportunity to correct the identity of the vine.

Throughout the OT, Israel is identity as the vine.

Ps. 80:8-11 'You brought a vine out of Egypt'

Parable of the Vineyard

Is. 5:1 'Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it and also hewed out a wine vat in it; then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones.'

Lamenting over the Princes of Israel.

Ezek. 19:10 'Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, planted by the waters; it was fruitful and full of branches'

Parable of the Landowner. – The Art and Science of a Church-Split.

Matt. 21:33 'there was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, but built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce.

The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third.

Again, he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them.

But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance. They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?"

The owner is God, The Son is Christ, the slaves were the prophets and the apostles and even today they are the ones who faithful remain in the vine.

Q: What will God do to those who are so devise, subversives, and deceptive to those who remain in the vine?

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees. Who are the Pharisees?

Matt. 15:13 'Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted.' SO, 'let them alone, they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.'

Concept of the Vine is a metaphor. The concept is consistent with the rest of Biblical Theology.

Truth of the metaphor is the Jesus is this Vine. Being in the Vine is being 'In Christ.'

'In Christ'

2 Cor. 5:17 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; the new has come'

Rom. 8:1 'there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'

Eph. 2:10 'we are created in Christ for good works'

Gal. 2:20 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'

Eph. 4:22-24 'put off your old self, which belonged to your former manner of life and is corrupt, but put on the new self, created in the likeness of God, in truth, righteousness and holiness'

Rom. 6:3 'do you not know that you who have been baptized into Jesus Christ when baptized into His death?' We are either dead in our sins and do not know Christ, or we are dead to that former manner of life and have been raised to walk in a new life. V. 5 'you can do nothing apart from me'

Being 'in Christ' is the same as being in the True Vine because Jesus Christ is the True Vine.

It does beg to question; Q: How are you 'in Christ'? OR in respect of this passage, How are you in the true vine?

The understanding that Israel was represented as a Vine and God is the Vinedresser is consistent with all of OT revelation.

But the understanding that Jesus Christ is this actual Vine and God is the Vinedresser is now loaded with implications.

Application of the metaphor to us. The application of this metaphor is two-part.

v.2 'He takes away' and 'He prunes'

Christ is the vine, God is the vine dresser. Christ is calling the Sheep to remain in the vine, and God is going to take away those who are in the vine that are not producing fruit. And God is going to prune the life of those who are already producing fruit.

Q: How do we prune our life?

1st. This happens in the True Vine.

2nd. This happens by God.

Turn to Proverbs 4.

Where do we find our remaining/abiding in the True Vine? It is the Church. The Church is the representation of Christ on earth and Christ expects the Church to be fruitful and pruned.

There are two main behavior traits that are distinctive between the unfruitful branch and the fruitful branch; self-pride and humility.

Self-pride rejects the pruning and cleansing word of God. Humility submits its life to the pruning and cleansing of the Word of God.

Self-pride.

It's always the person who thinks their life doesn't need pruned that actually needs it the most. That is the effects of self-pride. Self-pride deludes a personal self-awareness. Self-pride is a means/device/instrument that Satan uses to deceive people into thinking they are ok and all the while they are not.

Prov. 16:5 'everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; assuredly they will not go unpunished' – a major act of punishment is God's removal from His church. It's probably the worst thing that can happen to a person, because it severs them from God's active means of Grace.

Humility.

But the person of a humble mind is willfully pruned.

Prov. 15:5 'he who is wise regards a reproof...the lips of the wise spread knowledge'

Look at how pruning works in Proverbs 4.

Prov. 4:4 'let your heart hold fast my words'

4:5 'do not turn away from the words of my mouth'

4:6 'do not forsake it/words...it will guard you, love her/the words, she/the words will watch over you'

4:8 'prize her/the words of the Lord, and she/the words of the Lord will exalt you'

4:9 these words will be 'a garland of grace a crown of beauty'

4:10 Hear these words and accept them 'years of your life will be many'

The result of the work of the word will be:

v. 11 'directed path, an upright path'

v.12 'your steps will not be impeded'

v. 13 'the words is you very 'life'

Q: How is your life pruned?

4:20 'give attention to my words'

4:21 'do not let them depart from your sight' keep the words 'in your heart'

4:22 the words 'after life to those who find them and health to their body'

4:23 'watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life' – Take God's word and wash it over the affections of your heart.

Now, look at this with pruning. **Q:** How is your life pruned?

v. 24-27 'Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you. Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.'

Q: How does removal and pruning happen? These are two separate things that work to purify Christ's church.

v. 3 'cleanse' – καθαρος (clean, pure, free from impurity), English word, Catharsis. – How is one branch removed and another branched pruned? Jesus tells us, it is by the way that the disciples have already been made clean – **v. 3 'by the word I have spoken to you'**

There is a cathartic experience of the Word of God being spoken. It cleanses from all unrighteousness. And it either transforms a person or it transitions a person.

