

The True Vine, The Vinedresser, The Branch And The Fruit

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (John 15:1-8)

Jesus spoke these words after the last supper and washing the disciples feet and before he entered into the garden of Gethsemane:

The Vine = Jesus

The Vinedresser (cultivator/gardener) = God The Father

The Branch = The Believer

The Fruit = (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)

"I am the true vine. v1(a)

Jesus emphasizes he is the **true** Vine. Not necessarily contrasting from false or the opposite of fake. Other descriptions of Jesus as being true shed light on the foundation of the term True in this context. Some examples are as follows:

1. The **true** light - John 1:9 (in contrast to John who was but a lamp)
2. The **true** bread - John 6:32 (in contrast from manna which the fathers eat and died)
3. Minister of the Sanctuary and the **true** tabernacle - Hebrews 8:2 (contrasting the one Moses built which was the example and a shadow of the heavenly one)

The vine or the vineyard was a reference to Israel in the old testament, a vine that produced thorns and thistles.

Isaiah 5:1-4,7 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. 2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. 4 What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes? 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*.

Jesus is the exact opposite of the earthly vine of Israel. Jesus declares that :He is the True Vine.
(Share some of the traits and characteristics and purposes of the vine)

and My Father is the vinedresser v1(b)

The Father is the cultivator of the vine and the branches, the one who takes the utmost care for them. The Father is the one who prunes, and purges, cleans and protects the vine and its branches. It speaks to the love the Father has for Christ and his people.

Three aspects of his cultivation are:

1. Protecting care - His eye is ever upon and his Hand always tending to the branches
2. Watchfulness - Nothing ever escapes his all Knowing eye. He is likened to the gardener who notices daily the condition each branch, watering, training, pruning and is constantly occupied with the need of the branch that's attached to the vine.
3. Faithfulness - No branch is ever allowed to be joined to the vine unattended. When the branch is fruitless He tends to it, if the branch bears fruit He prunes it that it may bear more.

We must understand what the following versus says regarding the work that is God's work alone to do and not to be done by the efforts of man:

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Romans 9:16 (NLT) So receiving God's promise is not up to us. We can't get it by choosing it or working hard for it. God will show mercy to anyone he chooses.

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away v2(a)

Before we expound on the branch we must first realize the **SOLE** purpose of the branch is and always will be to **BEARE FRUIT** ---- The branch has no other function other than to **BEARE THE FRUIT OF THE VINE** (emphasize we are his workmanship created for good works that God prepared for us to do)

The branch has nothing and is nothing other than what the **VINE** supplies and renders!!! The branch is utterly helpless apart from the **Vine** and completely useless.

Back to the Word - Jesus is referring to believers in this passage because he denotes the branches as **IN HIM**. His audience were the eleven disciples at the time. He is not referencing non believers but talking about the believers who have or had fellowship with Him but became unfruitful or never really produced fruit. A unregenerate sole is never characterized as being **IN CHRIST!!!**

At this point Jesus is putting in plain words what happens to branches that do not bear fruit. Remember that the sole purpose of the branch is to bear fruit.

HE TAKES AWAY - what exactly does this mean he takes away. The Greek word is airo (i ro) which means 1) to raise up, elevate, lift up, 2) to take upon one's self and carry what has been raised up, to bear, 3) to bear away what has been raised, carry off - to remove to carry away.

Most scholars believe that this **taking away** represents the Father nurturing the branch for a season for the purpose of bearing fruit as depicted in:

Luke 13:6-9 He also spoke this parable: "A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8 But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it*. 9 And if it bears fruit, *well*. But if not, after that you can cut it down.

But just as the parable states and we will discover in the coming verses that if the branch still does not bear fruit, then it will be removed from the Vine by the Father.

and every branch that bears fruit He prunes (cleanses) v2(b) - Andrew Murray put it best in his book the True Vine when he wrote "*We must, in working for God use our natural gifts of wisdom, or eloquence, or influence, or zeal. And yet they are ever in danger of being unduly developed, and then trusted in. And so, after each season of work, God has to bring us to the end of ourselves, to the consciousness of the helplessness and the danger of all this is of man, to feel that we are nothing. All that is to be left of us is just enough to receive the power of the life giving sap of the Holy Spirit. What is of man must be reduced to its very lowest measure. All that is inconsistent with entire devotion to Christ's service must be removed.*"

Keep in mind that the pruning or cleansing is done directly to the branch. Even branches have areas in their life that needs to be purged or cleansed. Things such as:

Thought	Attitude	Commitment	Behavior	Self-Reliance
Relationships	Service	Passions	Motives	Willingness

that it may bear more fruit v2(c) - The entire purpose in the pruning or cleansing process is for the believer to bear more fruit. The purpose is not to punish, not to hurt or damage the branch, but to bear fruit. Some 100 fold, some 60 fold, some 30 fold it varies.

