

IAM the True Vine (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 October 2010

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] Take your Bibles, will you, this morning and turn to John chapter 15.

! John chapter 15, and we'll begin here in just a moment, starting with verse 1. It's a great text of Scripture. Another one of those great I am statements of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a matter of fact, it is the seventh and final statement.

That is at least the final one of the seven that normally people will group together and identify as the great statements, though there are more than seven, as we have discussed.

There are 12, actually. But this is the final one, and the final one in this series of messages, and it is, I would say, one of my favorites.

And in order for us to really get a hold of what it means, what this I am statement means, what Jesus is declaring about himself, we're certainly going to have to consider the larger text, in fact, a greater part of chapter 15.

[1:30] In order to do that, I'm going to take a couple Sundays on this particular text, okay? Is that all right with you? It doesn't matter, because I'm going to anyway.

Tremendous passage. John chapter 15, verse 1. I am the true vine.

And the Father, or my Father, is the vine dresser. 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.

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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.

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.

[2:49] 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. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and I shall, or it shall, be done for you.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples. I'm going to stop right there, though there is certainly more.

And what Jesus speaks there, more related to the vine. I'm going to stop right there, and have us begin this morning by, in a sense, taking a little walk with Jesus.

Okay? Take a little walk with him. Sounds like a good title of a song, doesn't it? Wasn't expecting that, but thank you, Wes.

Let's do take a little walk with Jesus and his disciples together. I mean, as we consider this event, or this occasion, where Jesus makes this great declaration of himself, and he speaks of the vine, and so let's just walk with him and his disciples.

[4:13] Chronologically, it's Thursday when Jesus makes this statement. And Jesus is, at least initially, he's with his disciples in the upper room.

You can read about that in chapter 14. They're in the upper room, and it is the day before one of the most significant events in all of history.

By the end of the day, the next day, rather, Jesus will be dead. He will have been crucified on the cross.

And so, Jesus is spending some quality time with his disciples on this very important day, leading up to the most important day.

He is spending these final moments with them, and he has washed their feet. He has dismissed Judas, the betrayer.

[5:13] And he has already eaten the Last Supper with the remaining 11 disciples, and he has taught them many, many things. And now, Jesus, with his disciples, leaves the upper room.

We understand that from the phrase, the last phrase of chapter 14. Chapter 14, verse 31, and leaving this place. And so, they have left the upper room, and they begin to make their way, eventually, to the Garden of Gethsemane.

But first, and this is conjecture on my part, but there is some historical backing for this.

Before they get to the Garden of Gethsemane, they stop by the temple, because that would be the requirement on the Passover, according to the law, the Passover.

So, they stop by the temple, and the huge gates of the temple would have been open. They would be open. And those gates remained open the entire week of the Passover, each night of the Passover.

[6:27] And so, I am kind of imagining, and I hope a sanctified imagination, imagining that Jesus stops there, there at the gates of the temple with his disciples, and they look at those beautiful gates.

The beautiful gates leading into the temple, that are open there. The gates leading into the temple, Herod, by the way, had built for the Jews.

Magnificent temple, not to be compared with Solomon's temple, but it was, in its own right, a magnificent structure built by Herod.

Now, what about these gates? Well, historians tell us that these beautiful gates were a kind of tourist attraction of that day. Kind of interesting. They were enormous.

They were made out of bronze, imported from Greece, and on the face, the outside of these great gates, skilled artisans had embossed a golden vine on each of these doors.

[7:41] A golden vine. And according to historians, it was beautiful, amazing to see, to look upon. Incredible.

Now, after the visit to the temple, we're just taking a walk with Jesus here, at least we're kind of speculating what this walk might have been like, where it might have led them.

After they leave the temple, then, in order to get to the Garden of Gethsemane, they had to journey across the Kidron Valley. And perhaps, it was a full moon.

I'll just add that. You don't have to believe that. It doesn't matter. Let's just say, that maybe there was a full moon that night, and Jesus and His disciples then could clearly see the vineyards.

That, and this is not speculation, the vineyards that would have literally blanketed the valley of Kidron and would be going up the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

[8:46] The vineyards. No doubt, I think they probably could see the fires of the vine prunings burning around the valley. Somewhere along the way, I think, because we don't really know when, or rather where, Jesus made this declaration and taught this lesson about the vineyard.

Somewhere along the way, from when they left the upper room to when they arrived, or between the time they left the upper room and arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus took full advantage, I think, of the surroundings there and taught His disciples and taught us because we have it recorded here in the Bible.

