

# The Vine and the Branches

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, Pastor asked me before he left if I would bring something forward this evening, and I had something on my heart, and so I'm going to try to communicate that to you this evening.

And I was kidding. I don't have a million facts, probably a little bit less than that, but I don't know.

That stuff just has always thrilled me. Why, where, how, and what it comes about.

And so that being the case, I want to preach a little bit tonight on choose whom. Whoop, that's not the right message. That's not what I want to do.

The vine and the branches. That's better. All right. It's not you, Justin. All right. Turn, if you will, to John 15. And we're going to start in verse 1, John 15, 1.

Jesus, the true vine, is what it says in my Bible right above that little paragraph as it's starting there.

I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he will take it away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

[ 1 : 30 ] Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. And men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my whole words abide in you, you shall ask what ye will.

And it shall be done unto you. Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples. As the father hath loved me, so have I loved you.

Continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my father's commandments, and abide in his love.

[ 2 : 37 ] These things have I spoken of you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth.

But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you. And 16, ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he give it to you.

The vine and the branches. You know, Rich mentioned, I think it was just Sunday, he mentioned object lessons from God's creation, and how they can show us great truths about the thoughts and the mind of God.

I think he turned to Romans 1.20, which says, for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

[ 4 : 08 ] Now I've got some things from the world, right down the street from me, and I want to go through a few things with him, but I've always tried to look around me and see God in nature.

It's one of the things that just blesses my soul. Rich and I will text each other with flowers, with trees, with different things, and just, man, it's just awesome.

I was looking at the olive trees that line Apperson Street near my house in Sunland, which started me thinking about this verse above. You know, and Sunland began as Monte Vista in 1885.

There's a fact for you. But I'll bet you didn't know that in 1885, there was a land was purchased from that area, and it, 40 acres, and it created the largest olive orchard in Los Angeles County.

And basically, you'll see an olive tree here and there and houses around, but if you go up Apperson from Oro Vista up almost to the school, you'll see olive trees that line that.

[ 5 : 21 ] And those are all original olive trees from that original grove that was planted in 1885. That's 136 years ago.

And I think, you know, live oak trees grow slow. Olive trees don't set any records either, I might just tell you. The oldest olive tree in the world, they claim, is in Crete.

And that tree's 2,000 years old. They think it's right at the time of Christ. And a lot of things happen to olive trees. They're kind of brittle, and they can break and bend and get snapped in winds and stuff.

And I don't know if you know what the oldest tree in the world is, right here in California, bristlecone pine, right? And there's a tree called Methuselah that they age, how they do this, at 5,000 years old. So trees can grow to be old. And if you look at an old tree like an old man, they're withered, they're twisted, they're beat up, and they still have some growth coming out of them.

[ 6 : 40 ] Because if they don't have growth or green leaves, what are they? They're dead, right? And so the verse here talks about Jesus is the true vine.

God's chosen people are His natural branches in verse 5. We have the right to be grafted in, becoming part of God's family tree. Now, grafted is not a Bible word.

If you looked up grafted, it wouldn't be in there. But the Bible word is engrafted, engrafted. And that's in James 1.21.

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity and naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word. Engrafted, it talks about the word of God, which is able to save your souls.

And then I'm talking about grafted. Engrafted, what is that? Graft is to join or fasten as if by grafting. I hate it when they use a word to define the word you're looking up, right?

[ 7 : 42 ] But basically what that is, and to become grafted and being functionally normal. So when you're grafted into something, you can be functionally normal.

Like in surgery, they graft bones, they graft skin. You hear skin grafts all the time. And basically they take that skin from somewhere else and they put it in a spot and it grows together.

And that's what grafting is basically. So let's get started and we'll open in prayer. Heavenly Father, I thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to be here this evening.

And God, if nothing else, I got a lot out of this. I hope you'll impart that in my enthusiasm to those folks here this evening. Bless your word. Pray I don't say anything out of line or untruthful about the word of God or about Jesus Christ.

Bless this time now in Christ's name. Amen. All right. So grafted, vines, branches. Well, what is that actually? Well, let's go to Botany 101.

[ 8 : 52 ] Okay, Botany 101. Number one, rooted in. In order for a plant to grow, it must have roots. In order for us to grow spiritually, we must be well-rooted in the word.

