

The Fruit of the Vine

Thomas Robinson, March 7, 2010

John 15:1-11

- ¹ **"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.**
² He **cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit,**
while every **branch that does bear fruit he prunes (cleans)**
so that it will be even **more fruitful.**
³ You are already **clean** because of **the word** I have spoken to you.
- ⁴ **Remain in me, as I also remain in you.**
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must **remain in the vine.**
Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.
- ⁵ **"I am the vine; you are the branches.**
If you **remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;**
(for) **apart from me you can do nothing.**
- ⁶ If you do **not remain** in me,
you are like a branch that is **thrown away** and withers;
such branches are picked up, thrown into the **fire and burned.**
- ⁷ If you **remain in me and my words remain in you,**
ask whatever you wish, and it will be done (become) for you.
- ⁸ This is to **my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit,**
showing yourselves to be (and become) **my disciples.**
- ⁹ **"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.**
Now **remain in my love.**
- ¹⁰ If you **keep my commands, you will remain in my love,**
just as I have kept my **Father's commands and remain in his love.**
- ¹¹ I have told you this so that **my joy may be in you**
and that **your joy may be complete."**

John 12:24

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless **a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies**, it remains alone; but if it dies, it **bears much fruit.**

John 13:8-11

⁸ "No," said **Peter**, "you shall never wash my feet." **Jesus** answered, "**Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.**" ⁹ "Then, Lord," **Simon Peter** replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" ¹⁰ **Jesus** answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole **body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.**" ¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

Romans 6:22

²² But now that you have been set **free from sin** and have become **slaves of God**, the **fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.**

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³ gentleness, self-control....

Philippians 1:9-11

And it is my prayer that **your love may abound** more and more, with **knowledge** and all **discernment**,¹⁰ so that you may approve what is **excellent**, and so be **pure** and **blameless** for the day of Christ,
¹¹ **filled with the fruit of righteousness** that comes **through Jesus Christ**, to the **glory** and **praise** of **God**.

The Vine, Branches and Gardener

As Jesus prepares the disciples for his death, he has washed their feet, foretold their failures, announced his going away, promised the Spirit as advocate.

Jesus is the Way, Truth, Life. He is the face of the Father. God dwelling in us.

A Vine image takes us a step further. The last of the “*I am*” sayings. A familiar image that becomes a parable. Wine before them. Many vineyards. Their work. Israel was a vineyard planted by God; went wild (Ps 80; Isa 5:1-7; 27:1-6; Jer 2:21).

The Flow of Shared Life

“*I am...You are.*” The power of the Vine image is the flow of existence, life, from the vine to branches. Jesus is the source of life. Disciples have their identity, life, power, fruitfulness only from him. Absolute intimacy. Shared divine life.

Remain - You in me, I in you. A branch lives only connected to the vine with other branches. No separate spirituality. Mutual faithfulness, belonging, vital power.

“*My words remain in you.*” Jesus’ story and teachings become our sap/blood, moving through us reminding, shaping, guiding, empowering us - Holy Spirit.

“*Remain in my love.*” God’s love for Jesus, given to us through life and death, creates our faith and love, becomes our world for confident, bold life, real fruit.

The Pruning of Purposeful Cultivation

Then there’s the gardener! A branch with no fruit will not be left alone. Life either flows and bears fruit or the branch is dead. Jesus in your life changes things.

God shows his glory/reality/substance in this world by leading his creatures to the full humanity/love/abundant life for which he created them - they bear fruit and become disciples of Jesus. The love within the Trinity is brought to us - power.

In Jesus that love becomes washing feet, dying for us. God’s love prunes/cleans our lives. Painful, hard to bear, but producing real change, real fruit. Our self-deception, selfishness, anger, malice, personal idols, addictions, violence, our self-righteousness, perfectionism, pride. Pruning makes place for real fruit.

The Harvest of Abundant Fruit

Fruit is not an achievement of the branch but is the life of the vine flowing through the branch to its natural result. Jesus is not giving a pep-talk for hard work.

The key word is “remain;” abide, stay connected to me. Mutual commitment.

Fruit is not defined by a check list. It is the full range of transformation of character and action that takes place when we live by his words, in his love, his life in us.

It is replacing hatred with love, anger with forgiveness, selfishness with grace.

It is the boldness to tell others about Jesus, to pursue justice for others, to risk ourselves for the good of others. It is the full living out of his love in our lives.