The person either remains in the vine, God prunes their life by His word, and the person is transformed.

OR

The person is transitioned out of the vine because of the nature of their heart and they are removed/transitioned out of the vine.

By the way, look back at chapter 13 – **Q:** How is it that Judas/the evil branch was removed?

If you were to look at John 6 you would see you have an apparent 20,000 disciples that are following Christ. And then at the end you have 19,988 that fall away. **Q:** How does that happen? It was a His word. It says in John 6, that they 'grumbled' against His teaching.

John 13:18 'I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME... Truly, Truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.' Then "Jesus became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.' – That was Judas, the branch that was removed."

Q: How was Judas/the betrayer/the unfruitful branch removed? It was by the word spoken by Jesus Christ.

People still do not fully grasp the Authoritative Word of God.

Not only is the Word of God authoritative, it very much so is experiential in the sense that it's authority is effecting a change inside of you. The Word of God is doing a work in you.

Let the Word do the Work. It is the Word of God that is cleansing you. It is the Word of God that is changing you.

How, how can it be. **Turn to Mark 4.**

I remember a **story I read about, about a lady, a younger lady**, that began attending the services held by Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones at Westminster Chapel in London, England.

Illustration.

After decades of sitting under his preaching ministry, the lady gave a testimony. She said this 'when I first began attending the services that the Pastor was leading I did not understand much of anything that was being spoken. I simply perceived that there was something different here. It was something spiritual and it was something I couldn't fully understand then, but I do now. I didn't understand the things he was saying, but at the same time I was experiencing the very things he was saying from the Bible. Then something even stranger happened. I went from experiencing this spiritual experience to understanding how this spiritual experience was taking place. It was on the basis of God's Word being spoken so clearly. And when I finally began to understand, the spiritual experience of knowing God more tangible, more real, more fruitful than ever before. Now, after all these years, I couldn't imagine remaining anywhere other than right here to hear God's Word spoken.'

God's Word was cleansing her soul and she was experiencing that without even fully understanding that it was happening.

The Concept of Removing/Taking Away and Pruning.

Turn Mark 4. The Sower who sowed the seed. 1 Seed, 4 soils.

Mark 4:3-12 – People perceive based off their heart. It is not a matter of intelligence, status, it is not a matter of ability – it is a matter of their heart.

Mark 4:13-25 focus just on 'takes away' αἶρει

Now I want you to look at this. You might need to flip back and forth but this is important.

John 15 – Jesus says that God is the Vinedresser, God removes/**takes away** and God prunes. The commonality is the word spoken. The word spoken either cleanse or condemns. Now, the discomfort of pruning is that the word spoken can very much so condemn a person in the vine, but it doesn't stop there, if they remain, they will be cleansed. They must 'endure until the end.' But look what happens.

God uses the word as the tool of pruning the vine in Christ.

John 15:2 the Vinedresser 'αἶρει' (takes away)

Mark 4:15 Satan 'αἶρει' (takes away)

What's being said here? God takes away in one, Satan takes away in another, yet the situation is seemingly the same.

The point is, God never does wrong. God is always good. God is also always in control of all things. God is always Sovereign. There is never a time, in your life, that God is not Sovereign. Yet, God must take away unfruitful branches. God uses Satan to take people out of His church who claim to love Him, but do not, who claim to profess Christ, yet actually do not.

God turns these people over to Satan and as we see, Satan has his bidding with these people in a number of categories; they fall away because of **affliction and persecution** (true saints get stronger through affliction and persecution), the worries of the world/deceitfulness of riches/**desire for other things** chokes out the word (they want Christ up until the point that it interferes with their god!)

Looking back at this **'takes away' concept**. Look back at John 15.

You have the true vine. That is Christ. You have the Vinedresser. That is God the Father.

The true vine, Christ, that is **symbol of the true Church**. There are churches by the way that are not true churches. There are vines that are not true vines.

Artificial Sweetness.

There are all kinds of false versions of true things. Look at this just in our age; How often would a person rather have artificial sweetener instead of something that is naturally sweet?

People will select artificial/that is fake/false flavor over the things God has created in the world to give us natural sweetness.

People will select the artificial flavoring of an apple, instead of just eating the true apple that God has created.

This lack of satisfaction in God's true vine, runs parallel with people who are not satisfied with how God has developed true sweetness in all other facets of what God has created.

You know, health wise, it's a dangerous thing when you become addicted to artificial sweetness. The reason is that it gives the body a false response to sweetness.

