

## THE VINE, THE VINEDRESSER AND THE BRANCHES

John 15:1-3

Through this extended metaphor of the vine and branches, Jesus set forth the basis of Christian living. Jesus used the imagery of vines and vine crops. He specifically identified Himself as the true vine and the Father as the vinedresser or caretaker of the vine. We are the branches. The vine has two types of branches. Branches that bear fruit in vv. 2,8 and branches that do not in vv. 2,6.

<sup>1</sup>I am the True vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser.

<sup>2</sup>Every branch in Me not bearing fruit, He takes it away; and each one bearing fruit, He prunes so that it may bear more fruit.

<sup>3</sup>You are already pruned because of the word which I have spoken to you.

### I. I AM THE TRUE VINE

- A. This is the last of 7 claims to deity in the form of “I AM” statements by Jesus in the gospel of John.
- B. I am the true vine.
- C. The branches are connected to the vine.
- D. The branches receive life from the vine.

### II. MY FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER

- A. God owns the vineyard. God is sovereign.

### III. YOU ARE THE BRANCH

- A. Every branch in Me
  - 1. Notice that both branches are in Christ.
  - 2. Both branches are a picture of the Christian.
- B. “He takes away the branch not bearing fruit.”
  - 1. It may mean “lift up” (“picked up” in 8:59), which would indicate that the vinedresser encourages and makes it easier for the fruitless believer, hoping he will respond and begin to bear fruit.
  - 2. We have a flower in the back yard. It grew and flowered then stopped. It apparently died. I cut off all the dead and now this year it is growing again. God will cut the dead off when you stop growing, producing fruit.
- C. He takes away the branch not bearing fruit.
  - 1. The Seven Churches in Revelation
    - a. “I know your works” – “I know the fruit on your branches”
    - b. All seven are told, “If you have an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
    - c. Ephesus: “Then remember from where you have fallen; and repent and do the first works, and if not I am coming to you quickly and will remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent.”
    - d. Pergamos: “Repent! But if not, I will come to you quickly and I will make war with them by the sword of My mouth.”

- e. Thyatira: "...unless they repent of their works I will kill her children with death and all the churches will know that I am the One searching the inner parts and hearts."
  - f. Sardis: "Then remember how you received and heard and keep and repent. If, then, you do not watch, I will come upon you like a thief and you will not at all know what hour I come upon you."
  - g. Laodicea: "...because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit you out of My mouth...As many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten. Be zealous then and repent. Behold I stand at the door and knock: If anyone hears My voice and opens the door I will go in to him and I will dine with him and he with me."
    - 1. The lukewarm are vomited out – taken away
    - 2. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten – prune
    - 3. They are both His church.
- D. Every branch bearing fruit He prunes so that it may bear more fruit.
- 1. The picture is of the vinedresser (the Father) getting rid of dead wood so that the living, fruit-bearing branches may be sharply distinguished.
  - 2. God removes all things in the believer's life that would hinder fruit-bearing i.e. He chastises to cut away sin and hindrances that would drain spiritual life just as the farmer removes anything on the branches that keep them from bearing maximum fruit (Heb. 12:3-11).
  - 3. "Prune" – this is done through the Word of God which cleans the life
    - a. Pruned or clean – to cleanse, to be free from impure admixture, without blemish, spotless
    - b. Romans 8:29 – Predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.
  - 4. In Superior, WI there was a row of rose bushes. They were overgrown, green with few flowers. I pruned them back and for the first year they looked ragged, but the second year they filled out with greener and plentiful red roses.
    - a. The more you let Christ prune your life the more beautiful you become.
    - b. Without spiritual pruning you may be growing, green, but not fulfilling your purpose: roses.
    - c. Spiritual pruning is cutting things that look good but are not productive to your spiritual purpose out of your life.
  - 5. We have two bushes by the front door. They are molded to be a square. Weekly I must take clippers and clip off strands that are growing up.
    - a. God is shaping you into His image. Daily you must take the clippers of God's Word and prune the strands that grow contrary to God's shape.

How connected to the vine are you?

You should find it comforting that there is a vinedresser that is sovereign over all.

Good vines are pruned to become better vines.