

Life on the Vine—Fruit

ISAIAH 5:1-7

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. ² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶ I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry! (ESV)

The Old Testament often pictured Israel as the vine or the vineyard of God. The vine became such a common symbol of the nation of Israel that it was the emblem on some of their coins. In the Jewish Temple the front of the Holy Place was adorned with a great golden vine. Prosperous Jews counted it a great honor to give gold to mold a new branch or bunch of grapes on to that vine. Jesus uses this same picture in the parable of the True Vine in John 15.

This relationship is the most powerful thing I have ever learned about how to live the Christian life. It's not about keeping a set of rules in your own strength and by your own

wisdom. It is about learning to surrender to the Holy Spirit so that Christ comes to actually live his life in and through you.

The biblical parable of the Vine is a powerful picture of what God means our life with him to be.

1. You were made to bear good fruit for God.

- A. Isaiah calls the people of Israel “the vineyard of the Lord” and “his pleasant planting.”
- B. Jesus repeats and enlarges that theme in the New Testament—John 15—when he teaches us that he is the True Vine and we are his branches.
- C. Because God’s people are God’s vine, he looks for them to bear fruit for him. Isaiah says that God was angry with Israel because he looked for them to bear good fruit, but found only wild grapes.
- D. Fruit is a biblical metaphor for what we do—our thoughts, words, and actions. Good fruit flows from a life that is connected the Christ through the Holy Spirit. Bad fruit is the natural product of our flesh—our fallen human nature.

Galatians 5:19–23

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control.

- E. Jesus said that believers have one job: to produce fruit, more fruit, and much fruit.

John 15:2, 8

² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that **does bear fruit** he prunes, that it may bear **more fruit**. . . . ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear **much fruit** and so prove to be my disciples.

2. **The fruit you produce—who you are and what you do—comes from what your heart is attached to.**

Luke 6:43-45

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- A. There is a vital connection between a tree or a vine and the kind of fruit it produces. Good fruit comes from a good tree or a good vine. Thorns come from a thorn bush.
- B. Jesus said the same is true of people. Who you are in your deep inward thoughts—what the Bible calls your heart—decides everything you do. Who you are and what you do flows from what holds your heart.

Application.

How do we do this? How do we get this right? How do we bear good fruit for God? It comes from a daily, personal, living union with Christ the Heavenly Vine.

1. ***Accept by faith*** that Christ means for his life and power to actually flow into and through you. *God gives what he asks, and works what he commands.* God has set his heart on producing fruit, more fruit, and much fruit in us. Christ waits to work it in us. All he asks is that we set our heart's desire on it, entrust ourselves to his working and care, and joyfully look to him to do his perfect work in us.
2. ***Keep yourself daily in the Word of God so that he can "prune" you to bear more fruit.***

John 15:1-3

¹ "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 does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

Each time you read or hear the Word of God, first wait on him to use it to prune you as his branch. Set your heart upon his desire for more fruit. Yield yourself to the cleansing work of his Word and Spirit.

3. ***Abide in Christ.*** Your prayer life isn't just about asking for stuff. You have been grafted into Jesus Christ the Heavenly Vine. Your prayer life is about trusting, obeying, and growing your attachment to him. Claim his promise:

John 15:7

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

**Lesson by Dr. Barry McCarty for
The Presidents' Class
First Baptist Church Dallas—March 22, 2020**