He taught them and us the lesson about the vine and the branches. A beautiful lesson. And I really kind of think that Jesus began to teach this lesson when they got to the temple that night.

May have started right there. And just taught them along the way as they walked along together and as they approached, perhaps as they approached the beautiful doors of the temple and looked at the vines embossed there on those beautiful doors, those bronze doors, He might have said at that moment, I am the true vine.

Using those beautiful doors as the backdrop. And as they walked through the vineyard, a vineyard there in the Kidron Valley, I can just imagine that Jesus, because this was very typical of Jesus, I can imagine that He maybe took His hand and placed it on a vine, a grape vine there, maybe even lifted up one of the branches and maybe it had been freshly pruned and He says to His disciples, every branch that bears fruit, He, the vine dresser, prunes that it may bear more fruit.

[10:53] Could it be that Jesus used that as just an illustration as He taught that truth? You see, just teaching them along the way, just teaching them as they're walking there together, maybe He sees a large cluster of grapes and I don't have any idea if grapes were in season at the time.

Perhaps He saw a cluster of grapes and He said to them, I am the vine and you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit.

But without Me, you can do nothing. And as they walk, maybe they feel the heat of one of the many fires lit in the vineyard and possibly there's a workman there.

Just imagine maybe there's a workman there throwing dead, dry branches into the fire and Jesus seizes the opportunity there. And He says, 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. Just imagine this. Then before they begin to walk up the Mount of Olives where they would eventually spend the night in the Garden of Gethsemane, perhaps Jesus turns to His beloved disciples and says, By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit.

[12 : 18] And just teaching them along the way. And you read through chapter 15 and the image of the vine is graphic, isn't it?

The words there, as we read them, just creates a picture in our minds and it's just wonderful, isn't it? But what is the truth taught here? That's what we need to get at, isn't it? What is Jesus saying here? What does that mean to us? Well, I could sum it up this way.

The vine and its branches, its true branches, represent a beautiful analogy of the vital union between Christ and the true believer.

We could just sum it up that way. He's using the analogy of the vine and the branches. And so just as the branch depends completely upon the vine for life and nourishment and growth and fruit, in the same way, in a greater way, the true believer in Christ is utterly dependent upon Jesus for spiritual life and nourishment and growth and fruit and fruit.

[13 : 45] Now, in the larger text that I read a moment ago, the key word there is the word abide. You may not have sensed it, but you heard it repeated over and over.

In fact, the word abide appears ten times in ten verses. The key word is abide. And so if you're reading through the text and you want to find out what it means, then the first thing you need to notice is the repetition of that word abide.

It is crucial in our understanding, not only of this great I am statement that Jesus makes about himself, but the understanding of what that is and what that means as applied to our lives as believers.

The word abide is crucial. It's the key word. And I guess we need to extend that to the key principle that is taught here. And that is abide in Christ.

That's the key principle. Abide in Christ. That, by the way, is stated five times in this discourse. Now let's explore God's vineyard then.

[14 : 53] That's what we want to do. Explore his vineyard. And so, first of all, getting right into it, having kind of walked with Jesus and pictured their walk and what he taught and leading them along.

And as we have pictured that in our minds, now let's just identify, first of all, identify the persons of the vineyard. That's where we need to begin, I think. Identify the persons or the personalities of the vineyard.

And we can identify three distinct persons here in this analogy of the vineyard, can't we? Let me just point them out to you. First of all, the first one is represented by the vine plant itself.

The second person identified here is represented by the vine dresser. And then the third is represented by the vine branches.

So there are three distinct personages that we can see identified in this analogy of the vine and the branches. All right? Let's take this in a little different order.

[16 : 04] And let me begin with the vine dresser. Not because the vine dresser is insignificant, but we don't need to spend a lot of time on this because Jesus identified the vine dresser in no uncertain terms.

He identified the vine dresser as the Father. He said, My Father is the vine dresser. That is, God the Father is the vine dresser. And what is a vine dresser?

Well, He's the farmer. All right? He's simply the farmer. He's the one who tills the ground, plants the vine, fertilizes the vine, waters the vine, and specifically, and this is what we see in Jesus' words here, He cares for the vine by doing two things.

He purges the fruitless branches, and He prunes the fruitful branches. That's the job of the vine dresser, identified by Jesus here in this analogy.

And we're going to see more about that, the work of the vine dresser, in a moment. But again, God the Father is the vine dresser, and the idea is a simple one here.