Amen. Vine shoots, stems, and a branch. As with any plant, once the roots begin to grow, a shoot must come up out of the dirt and it must emerge forth.

Spiritually, we must emerge from the miry clay, as in Psalm 40. Amen. Branch out. The shoot then puts out branches.

These branches give it structure. It allows it not only to have upward growth, not only up, but expansive growth as well, right?

It goes up and out. And that enables it to gather strength and developing the branches to make them stronger and be able to bear things.

[ 9 : 56 ] Then we have buds and blooms. Must put out new growth, constantly growing, blossoming and blooming, bringing forth colors.

And I like the colors. I like the trees when they bloom. You know, we look at the cherry trees and we look at the different fruit trees when they're bloomed.

It's absolutely gorgeous. Spiritually, we are to bud, blossom, and bloom, showing our colors.

Blooms are for pollination, for reproducing.

Blooms are beautiful. Others must see Christ's love and beauty in us. When others see Christ's love in us, it spreads. It pollinates others with the love of Christ.

So if you're not budding and blooming, then others, how are they going to see what you have?

Amen? That's part of that. Leaves. We are to leaf out in order to get nourishment.

[10:57] Leaves are what gathers sunlight, which becomes food for the plant. We must feed on the sun's light. Amen? For us to grow.

Then we have fruit. Fruit. Our rooting, branching, leafing out, budding, blooming, pollinating leads to fruit. The fruit is the nourishment to others.

Hear what I just said? The fruit is the nourishment for others. The apple tree doesn't sit around and eat its own fruit.

It isn't raised on an apple, right? It's fed by the water and God's sunlight. We're not to glory in our fruit.

Our fruit is for others. Fruit is known as produce, as in the produce aisle in the grocery. It is what was produced by the plant, a usable product.

[11:55] Spiritually, it represents our ability to perform or to reach our goal. Your goal as a Christian is to be rooted, to grow, to leaf out, to bud, blossom, and bloom, which then produces fruit.

And when you're doing that, you're doing what you're supposed to be doing. Amen? That's the key. Things that fruit and fruitfulness represent. It represents success, productivity, the sign of reaching the goal or the fruit of the plant.

Abundance shows how successful. Rich and I have both had trees or plants that put out five pieces of fruit.

And you're like, man, that thing's five years old. I ought to have more than five pieces of fruit. So the husbandman comes in and he dungs it and feeds it and waters it and tills the soil and tries it again.

And next year, if there's not more than five, yank it, right? Because it's not producing what it's supposed to do. Fertility, fruit holds the seed to reproduce again.

[13:12] Effectiveness, the effectiveness of the plant's performance to reach the goal. With the fig tree in the garden, Jesus went to the tree which should have had fruit. It did not, so it died.

It was worthless for what it was made for. We are made to glorify God. That's our purpose. Amen? Amen. Now that we know a little bit about plants, rooted in or grafted in.

First, we must be part of his family. Rooted in Christ, the righteous branch. Turn, if you will, to Jeremiah 23.5. Jeremiah 23.5.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will rise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

God's chosen people of the Old Testament were the Jewish nation of Israel. This nation was from the original family tree, the family tree of God.

[14:26] But the Lord made it possible for others outside the family to become family. God gave the right for us, the Gentiles, to be grafted in.

And that's why I brought these plants up. And I just wanted to show you that is a healthy olive branch. And it's got life.

Notice the color of the olives, the olive leaves. Can you see how it's dark and shiny on the underside? And see all the branches, how they're coming out, pointing upwards?

And that shows a healthy branch. And if you look at the base of these little leaves as you get towards the top, you'll see little buds that are starting to come out.

The grafting time for olives in Israel and in California is right from about now till the first couple of weeks in March, depending on how the tree starts to bud and grow.

[15:28] So, whoops, dropped my props. Okay.

So now here's another olive branch. And it's supposed to be pointed this way. Do you see how these branches are growing down?

They're not supposed to... Where's the sun? The sun's up. The branches have to reach up and go to the sun. If the husband sees branches that are pointed down, now these aren't broken.

They're actually growing down. Because the tree wasn't trimmed properly, and these are growing down trying to get to sunlight, but the sunlight's up there. So it needs to be purged so these limbs will grow up.

