



John 15:1 H

The True Vine and the Branches

Down through Jewish history the vine became the symbol of Israel. During the Macabees period of history, the symbol of the vine was on the coins of Israel. It was over the main doors of the synagogues. Josephus in describing Herod's Temple in Jesus' day says, "Under the crown work was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and the workmanship of which were an astonishing sight to the spectators" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 5.5.4).

I picture in my mind the Hebrew prophet Isaiah walking through the market place in Jerusalem. People are busy hawking their wares, vegetables and wool. As he walks along he sees a vendor selling stringed instruments. The prophet picks up an instrument and begins to chant a song for my "well beloved" concerning His vineyard. The LORD God Jehovah is the "well beloved" and His vineyard is the nation of Israel. Listen to his song in Isaiah chapter five.

"My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. And He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine." The vinedresser chose the finest kind of eastern vine, bearing a bluish red grape that would produce rich red wine.

"And He built a tower in the middle of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones." Instead of producing rich red quality grapes, it produced wild, harsh, sour, small grapes. The grapes from a good stock have failed to ripen. The vines have produced a harsh flavor. Literally, the word for "worthless ones" means "stinking, rotten grapes."

"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. And I will lay it waste; it will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." Judgment has come to God's vineyard.

"For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress" (Isaiah 5:1-7).

Isaiah closes his song with a play on words. Israel is a degenerate vine. God looked for justice, but found bloodshed. He looked for "righteousness" but He found "a cry of distress." The Old Testament scholar H. C. Leupold says,

He found "a cry of distress." The Old Testament scholar H. C. Leupold says, "Looking for measures he found massacres, and for righteousness he found riots." The vineyard failed to produce righteousness.

God chose the vine and planted it. The Hebrew poet describes it this way: "Thou didst remove a vine from Egypt; Thou didst drive out the nations, and didst plant it. Thou didst clear the ground before it, and it took deep root and filled the land" (Psalm 80:8-9). He concluded with a prayer, "O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech Thee; look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine" (v. 14).

Moreover, the prophet Jeremiah picked up the same lament as Isaiah with these words: "Yet I planted a choice vine, a completely faithful seed. How then have you turned yourself before me into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?" (Jeremiah 2:21).

The prophet Ezekiel reminds us the vine is good for nothing except to bear fruit. The vine was a symbol of the spiritual relationship between God and Israel. The fruit of righteousness was to honor and glorify God. The crooked, dwarf is worthless wood as fuel because it flames up like paper and is gone instantly. You could not use it to make furniture. It was too soft and no good for lumber. You can not use it as a tent peg because it crumbles or flexes when you hit it. It fulfills only one purpose by bearing rich, delicious fruit. Israel was a wild, rotten grape. Ezekiel tells us she was ripe for the great winepress of the wrath of God (Ezekiel 15:1-6; 19:10-14).

JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE (15:1, 5)

In John chapter fifteen Jesus and His disciples had just celebrated the Passover. The disciple Judas has left the group to set up the betrayal. Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples left Jerusalem, and went down into the Kidron Valley and up the slope of the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane.

As they walk along the trail Jesus and the disciples pass through the vineyards that surround the city. Perhaps they can see the beautiful golden dome of the Temple lit up with the festive candelabra. Along the trail are gnarled grapevines that showed the scars from recent prunings.

One New Testament scholar thinks they can see in the distance "the Temple at Jerusalem, above and round the gate, seventy cubits high, which led from the porch to the holy place, a richly carved vine was extended as a border and decoration. The branches, tendrils, and leaves were of finest gold; the stalks of the bunches were of the length of the human form, and the bunches hanging upon them were of costly jewels . . . this vine must have had an uncommon importance and a sacred meaning in the eyes of the Jews. With what majestic splendor must it likewise have appeared in the evening . . ."

Jesus picked up a cutting and turned to His disciples. "You know how Israel is pictured as a vine which is to produce refreshing fruit. Well, she failed. I am the authentic Vine. I am the true and genuine Vine as opposed

produce refreshing fruit. Well, she failed. I am the authentic Vine. I am the true and genuine Vine as opposed to a mere copy or symbol. I am the fulfillment of all that this symbol suggests. I am the Vine, the true One. ”

The word "true" is also used of that which is the ultimate realization. Jesus is the fullest realization of the hope of Israel, of her expectations, of what God intended her to be. Israel as a vine never achieved her goal. She was a failure. However, the Lord Jesus Christ Who came as the True Vine accomplished all that God intended His Messiah to do. In rabbinical literature the vine became the picture of the restored Israel. The vine stands for the Messiah, the Anointed of God. Jesus' claim to be the Vine is a claim to be the Messiah. In Him the true destiny of Israel is fulfilled and consummated. Jesus is the genuine Messianic Vine. In Him the Messianic age is inaugurated.