A person can have an artificial sweetness and physically still have an insulin response to that artificial sweetness. That's dangerous to a person long term because it trains their body to think they are receiving a nutrient that it is actually not receiving.

But what about this – the church that teaches people an artificial view of God, and artificial view of Christ, and artificial view of the Holy Spirit – they are actually giving people a false spiritual response and it is dangerous long-term.

It's giving people false hope, false love, false joy, false bravado, false confidence, false courage.

False assurance, all because God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are being represented in a way that is false.

It's like the AIDS epidemic. A person with AIDS typically doesn't die from AIDS, instead, their immune system becomes so compromised that they can literally die from a 100 different diseases.

Theologically, that is what has happened to the American church. What is supposed to be the True Vine of Christ! It is dying on the vine because of proper knowledge of God.

John 8:31-32 "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free"

Discipleship is contingent on teaching people and teaching people to remain in Christ.

If you were to ask at random a professed Christ, tell me 5 attributes of God from Scripture, prove Christ's deity from Scripture to me, tell me – how can I know the Holy Spirit is at work in my life from Scripture?

The average Christian would think you **that you are arrogant** for thinking you should actually know accurate information about God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. Friends, that Satanic deception. It would be arrogant to claim to know everything there is to know about God, but it is not arrogant to claim to know God in how He has revealed Himself, that is not arrogant, that is the basis of discipleship. Discipleship begins with knowing rightly and leads to pruning rightly, abiding rightly and having loving and joyful fellowship as the result. **Q So what's at stake? The entire Christian experience is at stake in not knowing rightly!**

That is a key indicator that the world has taken over the mind of that person and they do not have biblical worldview. It's also a key indicator that for the past 2 decades church culture in general has been completely devoid of Discipleship.

We have to learn to be satisfied and content with how God has created the world, instead, of attempted to swindle technological to make things more sweet that God actually intended them to be.

Takes away. 'αἰρεῖ'. Present, Active, Indicative verb. It is presently, actively being done by God and it is indicative of a true church.

Q: Well, what does that mean? It means this. That if you are in a true church you should always be cognizant that God is either removing unfruitful people from the church and turning those people over to Satan OR God is always pruning the life of His disciples and the result is that those disciples become more and more fruitful as time goes on.

The pruning of the life of Christ's disciples is presently being done. It is actively being done. And the pruning of the life of Christ's disciples is indicative of a true church.

It is impossible to attend a true church and for your life to not be transformed over time.

If you remain in the vine, it is not something you have to wonder about, it is not up for debate, God is going to prune your life. And if God does not prune your life, then God will remove you from the vine and you will be turned over to Satan.

Unfortunate Reality.

It becomes an unfortunate reality that you have friends who claim to be Christians but they are only nominal Christians. They are only Christians by title, not by transformation. They have not been 'born again.'

The evidence that they have not been born-again is that they fall away from the cleansing of the word, that would otherwise prune and refine their life.

Let me give you a few Biblical illustrations of this and then give you a hypothetical example that many of you will be familiar with.

John 2:13-16 Jesus makes a whip of chords and whips all of these corrupt people out of the church. It says in there that Jesus told them to 'take these things away' – it's the same term.

Parable of the Fig Tree. Matt. 24:39 '

Matt. 25:28 – The Unfruitful man is Excommunicated from the 'Light', I am the Light of the World, excommunicated from the fellowship of the saints into outer darkness.

That is a grave warning. The warning and the blessing come in the same package. You have to investigate both.

Consider this hypothetical example.

Say you are a young adult and you have a neighbor that is a young adult. Both of you go to church and you both come to profess Christ.

Over the seasons of life, various changes occur, and the church/the vine that you attend because to address sin in society that you and your neighbor have held close to your heart. You realize this is something that is true and you need to be pruned from it. So you willfully, turn away from it, and remain in the vine.

BUT, your neighbor has a different response. They hate the idea that this sin is being identified. And instead of hating the sin that is in their heart, they hate the fact that that sin is being so clearly identified. So your neighbor begins to speak out. Your neighbor begins to do the things that all unrepentant sinners do. They begin to speak. 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks'

And your neighbor who is unwise, does the things the fool does, and 'where there are many words transgression is unavoidable'

The simple sin that would have been simply forgiven by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross has now multiplied itself as a result of their wicked, prideful response.

And now they come to a **testing point**.

God tests them, that they can either remain and be pruned of this sin OR they can remain in their sin and be removed from the congregation of the true vine.

And your neighbor, whom you have been friends with now for years, you realize they believed in something different than you.

And your neighbor is committed to something completely different than what you are committed to.