So when you see something like this, and it's starting to do this, and the leaves aren't real healthy, this is when the grafting comes in. And basically, in order to graft, the husbandman will take a shoot, and he'll see this shoot, and you look at it, and you probably can't see it, but there's little tiny buds next to these leaves.

[16:43] So he removes the leaves carefully, and then he cuts it off above, and usually this is about three or four inches.

He takes a grafting knife, which is a square, extremely sharp knife. And if I was to use my little knife, most knives have a curved blade.

And it's not good for trimming this, because it wants to be cut precise, clean, and straight. So he cuts this branch at an angle, or a bias, and he takes it, and when he wants to put it into the olive vine or branch, he makes another slot, comes down with his knife like this, and see how that peels out?

And I'm going just below the bark, because the bark, the outside is the nourishment. That's where the sap flows, and it gets nourishment. And he takes this, and he sticks it in here, and then he wraps it up with grafting tape, and then he takes another tape that sticks, and then he takes and covers this, and by doing all of that, sometimes they'll put a plastic bag or a produce bag over this to keep the humidity up, and in this time of year, when it's cool, it acts like a greenhouse.

And that's the way you would graft. And these new little, two little buds, which I don't know if you can see, on the side, that will become, this would be cut off cleanly and sharp, not leaving all this garbage like I just did.

[ 18 : 31 ] And that's where the new branch will graft into it. And sometimes it gets so bad that he'll just come in, rip off all, everything on this.

We're going to need a maid when I'm done. And cuts it right back to just bare roots. Okay, there's multiple reasons to graft.

One is because you want to change the type of olives. Like out in Rancho Cucamonga, they had walnut trees, and you had English walnuts, or the ones like we eat, and you have California walnuts.

California walnuts are small, and they're not tasty, but the tree is really, really strong and stable. So they literally cut it off, and I'll just use this as an example.

They kept the stump off, about three or four feet long. They'll actually come in here, and peel back, and they'll take these scions, is what they're called, break it back to the bud, and then they put it on the outside, like this.

[ 19 : 49 ] Then they'll take another one, and put it on the other side, by doing the same thing. Then they wrap it up, and then you'll have, this will be the new growth.

And this is where the new fruit, the abundant fruit, and the good tasting fruit, and the pretty fruit will be. So that's a basic lesson in grafting.

And that's what we are. We're grafted in. We're the wild branch. The Bible talked about one other thing, in that verse. Talked about when it dies.

This is dead olive branch. It's worthless. The wind blows. It snaps right off. It's not strong. It's brittle. And it can produce no fruit.

So that's when the husbandman will come in, and actually clip that off, so that the new growth can start growing around it. So there's grafting, rooted in grafting in.

[ 20 : 52 ] The Bible tells us of the righteous branch, which is available to all to accept Him. To be part of Christ, we must firstly call.

Admit you're a sinner. Believe in Jesus. Confess that Jesus is your Lord. And that's the basic ABCs, right? Confess or call upon the name of the Lord, depending how you've heard it.

The next thing with that is we have to obey. Jeremiah 7.23 says, But this thing command I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

And walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. The other thing about obeying, if we don't obey, there's serious consequences and disobedience.

2 Thessalonians 1.8 says, In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 58 ] In flaming fire. The branch that does not produce is to be cut off and burned. John 15.6 says, If a man abide not in me, he has cast forth as a branch that is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Amen. So, if we don't obey, we have consequences. Then we have live, grow, and produce. So, we talked about what we have to rooted and grafted in, but then once we're grafted in, we have to live, grow, and produce.

To be part of Christ is to live. Philippians 1.21 says, For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. To be part of Christ is to reflect.

So, not only are we to live, but we're to reflect. We are made in His image. We should not live, and we should live, act, and move.

If the graft doesn't live, then it didn't graft, did it? It's just dead. So, if the graft is successful, we should live, act, and move.

[ 23 : 14 ] Genesis 1.27, So, God created man in His own image, in that the image of God created Him. Male and female, He created them.

When we're grafted into that tree, we're grafted into that image of God's tree, of that olive tree that was set forth, God's chosen people.

For to Him, and live and move, and to have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring. Acts 17.28 says, To be part of Christ, not only we must produce.