Jesus drew a sharp contrast between the degenerate vine of Israel and Himself. He transferred the privileges and responsibilities from the Hebrew people to Himself.

Jesus' secret is with His Father

This was the secret of His experience with His Father. "I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me" (John 14:10 H). The only way you can explain Jesus is His communion with the Father. There was perfect union with Him. I and the Father are one (John 10:30). There was never any disunion or disharmony. It was perfect fellowship. The Father and the Son are never regarded as separate entities each going His own separate way regardless of the other. They are always seen working together.

The secret of the Christian life

With this vine Jesus illustrated the most fundamental and basic secret of the Christian life. Jesus says this is the secret of the Christian life: "You in Me, and I in you." Look at 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, that it may bear more fruit." The basic idea is vital union with Christ. It speaks of an intimate love relationship with Him.

Campbell Morgan suggested the whole plant is the vine. Christ included in the vine not only the branches but the stem and root. When we are united in Christ we are one with Him. It is our identification with Christ. Jesus is the only source of spiritual life. When we are united with Him, we are identified with Him. The fruit of such a vine is the natural outflow of the life of the vine.

THE PURPOSE OF THE VINE (15:2)

The purpose of the vine is to bring forth fruit. The whole emphasis of the allegory of the vine is fruit bearing. God expected Israel to produce luscious, beautiful, rich choice grapes of righteousness. She produced sour, rotten, stinking, tasteless grapes. God was looking for justice and righteousness; instead he found oppression, cruelty, exploitation of men. Jesus said the purpose of the vine was "that it may keep on bearing more and more fruit."

What is the fruit God is producing in your life? The fruit of the vine will be the natural outflow of the life of the vine. Jesus is the Vine. When we are united with Him we are identified with Him. We produce His wine. We reproduce Christ. He works in us what He produces.

God expects the fruit of the Holy Spirit produced in our lives. Only Jesus living in us can produce the fruit of the Spirit. God expects to see likeness to Jesus Christ. He examines our lives and expects to see love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and self control. The fruit is Christ likeness. The fruit is

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and self control. The fruit is Christ likeness. The fruit is the righteousness of God in the heart. It is the likeness of Christ.

GOD THE FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER.

We who name the name of Jesus Christ are God's great vineyard. God expects us to produce His fruit in His vineyard. John 15:2 reads, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit."

Merrill Tenney wrote in his commentary on the Gospel of John this observation on the vinedresser or viticulturist and the pruning process.

. . . In pruning a vine, two principles are generally observed: first, all dead wood must be ruthlessly removed; and second, the live wood must be cut back drastically. Dead wood harbors insects and disease and may cause the vine to rot, to say nothing of being unproductive and unsightly. Live wood must be trimmed back in order to prevent such heavy growth that the life of the vine goes into the wood rather than into fruit. The vineyards in the early spring look like a collection of barren, bleeding stumps; but in the fall they are filled with luxuriant purple grapes. As the farmer wields the pruning knife on his vines, so God cuts dead wood out from among His saints, and often cuts back the living wood so far that His method seems cruel. Nevertheless, from those who have suffered the most there often comes the greatest fruitfulness (Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948, pp. 227-28).

God prunes us (v. 2).

Just as the viticulturist must cleanse the vine, our heavenly Father must cleanse us so we will bear more fruit. He finds a branch that is producing fruit and He begins to cut it back so it will bear more of the likeness of Christ. His goal is to cleanse the branches that remain, in order to produce fruitfulness. The whole emphasis is "fruit," "more fruit," "much fruit" again "much fruit." He won't stop until He sees fruit! God cuts away the dead wood, diseased and rotten portion of our lives. Sometimes we feel that His methods seem cruel. He does it so we will produce the righteousness of Jesus. I have often observed that from those who have endured intense suffering there comes forth the radiant beauty of the Lord Jesus. This pruning process is a cleansing process.

Jesus said in verse eight, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." He will do whatever cleansing is necessary to produce His kind of fruit. Our heavenly Father finds a branch that is beginning to bear fruit, beginning to produce the likeness of Christ, and He cuts it back, trims off shoots, so we will bear more fruit.

