

**Learning from Jesus' Last Message #9**  
**"How to Live a More Abundant Life"**  
Message Notes, March 13, 2022

**John 15:1-11 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. <sup>3</sup>You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup>"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. <sup>7</sup>But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! <sup>8</sup>When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

<sup>9</sup>"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

◆ **Background and a Healthy Self-Awareness**

- In the Old Testament, the Israelites are metaphorically referred to as "the vine"  
→ Psalm 80, 128:2; Isaiah 5:1-7; Ezekiel 17:8, Joel 2:22; Zechariah 8:12, Malachi 3:11  
**Jeremiah 2:21** But I was the one who planted you, choosing a vine of the purest stock—the very best. How did you grow into this corrupt wild vine?
- This is not mere disappointment in the people, but rather a statement that God will do things in the future in light of the current situation. Along with a correct self-awareness, God's growth strategy is also necessary.
- Jesus, the *true* vine, and God, the *Father*, who created the grapes, will make Israel grow into a fruitful vine. This applies to our lives, as well.

◆ **Learning from Pruning**

1. The purpose of pruning is to produce abundant fruit
  - The root of everything is love. "I have loved you" (9)
  - God, who is pure love, has a genuine interest in our growth. The word *true* in "I am the true vine" (1) means genuine, unadulterated purity
  - No one other than God truly wants and believes in your growth and has a plan for it
2. Relationship between the trunk and the branches of grapevines (photo)
3. Pruning is done on all branches, without exception
  - Pruning is not a punishment for those who slack off. Rather, pruning is a common task that is part of caring for grape vines, done in this case by the Father, who is a kind and wise gardener.
  - Pruning is never pleasant at the time, but later proves to be necessary and timely. In other words, pruning is evidence of being the object of love and expectation  
**Hebrews 12:10-11** <sup>10</sup>For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup>No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. (NLT)

#### 4. What pruning implies

- Unnecessary parts are eliminated so that energy is not wasted, and power can be focused on what needs to be done
- If the branch is not connected to the trunk, it can do nothing (5): emphasized through double negation (absolutely not possible)
- Therefore, we must aim for a stronger and more conscious connection to the trunk (4) a double connection (I to you, you to me)→letting go of what is unnecessary and grasping what is most necessary
- Pruning gives us the feeling that we are being cut off without our involvement in the process, but this is not the case. God invites us to have a conversation with him as we go through the process of submitting to him. Growth results.

➤ What is God showing you to let go of, but that you are hesitant to surrender to Him?

#### 5. Pruning and the joy of life

- Pruning means becoming obedient to God's best plan (7), not only to bear much fruit (8), but also to live in God's love (10) and to rejoice in life (11).
- Pruning is the way God restores us to true humanity (in God's image: the loving image of the Trinity). Even before we see the more effective results (harvest), when we realize that we are loved by God and we respond to that love wholeheartedly, we experience the joy that overflows from within.

➤ Have you experienced joy and filling with God's love as a result of obeying His will?

### ◆ How Can I Co-operate with God's Pruning?

#### 1. Experience the peace and love that can come only through pruning

**Romans 5:1-5** <sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. <sup>2</sup>Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. <sup>3</sup>We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. <sup>4</sup>And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. <sup>5</sup>And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

#### 2. Continue to converse with God (unwavering trust is the strength of faith)

**James 1:5 (LB)** If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not resent it.

### ◆ Conclusion

- What kind of divine pruning are you experiencing right now? To what extent are you having direct conversations with God about it?
- What is making it difficult for you to accept or deal with being pruned?