

¹"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every 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.

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.

¹⁶You 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 the Father in My name He may give you."

John 15:1-2; 5; 16 NKJV

These are the last hours before Jesus is going to be arrested and taken away from His disciples. He is reminding them of the most important things. Sandwiched in between His instructions to them about serving and loving one another is this picture of His body, the church, as the vine and its branches.

When you look at a vine, you can hardly distinguish the vine from its branches so much so that we just call it all a vine. It's a living, growing, fruit-bearing plant that can grow over anything. The branches are intertwined and attached to one another and supported by tendrils that curl around and grip onto each other and whatever else they can.

This is an incredible picture of the Christian church, the community of Jesus' followers. We ought to be closely connected and attached to one another in loving relationships, covering one another while each one remains connected with and drawing life from Jesus, the vine, our source of life. And we ought to be growing and bearing fruit!

This vine is lovingly cared for and tended by the vinedresser, our heavenly Father. Those branches that are dead and not bearing fruit, he removes, and the branches that are bearing fruit are pruned, so that they can bear more fruit, and fruit that remains. We all ought to be bearing fruit that remains; making disciples, who in turn will make disciples. It is the way Jesus is building His church.

- 1) Are you a fruit-bearing branch? Embrace the pruning process.
- 2) Are you vitally connected to Jesus, surrendered to His will and way and receiving nutrition and life through your relationship with Him? If not, find someone who can walk with you and help you.
- 3) Who are you discipling (walking with and teaching to follow Jesus)? How will you get started if you aren't?

Based on today's reading, what is one thing God is saying to you?