

18 5-2-21 Remain on the Vine

In Hampton Court near London, there is a grapevine which is about 1,000 years old. This grapevine has one root which is at least two feet thick, and some of the branches are 200 feet long. Despite its age the vine produces several tons of grapes each year. Although some of the smaller branches are 200 feet from the main stem, they still bear the sweet and delicious fruit because they are connected to the vine. Life flows from that single root and throughout the vine bringing nourishment and strength to each of the branches.

Jesus promises to do the same for us. He claims to be the “true vine” that brings life to each of the branches. The purpose of the vine is to bring nourishment to the branches in order that they might produce fruit. When separated from the vine the branches wither and die. Therefore, if Jesus is the true vine, then the vitality of our spiritual life is dependent upon our connection to Him.

Here’s some good news. Notice that Jesus tells us to “remain” or “abide” on the vine. That means that we are already connected to Him. Our Lord does not say “get on the vine” or “strive to be grafted to the vine.” No, Jesus tells us to remain where we are. And, if we do, we will produce fruit because of the life giving nourishment that Christ gives.

How, then, are we to remain on the vine? Jesus himself tells us. He says: *"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you."* The first step of remaining on the vine is to familiarize yourself more and more with the Word of God. The words of Jesus are life. They are the sap that flows from the root up into the branches. In order to remain, we need to be fed on God’s word and live by it.

Secondly, to remain on the vine, you need an active prayer life. Prayer is our communication with God. Just as the life giving sap flows through the vine into the branches every day, so too our communication with God needs to be a daily opening to His inspiration.

With God the Father being the best of gardeners, and Jesus Christ as the most excellent vine, the Lord wants us to remain on the vine in order to produce good fruit. What kind of fruit? The kind that will build up God’s Kingdom right here in our midst—the fruit of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

A branch on a vine will produce the expected fruit if it just remains firmly attached to the vine, and no outside influence poisons its fruit-bearing process. We, too, will produce the expected fruit with our lives if we are fed on the Word of God and we communicate well and often in our prayer. You and I are on the Vine already. We just have to remain there.