[17 : 12] Very simple. And that is that God the Father is responsible to care for His vineyard, and He will care for His vineyard. All right? That's just very simple.

We don't need to spend a lot of time on that. And so let's move from there to the second person that's identified in the analogy. And He is identified by the vine plant itself. The vine plant itself. And this is very simple too. But we need to pay close attention because there's more here than possibly meets the eye. Jesus said, I am the true vine. All right? So the vine plant is who? It's Jesus. All right? That's simple. He said, I am the true vine. And in nearly every translation, that's how it's rendered. But if we were to read it according to the word order in the Greek text, it would read like this. It would be very strange. It would be kind of awkward. It would read like this. I am the vine, the true. [18:14] That's what Jesus said. Literally speaking. Just taking it right out of the Greek text. I am the vine, the true. Or we could render it this way.

It would be permissible. I am the vine, the true one. The true one. Now what's the idea here? Because we need to get at that. At that idea. And so the word true in the Greek is *alethinos*. And it's a very simple word. But *alethinos* does not mean true as opposed to false. Some of you might have come to that conclusion. That when Jesus said he was the true vine, he was saying, he was identifying himself as the true one as opposed to all the false vines. And there are false vines, aren't there? That is, there are false or counterfeit Christ. There have been over history and there will be as we continue in history, ultimately to the one supreme counterfeit Christ who will come one day, the Antichrist. [19:19] And that's true enough, isn't it? That Jesus is the true Christ as opposed to all the false Christ. And we could go to the Bible and find that taught in a number of places.

But that's not what he means here. It's not true as opposed to false or fake or counterfeit. It is true or real, rather. Real, the real vine as opposed to a copy. Help us better understand. A copy to us sounds like a fake. But a copy in the sense of a type or a symbol or a representation of. That's the idea behind the word of Lathana. That's what Jesus is saying. And we see this numerous places in Scripture, by the way. At least one of these we've looked at just recently. But, for example, in John chapter 1, verse 9, the Bible there says, speaking of Jesus, it says, And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. That was the true light. [20:28] That is, Jesus is the true light that gives light to every man coming into the world. It's a lathe in us. The true light, as opposed to other lights, like the light we have right here that is simply a representation of it.

A type of the true light. And other lights that we can mention that would be more symbolic. Alright? Very clear, isn't it? John chapter 6, verse 32. Jesus, and we have looked at this text, Jesus referred to himself as the true bread. The true bread from heaven. That's key that we get all that together. The true bread from heaven. He says, The true bread from heaven is he who comes down from heaven. Now, he's speaking of himself. And he's saying, I'm the true bread as opposed to the manna God provided Israel there in the wilderness. I'm the true bread. It was the type. It was the copy. It was the representation of the truth. He might even be comparing it with the bread that he provided for the 5,000 who were seated there and had no food to eat. [21:40] And Jesus took those few loaves and broke it and blessed it and suddenly it was able to feed 5,000. See, he's saying, I'm the true bread as opposed to the manna as opposed to the bread that I've just fed you with.

Another example would be Hebrews 8, 2. One of my favorite examples and I wish we had time to really consider it. But here the Bible says in Hebrews 8, 2, We have such a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle. The true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man. The true tabernacle as opposed to the physical one. He's the true as opposed to the copy. We know the wilderness tabernacle was a perfect copy in a sense that it was pointing a shadow of the true Christ. All right, so you see the comparison is between the real and the copy or the symbolic or more accurately a comparison between the heavenly and the earthly.

[23:09] The heavenly and the earthly. Just like in John 6, 32 he said the true bread from where? Heaven. And there in Hebrews 8, 2 the true tabernacle which is where?

In heaven. So it's a comparison between the heavenly and the earthly. Now this is leading somewhere. It's leading to a question. Let me ask you which is more real?

Things in heaven or things pertaining to heaven or things on earth? Now a lot of people would say things on earth. I mean, most people would evaluate what is real based upon what they can see with their eyes or what they can touch with their hands or what they can taste with their tongue or smell with their nose or hear with their ears.

That for many of us until we really think about it that's what identifies real. Things here on earth. Things we can touch.

You know, this is real here. I'm not careful it'll roll off the podium here or off the stage. But is that what identifies what is real?

[24:25] Let me put it this way. Things on earth, all things on earth are temporal. They're temporary.

temporary. We may get to thinking that the things here are just going to keep on going and the things we have we're going to always have and the beautiful home we live in is always going to be there and we get to thinking that the things here on earth are permanent but they're temporal.

