



Pruning the Branches

By Homer L. Crothers, Ph.D.,

John 15:1-7 speaks of a believer's relationship with Jesus. This relationship is explained by metaphors. Those metaphors are the vine and the branch. Jesus is shown to be the vine and believers are the branch. In this setting, the vine is a grapevine, and the branches are the sprouts that come from the main vine.

Abba Father is identified as the vinedresser. One of His duties is to prune the vine by cutting away the branches that do not bear fruit. This occurs in tending real grapevines. Branches that have become dry or diseased are removed by cutting them off. In the natural realm, removal of such branches prevents the spread of disease, which results in nonproductivity and death of the vine.

The message is different in the spiritual realm. Jesus gave up His life on the cross for every person; past, present, and future. Every person who accepts Jesus as their Savior and Lord becomes a branch that bears fruit. Because Jesus died for the sin of all people and arose alive from death to sit at His Father's right hand, that sacrifice makes every person a branch of the vine. Did you get that? Jesus' death and resurrection results in every person being a branch of the vine. This is supported by 2 Corinthians 5:14-16, which tells us that *"if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all"* and *"we regard no one according to the flesh."* However, each person who does not accept Jesus is a branch that does not bear fruit. Such a person is identified in 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."* Those who believe in Jesus cannot lose their salvation. Anyone who does not believe that Jesus is the Son of the Living God is a branch that is thrown into the fire by their decision. The fire that those branches are thrown into is Hell.

People who receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord are to bear more fruit. If they have trouble bearing fruit, the reason may be that they are living in unbelief for something, or in fear that paralyzes them, or have inflicted themselves with self-condemnation. They have become like a real grapevine branch that has grown down to the dirt. In that position, the branch becomes covered with dirt and unable to recover itself. The vinedresser comes along and sees the condition of the branch. Instead of cutting the branch from the vine, he picks it up and washes

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away the dirt. Then gently and carefully returns the branch to its position securing it so it may bear more fruit.

In the spiritual realm, when God finds one of His children suffering, He comes to that child lifting him or her and washing them with His love using the water of the word. As the child is strengthened and reestablished again on the firm foundation of Jesus, God gently secures him or her so they may bear more fruit. This process is confirmed by verse three where the child of God is assured that he or she is already clean, *“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”* A child of God recovering from waywardness or ignorance of the truth learns in verse four that to be secured as a branch means to abide, dwell, and be attached to the vine, which is Jesus.

When not attached to the vine, a branch is in a position that can result in death because the Believer, by not abiding through the reading of the word or through prayer, has moved out from under God’s protection. Such a position makes the Believer vulnerable to the enemy’s attacks. In the natural realm, a branch removed from the vine will dry and die because it does not have life flowing into it from the vine. This same situation exists in the spiritual realm. Apart from Jesus, is to be away from life and in a position of death.

Verse five clearly confirms this for it states, *“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.”*

Did you notice on this walk-through John 15:1-7 how bearing fruit grows? When one receives Jesus, they become a branch that bears fruit. As a person grows in their relationship with Jesus, they bear more fruit. Then, at the point where a Believer recognizes that apart from Jesus, they can do nothing, he or she bears much fruit.

In summary, I point you to verse seven. Therein we learn that when we abide in Jesus and His words abide in us, we can ask what we desire, and it shall be done for us. What we desire changes as our relationship with Jesus grows closer.

I have more to share about this in my article titled, [What is the Fruit?](#) which you will find on the Resources page of Love Life Ministry website at www.lovelifeministry.com.

I speak blessings over you that touches you with the healing power of God’s love!

Shalom!!

Homer Crothers

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