Have you been going through the painful pruning process lately? He works at cutting out everything in our lives that is opposed to Christ likeness. The Great Physician has never let His scalpel slip. With precision He cuts out the resentments, bitterness, anger, selfishness, self-centeredness, arrogance, etc. Anything that is not the fruit of the Spirit He will cut out of our lives. If it is not Christ likeness He will snip it out.

How does the Father prune? (v. 3)

"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (v. 3). The Father employs the circumstances and situations in our lives to make us heed and hear His Word. He uses the Scriptures to confront our carnality and selfishness. Have you found yourself in a situation where you had to listen to God's Word? You couldn't run away. All you could do was stop and listen to His voice through the

God's Word? You couldn't run away. All you could do was stop and listen to His voice through the Scriptures. It cuts into our quick. It hurts. You feel the sting of it. That is the Father's pruning knife cutting off the sucker in our old self.

We carry over into our Christian life a lot of things from our old life that is not Christ-like. We brought a lot of old luggage when we came to Christ. Remember He accepts us in His grace. He does not expect us to "clean up our act" before coming to Him. By grace He accepts us just as we are, sinner and all. Through the process of sanctification, God cuts the old man out of our lives. He cleans us up through this process of pruning. It doesn't happen suddenly, or once and for all, but it takes a whole life time. He does it repeatedly and often. Slowly and surely God's Word is at work in our hearts pruning and cleansing and causing us to bear fruit. The Father's pruning knife cuts off the sucker shoots of our old life within us, so that we become more Christ-like.

We have inherited a lot of tendencies, philosophies and attitudes that are not Christ-like. God cleanses us. He cuts off the fat and causes us to lean on Him for His righteousness.

The issue is Christ-likeness, not salvation (v. 3, 6).

It is critical that we note the difference between position and production in this passage. Christ is speaking of our position in Him. "Every branch in Me" speaks of our unchanging position in Christ. The command to "abide in Me" is given to those who are already branches. This passage does not give proof that true believers may fall away. Jesus is not teaching that we can lose our salvation by failing to abide. However, He is demonstrating that our responsibility is to abide in Him. It is not an option in the Christian life. It is a responsibility and requirement. It is only part of the picture of the vinedresser and the point cannot be made without it. The emphasis is on bearing fruit, not salvation. Left by itself the vine produces all kinds of unproductive growth. Pruning is essential for production of fruit.

The disciples are already cleansed by faith in His word (verse 3). The word "clean" in verse 3 is the same expression used in John 13:10. Jesus was referring to saving faith when He said, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

Consequences of not abiding (v. 6)

Verse six gives us the consequences of not abiding in the vine. "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." Judas Iscariot was with the Lord Jesus. He spent time with Him, performed miracles, shared in the experiences of Christ, but there was no life in Him. He did not abide in Christ, and Christ did not abide in Him. The disciples were surprised when Jesus told them one of them would betray Him. The last person they thought of was Judas. They all said, "Lord, is it I?" Judas was the exception in terms of this parable. He is an unfruitful branch that has to be removed. The disciples who kept Jesus' word are "clean" through His word. Judas did not abide in Christ, and Christ did not abide in him. He was cut off and he withered and died. He committed suicide within a few days, and he was burned -eternally lost. It is the most horrible tragedy in the Bible. It ought to cause us to search our hearts.

Verse three, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." Verse six, "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." Verse eight, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." Verse 16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you." Verse 19, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are

He may give to you." Verse 19, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

You cannot live the Christian life in the power of the flesh. The flesh always produces rotten grapes. The believer never ceases to be a branch no matter how barren the believer becomes. The works done in the flesh are thrown in the fire and burned up. Do you have some old fleshly branches God is cleaning up in His vineyard?

The Apostle Paul helps to distinguish our position in Christ and the production of fruit in I Corinthians 3:11 – 15.

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

THE PRINCIPLE OF FRUITFULNESS (15:4 8)

Whereas verses 1 3-relates to our position in the Vine, verses 4 8-speaks of our practice as branches in the Vine.

Jesus looks for His own life reproduced in us. He wants to reproduce the life of the Vine in the branches. He tells us the secret in verses four and five, "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." The single most important thing in your life is an intimate, abiding love relationship with Jesus Christ. This is our responsibility in our position in Christ. "You in Me, and I in you." That was the kind of life Jesus had with the Father while He was here on the earth. It is an intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who lives within us. The Apostle Paul used the expression "in" Christ to communicate this same vital connection that exists between Christ and the believer. The basic relationship is already established by the coming of the Holy Spirit into the believer's life.

