

The pruning that makes us into something great.

“... we must not be surprised if we're in for a rough time. When a man turns to Christ and seems to be getting on pretty well ... he often feels that it would now be natural if things went fairly smoothly. When troubles come along—illnesses, money troubles, new kinds of temptations—you begin to get disappointed.

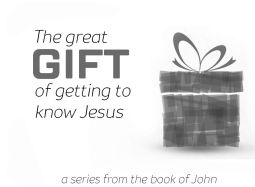
Because God is forcing him on, or up, to a higher level: putting him into situations where he will have to be very much braver, or more patient, or more loving, than he ever dreamed of being before. It seems to us all unnecessary: but that is because we have not yet had the slightest notion of the tremendous thing He means to make of us. ... Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised.

But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.

You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

C.S. Lewis

Dan Wilvers- December 3rth, 2017 Part 1



Jesus , "I am the true vine"

What Jesus teaches about His role in this world

John 15:1-8

"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. 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.

Two kinds of branches here:

In Jesus' metaphor some of us look like were growing but there's no life going from the vine to the branch. That's why it says here, in verse 2,

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, ..." vs. 2

But in verse 5, Jesus is saying, if you have that vital connection to Him, then fruit is inevitable.

...If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. vs.5

Two Signs of the branch that is cut off:

1. If you think- *"Because, I'm being such a good Christian, God will love me."*
2. Whatever you think you've done to be a Christian hasn't produced much change.

Why? *It all stems from a wrong way of relating to God.*

People often ask when they're weighing the cost of following Jesus:

"If I become a Christian, what will I have to give up?"

But what you are really thinking is what it means to be a Christian is to basically clean your life up.

- Does the branch say to the vine, *"Hey, I'm being fruitful, let me join you?"* Of course not, the branch is fruitful because it gets the life from the vine.

Remain in me, and I will 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. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:4,5

The Sign of the branch that is grafted in:

"The Christian way is different: harder and easier. Christ says, 'Give me All. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you. I have not come to torment your ordinary self but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. [...] Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked ... I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours.' "

C.S. Lewis

So what does that connection to the vine look like?

Growth as a believer requires *"pruning."*

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. John 15:2

"... my Father is the gardener."

John 15:1

Here's the key to the vine illustration:

The same knife that will cut off a person who doesn't find their joy in Jesus, will cut back and prosper the person who does.

Here's your motive for being *"pruned"* by God:

"... he was cut off from the land of the living ..."

Isaiah 53:8

For three hours, beginning at noon, darkness came over the earth. ⁴⁶And at three o'clock Jesus shouted with a mighty voice in Aramaic, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"—that is, "My God, My God, why have you deserted me?Jesus passionately cried out, *took his last breath*, and gave up his spirit.⁵¹ At that moment the veil in the Holy of Holies was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Matthew 27:45,46, 50,51