



With hope that this page will bring glory to God and attention to His Word, you are invited to check this page every day for a piece of scripture, thoughts on the verse(s) and a prayer. May the ideas presented here bring you fulfillment as you continue your journey with Christ.

Saturday April 27, 2024

Today's Scripture:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

John 15:1-2

Thoughts on Today's Verse(s):

In recent years, my lovely wife and I have acquired a type of tree at our southern USA home with which we had no previous experience: *a lemon tree*. It was there when we bought the house and it became apparent that we needed to look after it properly. That is, make sure it gets the right amount of water from our sprinkler system, fertilize it in a timely fashion, prune it and even cut away branches that are not producing. We're still learning but are seeing the fruit of our labors with good attention to the tree.

As Jesus tells us in today's passage from St. John, The Lord treats us very much like a citrus tree. He prunes and waters, fertilizes and even cuts away dead weight, that the tree may bear fruit.

"Huh? We are all trees?"

No, Jesus is the tree, The True Vine. We are the branches and everyone of us subject to the attention of The Farmer/Vinedresser/Gardner Who is God Himself. And in order that we bear fruit for His kingdom, He will prune and even cut away dead branches. *"How does He do that?"*

First, God prunes us by allowing trials and troubles into our lives. He will send people and problems upon us that challenge our faith and push us back to Him in trust. The good news is that when we allow Him to lead us through those challenges, by staying *in* Jesus, seeking to learn and gain His wisdom, the pruning process is successful and we do become more productive branches.

Second, God will even cut away dead branches. The Lord of lords is very aware of those in His church who are not producing, or even worse, are offering "bad" fruit (Matthew 7: 18-20), and He will cut them away that the rest of the tree grows and flourishes and thrives. The food He offers to the tree must not be tainted by those who twist and even pervert it. It is wasted on a dead branch and thus the branch is cut away. This is why some folks fall away. This is also why God allows some churches/parishes to close.

Our tree in Arizona is thriving, producing many lemons and we, our family and friends are all the beneficiaries. We enjoy lemon slices in our drinks like tea and water and we savor sweet lemonade from the fruit the tree produces. But we must continue to water, fertilize, prune and even cut away dead weight. It is a never-ending process. So too it is with The Lord and His kingdom.

Prayer:

O Holy Vinedresser, You prune and cut away, You water and fertilize. How perfect You are in Your attention to Your tree. Dear Gracious Gardner, prune us that we may bear good fruit for Your kingdom. Help us to recognize the challenges You offer as pruning that we may embrace them and learn from them. Farmer Father, cut away the dead and broken branches that bear no fruit. Water us with Your presence and fertilize us with Your Word. May we seek to help You grow Your kingdom and Your church that it may bear good fruit across the whole world be open to the attention You bring, even when it means we will be pruned, rationed and immersed in truth. You are The One and Only True Grower of the Vine. Through Christ our Lord we pray, Amen.