And now, it has finally come to the decisive point. It has now come to the moment of testing. Where the disciple of Christ will remain in the vine, they will be pruned of unfruitful sin, and they will be cleansed by the word, they will be accepted by Christ, they will be loved by God, they will be accepted by the congregation, they will be loved by the congregation, and not only

will you experience this great love of God, Christ promises that after the pruning your joy will be made full.

BUT your friend, whom you thought was saved was actually not. **Your friend turns away. They are an apostate. 'he who goes out from us was never actually of us.'** 1 Jn. 2:19

The desire for other things is causing your neighbor to be pulled away, taken away, removed from the vine NOT because God is unwilling to cleanse them, BUT because they reject the method that God has ordained to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Instead, they prefer their sin over the natural sanctification of pruning. Your friend has too much self-pride to admit they need to repent.

And the conclusion for your friend is not joy, it is bitterness.

Because of your friends unwillingness to be pruned and cleansed by the word, their joy is not made complete, and now the result of the branch of their life is removal that leads to bitterness.

They are removed from the true vine, they begin to express their true self. We see their true colors shining through.

A failure to be pruned results in being removed and the results of being removed, result in bitterness.

Acts 8:23 Simon Magnus fell into this sin. He thought that the Holy Spirit was something to be purchased and pursued by his 'desire for other things.' **Peter told him, 'I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.'**

Rom. 3:14 'Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving,' **'THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS'** **"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"** (It is the natural response of the unpruned to turn to cursing and bitterness.)

Heb. 12:14-15 'Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many are defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.'

Friends it is better to forfeit and be pruned of a meal than it is to forfeit and be removed of your heavenly reward. Remain in the vine and the word of God will cleanse you, pruning you, and will make your joy full.

The results of the bitterness.

But, this doesn't stop there. The bitter result does not stop at the symptom and personality expression of bitterness. It goes even further.

Look at verse 6 of John 15 **'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.'** John 15:6

This is the horrible reality of the prideful, unrepentant sinner. The simple sin in the heart that could have been easily and mercifully forgiven turns into a life of bitterness instead of joy.

And you say, 'oh I know people like that' – we all do.

The necessary work of Pruning. Pruning is the positive side of the passage. Let me make a transition.

v. 2 says 'He prunes' – "He/God prunes the fruitful branch'

Pruning is necessary for every disciple. It is not unusual. It is not harsh. It is an absolutely normal and critical aspect of Christian life.

Pruning should be an activity that you regularly attend your mind to.

The promise of God's blessing is stored up in the action of pruning. Pruning is necessary for an increase of love. Pruning is necessary for an increase of joy. The pruning is necessary for a more robust harvest.

Horticulture illustration.

It is considered in horticulture that a properly pruned branch can yield 3-4 more blooms in a new season.

If God does this with a tree, why would it be any different with us? It's not.

The root word for pruning in **v. 2** is the same **v. 3 cleanse**

Prune and Cleanse is the connection of action and result.

Καθαρος/catharsis. (Makes clean, cleanses, makes clear, prunes)

Q: Who does this happen to? Christ tells that this happens to 'every branch that bears fruit'

This shows us here just like the taking away, that the pruning – it is a Present, Active, Indicative action of God.

God is presently and actively pruning people who bear fruit, and God's during this is indicative of His true church.

The reason God is doing this is so that you bear more fruit.

Some basic applications of pruning in your life. Pruning is really the intersection of self-control, discipline, submission, and obedience.

The passage tells us that this is done by

1. The Work of the Word.

2. Abiding in Christ.
3. Apart from Christ we can do nothing.

Pruning.

Lev. 25:3-4

Is. 5:6

Is. 18:5

Jn. 15:2-6

Is. 2:4

Joel 3:10

Mic. 4:3

Horticulture.

Transition to Communion.

1 Cor. 11 – if we would judge ourselves rightly.

Turn. 1 Cor. 11

Pruning is a great example of the Lord's Table.

John 15:1-11 | The True Vine Pt. I

In this passage Jesus Christ teaches the disciples what it means to remain in the true vine.

There is the means of remaining and there is the result of remaining. In this sermon we look at the actions taken by God to both cause the remaining and the removal of fruitful branches and unfruitful branches.'

Kids/Small Group.

1. **Who is the true vine, who takes away and prunes, who are the unfruitful branches and who are the fruitful braches?**
2. **What is the illustration of Christ's identity as the True Vine? It's relation to Israel and its relation to the church?**
3. **What is the instrument God uses to take away and prune the True Vine?**
4. **Do you witness any people who are unfruitful branches that are 'take away' by God? Is this a concerning reality? What does Jesus say about this in other parables, Ref. Matthew.**
5. **What are ways that God is pruning your life and how can you support one another in the pruning work of God in your life?**