Two things stand out in these two verses. There is an activity that is to be done, and there is a passivity that is to be acknowledged. We are to abide in Christ. That is active, something we do. We are also to let Him abide in us which is passive. It is something we allow Him to do in us. Both of these relationships are absolutely essential if we are to live the Christian life.

The "fruit" God is looking for in the Christian is the likeness of Jesus. It is the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22 23. This is the proof of discipleship.

Our responsibility as branches (v. 4 5)

Jesus said "Abide in Me." To "abide" means "to remain in union, maintain a living communion, to maintain unbroken fellowship with another. This is our responsibility in Christ. John uses the word "abide" over fifty times in his writings; eleven times in John 15. When I am abiding I am believing, reckoning on and persevering.

The "filling of the Spirit" and the "abiding" are one and the same. "Walk in the Spirit" keeps us abiding in Christ.

Christ.

A vine branch is lifeless and useless unless it remains attached to the vine. It can produce grapes only as it remains attached. The moment it is severed it begins to die and becomes fruitless. Believers in Christ can produce the fruit of the Spirit only as they remain attached to Jesus and draw their life in the Spirit from Him.

The Apostle Paul expressed the same truth in Galatians 2:20. He wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." The believer who is abiding in Christ can say, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

I choose daily to abide in Christ.

"Abide in Me" talks about the will. It speaks to the choices we make every day. I make a decision daily to abide in Christ. I made a commitment a long time ago, but I also make it every day. I begin my day, "Lord abide in me." I make it many times during the day. I decide to expose myself to Him, to His word, to fellowship of other believers in Christ and maintain that relationship of being yielded to Him. I choose to read His Word, to pray, to obey Him. I choose to make myself available to Him daily. We abide in Him by allowing Him to abide in us. We have been placed into Christ by the Holy Spirit. Now we choose to maintain that relationship by the decisions we make. That is the Spirit controlled person.

"I in you." Jesus wants to abide in us. Everything in your Christian life depends on the quality of that relationship with Christ. The quality of your Christian life depends on the quality of your relationship with Him. It all depends on an intimate love relationship with Christ. He says, "Let me abide in you." You can make choices but you cannot fulfill them. You are not responsible for the power to carry them out. God is. You depend upon Him to carry you through. If you try to do the whole thing by yourself in your own strength, you will fail. If you try to make all the choices and carry all the responsibility on your own, you will fail.

Yes, we must make choices, and determine to follow Him. We must choose to place ourselves so He can speak to us through His Word. Then we have to count on Him to supply us and empower us to live His life. "Christ in you is the hope of glory."

God desires an intimacy with you that is more real than any other relationship in life. That is the only place you will ever find the power to be all God wants you to be. He does in us what we can never do for ourselves. It is His power, His vitality, His strength, His spiritual sap that enables us to be Christ like.

Did you notice the passive response on our part is the production of fruit in verse five? "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." The command is not to produce fruit, but to abide. When we are abiding in Christ the fruit comes naturally. He produces it in us. If we abide in Christ we will bear fruit. If we don't we become barren. The Vine is incomplete without the branches. He must have His branches to produce His fruit. When we abide He produces His fruit in us. We do not have to work at it. We don't have to agonize over it. We don't struggle to produce these characteristics of Christ. The Vine brings them about naturally. Good sweet grapes simply stay on the vine and let's the life of the vine produce the fruit. Good spiritual fruit comes naturally from God's vineyard.

When we abide in Christ we are at the center of God's will. It is impossible to abide in Christ and be outside of His will. When we abide in Him, He opens our spiritual eyes to see where He is working. He doesn't want us to bring to Him our great plans, and goals and decisions and ask Him to bless them. He wants us to seek

us to bring to Him our great plans, and goals and decisions and ask Him to bless them. He wants us to seek His face and allow Him to guide us in doing what He chooses for us to do. When our hearts are right with Him, He will reveal to us where He is at work. We can dream up a lot of activities with lots of green leaves and foliage, but no fruit of Spirit. "Apart from Me, you can do nothing!" Will we ever learn that truth? We can do many things; we can produce a lot of programs and religious activities, without depending on Christ. We cannot produce His likeness unless we abide in Him.

PROMISES THAT ENABLE US TO ABIDE IN CHRIST (15:7 8, 26).

We have the promise of prayer.