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you v3 - We must realize that we have put on the righteousness of Christ and are covered by it. We are ALREADY clean, in Christ Jesus.

John 13:10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

Ephesians 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. ***Abide in Me, and I in you v4(a)*** - We must never forget that when we abide in Christ, he will in turn abide in us. When we open the door he will come in and sup with us. When we draw near to God, He will draw near to us.

Abiding in Christ is to remain, to continue to be present, to be held, kept continually, not to depart.

Throughout the entire process of the branch bearing fruit, the only thing that is required of the branch is to Abide in Christ. The only thing the branch can do in regarding bearing fruit is to abide in Christ. The branch cannot assist in bearing fruit any other way, other than to abide in Christ.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me v4(b) - It is virtually impossible for the branch to bear fruit unless it abides in the vine. (use the natural vine as an example).

Likewise is absolutely an impossibility for the believer to bear fruit unless they are abiding in Christ. Nothing is lost in translation here. This verse means exactly what it says. (you may think you are producing fruit without abiding in Christ, but you are mistaken)

Keep in mind that the branch only bears the fruit, the vine produces the fruit

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit v5(a) - The equation is straightforward and uncomplicated. Very low risk and exceedingly high rewards resulting in bearing much fruit.

The branch that abides in Christ **will not** fail to bear fruit. It's an impossibility. He gives us His word of assurance. It is not a question of your ability, or efforts or your sufficiency

The very act of abiding in Christ Jesus results in producing fruit. Not only fruit but MUCH fruit. The believer's efforts should not be in producing fruit, but to abide. The fruit that is produced by the branch is and only will be the result of abiding in the Vine. There are absolutely no exceptions to this decree

for without Me you can do nothing v5(b) - (the natural vine is still a good example)

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; v6(a) - Not bearing fruit is never an expectable option for the believer. There is a significant and considerable consequence that awaits those who do not bear fruit.

This is one of the most serious, somber and severe warnings you will ever find in scripture, "**HE IS CAST OUT AS A BRANCH AND IS WITHERED**".

Because the severe consequence for not bearing fruit, this verse is much maligned and misunderstood particularly by people who wholeheartedly believe in eternal security (once saved always saved) and by no means am I disputing eternal security. The fact of the matter is that I am totally clueless regarding the issue.

However, the plain, and clear, and obvious meaning to Christ's words is exactly what he said; if any branch or believer continues not to abide in Him, then he is "**CAST OUT AS A BRANCH**"

Christ could not be talking about the unbeliever because He states that such a person will be cast out AS A BRANCH. And no unbeliever is ever considered a branch of the Vine.

The same type of withering that happens to a natural branch, happens to a spiritual branch. The branch that withers has its life dried up. Possible scenarios could include but not limited to the following aspects of life withering away:

Gifts & Abilities	Life & Body	Family & Friends	Fate & Destiny
Hopes & Dreams	Confidence	Assurance	Purpose & Meaning

The culprit for such a deterioration is none other than not abiding in Christ. What can possibly be the cause of "not abiding":

1. Some it may be that they never understood that Christians are called to obedience and service. They were content just believing and was safe from hell. They just didn't know the need to abide.
2. With others it is the cares of the world, the deceitfulness riches, and the desires for other things that choke the Word resulting in them becoming unfruitful (Mark 4:19)
3. Others have their faith based upon the wisdom of man and not in the power of the gospel. They trust in their own efforts and works
4. With some, they have an unbelieving heart and are deceived into thinking that God's doesn't mean what it says (Gen 3:4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.)

and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned v6(b) - What do these words mean? Does it mean that if a believer does not abide in Christ he will be cast in the fire?

Some may say that this is related to:

1st Corinthians 3:13-15 which states that: "each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. 15 if anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

As for me, I would much rather concentrate on and direct all my attention and efforts into abiding in Christ and not on the consequences of not abiding. It is much more profitable to be a branch that bears much fruit by abiding in Christ than to be a branch that is "cast out and withered, and gathered up and thrown into the fire and are burned"

Let our focus be on verse 8 "*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*"

For more insight into this matter look to Hebrews 3:6-19