The Bible says that heaven and earth are passing away. Matthew 24, 35 by the way. heaven and earth not heaven where the abode of God is but the heavens in the sense of the stars the moon the planets the solar systems all of the heavens all of creation is just passing away.

But things in heaven are eternal. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5 1 eternal in the heavens and so I'll ask the question again which is more real?

Which is more real? So then having said that if Jesus is the real vine the true vine then what is the copy?

[25:52] or what is the type? See we're identifying the vine plant itself it's the true vine what's the copy?

well I mentioned those doors those bronze doors that undoubtedly if not this particular occasion they certainly did on other occasions look upon and all the disciples would be very familiar with those bronze doors that were leading into the temple with the golden vines embossed on them and I can again imagine Jesus pointing to those vines and saying do you see those vines?

I'm the true one the true one and all of the disciples would also understand that those vines embossed on the doors were symbols of the nation Israel because the bible tells us and teaches us that the nation Israel is God's vine Psalm 80 verse 8 you have brought brought a vine out of Egypt you have cast out the nations and planted it speaking of the nation Israel and more specifically more deliberately Isaiah 5 7 says for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel house of Israel is his vineyard and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant and so the disciples would have been well aware of the symbol of the nation Israel that symbol being the vine God's vine but it was the type the copy and so in Jesus pointing to those golden vines and in the minds of the disciples it would have been immediately attached to who they are as as part of the nation Israel Jesus was in a sense saying the vine of God Israel I'm the true one I'm the true one vine then I think as he walked through the vine and just lifted up the vine branch as I already said see this looks real doesn't it I'm the true one the true one besides being a little interesting what does that mean to us Jesus is saying I am the true vine that is I'm the whole thing I'm the whole plant root stem branch the whole thing meaning in

Christ as the vine there is perfect unity perfect oneness a oneness that cannot be broken a oneness a unity that is vital and that goes for every part of the vine every part of it now that's going to be important to consider because it's good news for the third person identified in the vineyard there is the vine dresser that's God the father and there is the vine plant that's God the son and then third the vine branches the vine branches who are the branches here's where it gets a little complicated and controversial too because verse two according to verse two there appear to be two types of branches two types of branches some would say there's just one type but there's really two look at verse two again every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away that's that's branch number one and every branch that bears fruit he prunes that it may bear more fruit that's the second branch mentioned two different kinds of branches right one that bears fruit one that does not there's the fruitless branch and the fruitful branch now one has a right to be there the fruitful branch has a right to be there in the vine the others do not the others do not and the bible says and

he the vine dresser takes it away that is those that do not belong there the branches that do not bear fruit and so who are the branches who do the branches represent then

[31:19] I would say two kinds of disciples quote disciples did you look at verse six 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 if you abide in me excuse me back up to verse five would you just waxing an elephant and in the wrong place verse five 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 let's just take that right there the branches represent all professing disciples of

Christ those who profess to be disciples of Christ consisting of two types those who really are and those that are not not those that used to be and are not now but those who have never been true disciples to true branches that's the idea from the text the branches represent all professing disciples of Christ consisting of true disciples that is identified by the fact that they abide in Christ that's the reality of the relationship with the vine and the proof is that they bear fruit and false disciples identified by those who do not abide in Christ that's the reality they do not abide in Christ they're false disciples and the proof is that they do not bear fruit that's the idea here not true disciples that have lost their salvation the idea is not true disciples that have lost their salvation you may be wondering how do you know that well

I'm going to tell you this you're going to come back tonight to find that out because it's quite involved and I want to spend time on that but not this morning so I'm going to put Romans aside tonight and we're going to talk about eternal security tonight we're going to begin with this text here and the controversy about what Jesus supposedly is teaching or the controversy about what he is teaching what others think he's teaching and then I'm going to share with you from scripture why I believe in eternal security we'll do that tonight okay don't miss that tonight that's an advertisement for tonight okay but the picture here though there appear to be two kind to one branch that is those that bear fruit and those that don't it's really two types of branches those that are true branches of the vine and those that are not and they represent disciples those who are true disciples and those that are false disciples those that have associated themselves with the vine but they're not truly of the vine that's the idea here now let me say just a brief word about the fruit and then we'll move on and I'll deal with this in more detail next Sunday when we verify the produce of the vine the fruit that the heavenly vine dresser expects to find is contrary to the way it is preached sometimes it is not souls won for

