

The Vine and its Branches

We spent a day spending quality time with our Lord, seeking a deeper understanding of His Word. The following was the key Bible verse:

⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5.

Jesus in His teaching often spoke in parables, stories based on the life and culture of the time and often with an agricultural concept. This had meaning for the people of that time who were largely from a rural background. Now some 2000 years later we can meditate on the deeper meaning of these parables in the context of our daily lives.

Our meditations for the Retreat were based on John 15:1-17 which gave me a deeper understanding of this parable. I was particularly encouraged by:

¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15:14.

Jesus laid down His life for us, His friends. Friends? What does this mean? To receive His grace we need to love each other as He has loved us. This only becomes a reality when we receive the Holy Spirit as a Believer and develop that one on one personal relationship with Him, are guided by Him and obedient to Him. We are then indeed friends! This friendship will endure and grow as we see ourselves as the branches in His vine.

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. John 15:1-2.

We can only begin to understand this when we see our friendship developing and enduring. Our prayers are answered as we follow His guidance, and feel the love of His support in us. As we begin to work with Him we can see our branch in the vine growing and being strengthened by the guidance and pruning He gives us enabling us to reach the goals that He has set for us, indeed, to produce more and richer and more excellent fruit.

As we mature we come to understand that we should truly listen to Him and be guided only by Him, and not take on too much variety of work as we might well ourselves desire to do. Only then will our branch grow strong and enduring and produce only the quality fruit He desires, and nothing inferior. This is certainly an issue for each one of us to personally meditate on, as we look at the activities we are involved in within the Church and its Outreach activities!

(taken from a church newsletter article written by one of the retreatants, with agreement)