John 8.12 says, Then spake Jesus again to them, saying, I am the light of the world. He that falleth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Jesus says He is the light, and that we are to have that light in our lives, right? And that's those leaves. We're supposed to leaf out after we start growing and sprout, put out leaves, so we can collect that light and grow in it.

[ 24 : 27 ] Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven. We are to let our light, not His light, in us.

We're supposed to shine before others. So, the olive tree doesn't produce light, does it?

So, that light that we're supposed to shine off and show is His light. His light is what makes that tree and the branches grow and the leaves accept it to give the nourishment.

So, if we're putting that back on us, look what I have done, then that's not really the case. It's what God's light has done. Amen? And we have to remember that.

It is also to be all the time. We are to produce His fruit, whether we are young or old. You young kids, start producing fruit.

[ 25 : 33 ] Most trees, a year to two years, they'll bud up, do good, and start producing. Maybe only a little at first, and then as they get bigger and stronger.

But us old guys, I am not 2,000 years old like that olive tree in Crete. That still produces olives, by the way. If it doesn't produce olives, they don't even count it as a live olive tree.

Now, over the years, it might have been grafted and new branches put on because sometimes the old ones break. And you know, an olive tree can break completely off, and a year later, at the right time of year, they can go and put those signs, those little pieces of sprigs, and it will grow.

That's amazing. It's amazing to me. So, it's the root and that natural tree that does that. God promises in Psalm 92, those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God, they shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

They shall be fat and flourishing, I fit that, to show that the Lord is upright, He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. At an old age, He promises it.

[ 26 : 52 ] Don't give up. Young guys get going, middle-aged people get going, but we're not, no one in here is 2,000 years old. Amen? So, let's keep moving forward.

We're supposed to produce fruit. Now, Christians, even if we're growing and producing fruit, sometimes we'll be pruned back or purged, the Bible calls it.

Purging not only protects the limbs from breaking in a storm, but if the branches grow wild and out of control, nutrients are being distracted, being directed to that wild growth and not to the fruit.

Our job is not to grow 10 miles long, that vine. It's to produce fruit. In a grapevine, when you're going grapes, you see a cluster of grapes coming off of a branch, and you measure 24 to 36 inches, and you lop it off because that's all it needs.

It needs that amount of leaves to give the sunlight and the nutrients to produce those cluster of grapes. So, we're not supposed to be all gangly and wild and growing all over, and I'm sure you've seen vines where, and tree branches that grow way out too long and too wide, the wind comes along and it snaps them off.

[ 28 : 17 ] Then they can't produce anything anymore. John 15, 1 and 2 says, I am the true vine and my father is the husband man. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it that it may bring forth more fruit. It's an amazing science how these people grow fruit trees.

You go up into the valley, look at the almond trees. trees and they're all 12 feet wide, 20 feet tall. No branches, up to 4 feet.

And you're like, why? Because they, they have determined that a tree that size will produce the most fruit and takes the least amount of work to do it.

And that's what we need to do. We need to not try to grow in our own lives and grow in everything we're doing. We need to take His light, pass it forward, and produce fruit unto God.

[ 29 : 24 ] Bloom, blossom, so that others can see it. So in conclusion, we are to accept, believe, and confess daily. We are to obey Christ, and if we don't, there's consequences.

We are to live for Christ. We are to grow. We are to reflect. We are made in His image, and we should live, act, and move.

We are to produce. We're never to sit back on our laurels. We must continue to produce fruit. If you've already called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, I ask you today, are you living your life as to be productive?

Are your branches going wild? Because if they are, the husbandman, Lord Jesus Christ, is going to prune them back. And I don't know about you, I don't like to be pruned.

It's good and healthy, but it loses part of us. So keep that in mind. Focus on bearing fruit for the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will be best for you, for your family, and most of all, you'll produce fruit for the others to get nourishment and come in to see the beauty glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 53 ] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I thank you for this time this evening. I know I rushed through it, and I cut a lot of things out, and I hope I didn't cut anything critical, Lord, but I pray that you'd take these thoughts, that we might consider what goes on in your creation when we look at trees and fruit and all the things about it.

Help us to enjoy and marvel at the botany and put it into our lives as you intended it for us. In Christ's name, amen.

Amen. Amen. All right. You are...