The condition of the promise is that we abide and that we will produce His fruit. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (vv. 7, 8). The sap, nutrients, energy must come from Him. Again He says in v. 16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you." When you give Christ the desires of your heart then all you do is touched and controlled by His love. We adjust our lives to His will when we come to Him in prayer. These are not "name it and claim it" proof texts. There is nothing selfish here. The petition is, "Lord where are you at work in my life?" Show me where you are at work all about me.

Jesus made the same promise to His disciples in John 14:13-14. He said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." The promise is made to those who remain in Him and His words have a permanent residence in the believer. Eternal life and resurrection power are always available to the person who has faith in Christ.

Prayer is coming and talking to the One whom we love and want to know more intimately. It is sharing with Him the intimacy of our heart. It is a beautiful and marvelous experience of love. In prayer you share with Him where you are spiritually. You share your desires, your goals, ambitions, sins, failures, hopes, struggles, burdens and love for Him. When you do it daily Christ becomes real to you. You are abiding in him in prayer. It is a delightful marvelous experience.

There is a clear demonstration of discipleship in verse eight. God will be glorified in Christ likeness. There will be a deeper experience in Christ's love. "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love." It is easy to obey Him when our heart is moved by His love. When we do not obey Him it is evident we do not love Him. When we obey Him our love grows deeper and deeper. We become something beautiful. The more you love Him the more you want to abide in Him. The more you abide the more you will obey.

We have the promise of the Paracletos.

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me," (v. 26). If you are not walking in the Spirit you are not abiding. We are not saved and then left to live the Christian life all by ourselves. We received the Helper the moment we were saved. The Holy Spirit lives within us. He produces the likeness of Christ as we yield ourselves to Him.

PROOF THAT WE ARE BEARING FRUIT (15:7-11)

God answers your prayers according to His will (v. 7).

God answers your prayers according to His will (v. 7).

You will see God at work in your life. If you are abiding in Christ your prayers will be "in the name" of Christ. They will be in accord with all that Christ stands for and desires.

You will demonstrate Christ likeness (v. 8).

It is not activity that glorifies God, but a Christ-like character. You may be bedridden, or suffering from some debilitating disease, but you can manifest a Christ like spirit. You are demonstrating discipleship. That is all He asks of you. You abide; He will produce His character in you. In this vital union there is much fruit bearing. We will "keep on bearing" much fruit.

You will have a growing experience of Christ's love (vv. 9 -10).

What is your response to God's love? There must always be a response if love is to grow. When love is responded to it grows deeper and richer. If you are not feeling the depths of God's love you are not responding to it. You are not loving Him back. You have to feed any relationship to make it grow. Relationships don't grow automatically. Love has to be responded to. This is also true of our relationship with God. We love Him because He first loved us, says the apostle John. We keep on loving Him in response to His love.

"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" (vv. 9 -10). Our love for Christ is the result of His sacrificial love for us. Are you growing deeper and deeper in God's love?

Abiding in Christ is an intimate walk with Christ. We are enriched with by Christ. In verses 10 and 11 He adds, "my love," "my joy" and "my peace."

You joy will be full (v. 11).

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (v. 11). It is creative joy. It is the joy of a finished work. Jesus calls us into His joy. We can have Christ's permanent absolute joy in our lives. It is the fruit of His life in us.

Where is God at work in your life?

Are you in the middle of a pruning process? Where is God cleansing in your life? Is the Father using the sharp knife of circumstances to sanctify you with His Word? Are you going through changes where you are being forced to rely upon Him? Is He working on some old habits, behaviors or attitudes that have to go? Don't resist the Vinedresser's knife. Yield to Him, and allow Him to do His deep work in your life.

What kind of fruit are you producing? Are you beginning to look and smell more like Jesus? Is there a cluster of rich beautiful spiritual fruit that is looking more and more like Christ? Are your lost friends and family beginning to see God's love demonstrated more than ever before? Do you bear a resemblance to your Savior?

How are you abiding? Did you notice that abiding in Christ is a matter of trust and obey? It is trusting our Lord and obeying His word. There are no special techniques or spiritual formulas. It is an intimate walk with Christ moment by moment. Most of us are preoccupied with performance and all that God asks is for us to be

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Christ moment by moment. Most of us are preoccupied with performance and all that God asks is for us to be preoccupied with the person of Jesus Christ.

In this passage of Scripture it is crucial for us to bear in mind that we have been describing the Christian life. It begins with a spiritual birth. If you are not bearing fruit it may be because you have never been born again. That is where this kind of life begins. We are always ready to help you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Click here to find out more about trusting in Christ as your Savior.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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