Christ as important as that is I'm not minimizing the importance of winning souls to Christ that's wrapped up in the whole command to proclaim the gospel to win people to Christ I'm not minimizing that but here the fruit is not that it would be great for me to use that as a text to get us all involved more involved in soul winning and we ought to be involved in soul winning it would be good to use that text to say that the fruit here is souls won to Christ but that's not the idea here the fruit here is spiritual it's moral fruit and I want to show that to you by having you go to Old Testament text in Isaiah chapter 5 and verse well verse 1 Isaiah chapter 5 and verse 1 the Bible here speaks of God's vineyard God's vine and in this case it is the type type of which Jesus is the true the type is the nation Israel but I want to point out something here in chapter 5 of Isaiah 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 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 wine press in it so he expected it to bring forth good grapes that's what he expected the farmer expected good grapes but it brought forth wild grapes now look over to verse 7 for the vineyard of the Lord and I quoted this a moment ago the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah are his pleasant plant he looked for fruit now it doesn't say fruit there but here he tells us what the fruit is that he was looking for what did he look for he looked for justice but behold oppression he looked for and expected to find righteousness but behold a cry for help now what are we to make of this he looked for fruit and expected to find it he looked for righteousness he looked for moral character he looked for the life of

[38:00] God to be expressed in the activities of their lives he looked for righteousness but instead he found oppression he found cruelty he found exploitation he found indifference to those in need and a host of other things the idea is not to point out the specific things that he would look for in the nation Israel the idea is to see what they represent and that is that God expects his vine branches to produce righteousness he expects to find that fruit now we can bring that over into the New Testament and understand that what he is looking for what he expects to find is moral character

and in the Spirit he expects to find the fruit of the Spirit or the fruit produced by the Spirit and so listen for the true branches the branches that abide in the vine or that is for the true disciples of Christ that is the believers the followers that abide in Jesus the life which is in the vine that is in Christ will not probably not possibly but will produce the fruit described by Paul in Galatians 5 22 and 23 it will produce it love joy peace long suffering gentleness goodness faith meekness self control the fruit of the Spirit or put it even more plainly because I think this is the idea that Paul had in mind in Galatians chapter 5 he's looking for the fruit of Christ likeness he's looking for the life of Christ because that's what's described in Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 this is a picture of Jesus this is a picture of the life and character of the

Lord Jesus Christ that God expects! to find in his true branches that is the life and character of Christ operating in the life of the believer alright now we need to move on once we identify the persons of the venue now we must clarify the processes of venue and this is the part we don't like next week we'll do two other things we'll verify the produce of the vineyard and that is looking at the fruit itself that God expects to find and then we will end with satisfy the principle of the vineyard and consider what it means to abide in Christ that's where all this is leading this idea of abiding in Christ but what about the processes the vine dresser uses in his vineyard what about that and it is at this point that the reader can become disturbed and maybe even confused the vine dresser you see cares for his vineyard that's his job he cares for the vineyard he desires that every branch bear more fruit that's his desire that it bear more fruit and so what does he do well every branch that does not bear fruit the vine dresser purges and every branch that does bear fruit the vine dresser prunes that's the activity of the vine dresser and so number one he purges the fruitless branches doesn't he purges them verse two every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away purges it from the vine from the vine takes it away takes it away and then if you look over there verse six 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 now folks there is no way to avoid this the idea here is hell eternal punishment eternal fires of

God's judgment that's what happens to all false branches I'm sorry that's disturbing but that's what happens it is just not something we want to hear because you see some of the quote disciples I say quote disciples that have associated themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ the true vine and are growing side by side with the true disciples true followers of Christ they look like the other disciples they profess to be a part of the vine part of Christ but they possess no actual no vital spiritual connection with Jesus no union with him they are not abiding in Christ and therefore cannot produce spiritual fruit and we have right here in the Bible right in close proximity to this passage we have a perfect example and it would be

Judas perfect example Judas you see listen Judas was so much a part of the vine in a sense in the sense that he associated himself with the vine the true vine he was so much a part of it that when Jesus announced that one of his disciples would betray him all the other disciples could not figure out who it was in fact you know that they first started to look at themselves is it me is it me not one of them thought it was Judas he was a branch of the vine that was so associated so in many ways integrated into the vine that everybody thought he was a true branch but he was not he was not Judas was not a true disciple Judas was not saved Judas is not example not an example of a saved man who lost his salvation because of sin

