

My Thoughts for Sunday, 5 April 2015

“A Bearer of Fruit for Salvation”

1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He 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. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” John 15:1-4

I received this faith statement from a very dear friend of mine just last week and was so moved by it that I felt compelled to expound on the remaining verses from John through verse 17. I, too, was extremely moved by the Worship service and also, as I do before every Easter celebration watched with intense emotion, “The Passion of Christ.”

My dear friends’ statement

My Father in heaven and my Savior, the Lord, Jesus Christ provided this reminder to me this morning as a daily verse. Sunday I was so lifted by our special Organ Worship service led by Charles Bonow, and throughout the rest of day as we watched “The Passion of Christ“ and “God's Not Dead.” The next day I was very low. I read this and my thoughts went to the many joys and trials I face each week. He lets me go through life making choices and intercedes for me when I appear to be a non-bearing branch. What a blessing! Although it hurts when we are pruned the beauty of the branch far outweighs the pain of the pruning. As I walk through this day and the days to come I pray my branches, with the Lords help, will sprout numerous buds of fruit.

We would all do well to reread these verses, written for us by John, as they are direct quotes from our Lord and Savior. He gave us some very important instruction in this parable of our relationship to our Heavenly Father. Read on in verses 5-8 and understand just how vital it is that we do remain in Christ as our Lord and guide. Look back to the opening verse where Jesus says He is the vine but the Father is the gardener. God is the one who will throw the unproductive branches into the fire of destruction as stated in verse 6.

5 “I 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. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Remember, we are sinners, nothing has changed that. We, in our own sinfulness and by our own will, love to sin and go against God's will for us. And you all know... *"the wages of sin is death"* Look closely at the great promise that our Lord has given us in verse 8 and the next verses. He is giving us an out from our sins, a means to look worthy in the eyes of the Father. He plainly tells us that it is to His Father's glory that we bear much fruit. By bearing this fruit that we were designed to do we show ourselves as Jesus' disciples. We become worthy in God's eyes to be given the promised gift of eternal life with Him. Look especially at verse 7, Jesus states, *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."*

In the end, no matter how you slice it, it is all about LOVE. Jesus makes it extremely clear for us. Plain and simple. He states...⁹ *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.* We have only to keep this greatest command He has ever given us, love Him and love our neighbors as He has loved us. This happens to also be the most difficult command to keep, it seems. It is very difficult for us sinners to love as He, who is perfect, has loved us. He goes on to give us reason for this love we need to share with others as He has so freely given it to us; that in this love our joy may be complete.

Then in verse 14 He goes on to tell us of our new status in his kingdom. We are no longer looked upon as servants but rather as friends because everything He has learned from His Father, He now shares with us. Do you have anyone that you know that you would rather be known by as Friend than the living Son of the living God? We were chosen by Him to be His friends and Jesus goes on to tell us that as His friends, His Father will give us anything we can ask for in His name.

11 "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other."

WOW! Can you think of anything greater than being the chosen friend of Jesus? Do you have any reason to not want to fulfill this one command to Love One Another? Jesus' love for us brought about His death that we might have life in Him as branches of the vine. Let's take advantage of this gift He has given us and strive, with His help to become fruitful and enjoy the promise of eternal life.