[44:53] Judas never was saved to begin with Jesus said early on in his ministry in John chapter 6 verse 70 he said did I myself not choose you the twelve and yet one of you is a devil later he said in John 17 12 none of them is lost that is your disciples you give me none of them is lost but the son of perdition the one doomed to destruction see Judas was not saved and in nearly every observable way Judas looked like the true branch in the vine he looked like that and for three years approximately he was privileged to associate himself with the true vine but as with all false branches Judas was eventually cast out and burned in the fire that's what happened to him and listen this will be the ultimate fate of all non abiding non fruit bearing professors of

Christ and the Bible tells us so Matthew 13 49 so it will be at the end of the age the angels will come forth separate the wicked from among the just and cast them into the furnace of fire there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth this is disturbing frightening you know in a sense one of the most dangerous places for an unregenerate sinner is to be on the roll of the local church one of the safest places most dangerous places I mean they are in a sense in God's vineyard associated themselves with the vain but they are not one of the true branches dangerous place and the church today

especially in

America is loaded with false branches false branches who think their affiliation with the church is a guarantee of eternal life a guarantee of their salvation a just mere affiliation and with that with many of them the fact that they're active in some way or some capacity Judas was pretty active wasn't he he was the treasurer for the group they must have trusted him so there are people who think that think that their association with the local church is going to get them to heaven and it didn't work for Judas and Jesus was his pastor and it won't work for any false branches today he purges the fruitless branches but he prunes the fruitful branches again verse two and every branch that bears fruit he prunes for what reason that it may bear more fruit more fruit in verse five I am the vine you are the branches he who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit but without me you can do nothing you can do nothing as I said the fruit here is the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ and it's identified by or defined by the fruit of the spirit primarily the fruit of the spirit leads to many other types of fruit and

Jesus speaks of fruit and more fruit and much fruit doesn't he and so the vine dresser prunes the branches that bear fruit so that they will bear more fruit produce more fruit and so the implication is if the fruit is to be like Christ to have the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ living in you and living out in your life if that's what the fruit is then there must be the potential for progressively more fruit or more Christ likeness right there must be the potential to be more like Christ that is we might think of it in these terms to bear the fruit of the spirit in greater and more profound ways in this life and so the vine dresser his business is to prune the true disciples to prune the vine branches that's what the vine dresser is doing and doing in my life and your life and and he's pruning us now the [50:41] Greek word here really should be translated cleanser the word means cleanse how do we understand that well a vine you see produces shoots that are called suckers what they're called and these suckers they start to grow where the branch attaches to the stem of the vine and if the farmer allows the suckers to grow then they will siphon off the nutrients to the entire plant and thereby causing the vine to produce less fruit that's that's just you know the truth of viticulture but also since these suckers are kind of leafy little things and sprout out there they're at where the vine joins to the stem and they're kind of leafy then they tend to collect dirt and other debris and leaves and trash and so the pruning process literally cleanses the vine now what's the cross the application of course is to

God's activity in the life of his true believers he's cutting things out cutting pruning cleaning and sometimes it doesn't feel very good I think the definitive passage on this process is Hebrews 12:7 in fact verse 5 listen to it as I close and you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons he's speaking to true branches here my son do not despise the chastening of the Lord we might say the pruning of the vine dresser nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by him for whom the Lord loves he what he chastens he chastens he disciplines and scourges every son whom he receives if you endure chastening

God deals with you as with sons that is if that's your experience the pruning of the vine dresser in your life the discipline of God in your life if that's your experience then be encouraged God deals with you as with sons as a true branch for what son is there whom the father does not chasten but if you are without chastening of which all have become partakers then you are illegitimate not sons not a true branch furthermore we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the father of spirits and live for they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them but he for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness that we may bear more fruit now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present but painful nevertheless afterward yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it!

that's what God does to his true branches sometimes we don't like it sometimes it hurts God is purging pruning rather anything in our lives that siphons off the life of Christ that we may produce more and more and more fruit for his glory whatever it is not just sinful things you get the idea that this chastening is simply isolated to how God deals with sin in our lives he does do that that is discipline he's correcting teaching training he's moving us forward to be more like Christ he is cutting away things that may be distractions cutting away things that have allured us our allegiances allured our affections it may not be sinful things may be very good things but they're keeping us from the best things God is doing that kind of work in his true branches and he's pruning us so that we will bear more bear much fruit for his glory that's the process is been Thank you.