

# I Am The Vine

John 15:1-11

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<sup>focal</sup>(John 15:1-11 KJV) "I am the true<sup>1</sup> vine<sup>2</sup>, and my Father is the husbandman<sup>3</sup>. {2} Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away<sup>7</sup>: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth<sup>8</sup> it, that it may bring forth more fruit. {3} Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. {4} Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. {5} I am the vine, ye are the branches<sup>4</sup>: He that abideth<sup>5</sup> in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much<sup>6</sup> fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. {6} If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. {7} If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. {8} Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. {9} As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. {10} If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. {11} These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

I recently had a gentleman write me with a very real problem - and, I believe, a very common problem in *modern day* Christianity. His letter reads:

"When I was in my early teens, I answered the altar call in my local Baptist Church. I finish school and joined the military and was involved in every sin that one can imagine. I was into

drinking, fornication, adultery, theft and all the sins mentioned in the Bible. After my third marriage, I began attending Church again and asked the Lord to forgive me of the things I had done. However, within a year or two I fell into my old lifestyle. I finally got disgusted with myself and got down on my knees and asked for salvation again. I am now 56 years old with a life full of regrets. Today, my past seems to bother me almost daily, and I am really trying to do my best to move for the lord and my family. The problem I seem to have is, when I hear a very good sermon in church, I ask for salvation over and over many times. Does this mean I was never saved as a teenager and then living the life I did in trampling the word of God under foot for so long that it is too late for me to be saved? I pray and do not seem to get answers. I read my Bible and attend church regular, but my past never is far from my memory and seems to bother me daily."

Now, you may be sitting there and thinking, "Boy, I'm glad I'm not like THAT man", but if you are I'm more afraid for you than I am for him. What this man describes is not only a *problem*, but a *plague* within Christianity. Of the *three major religions* in the world today (and by major, I mean those ranked by the most followers), many (though not all) of those who claim the name of Christ many times lead a life unaffected by their profession. Followers of *Islam* pray five times a day. No matter where you are when the call to pray is given the Muslim will toss out a prayer rug and pray. Followers of *Judaism* - the children of *Israel* - adjust their eating habits according to their faith. Only *kosher* foods are eaten by the faithful Jew. Yet many who profess Christ have a *nominal* or an *incidental* faith.

What's wrong with this? Well, the Scripture makes it plain that salvation is by faith in Christ alone. We have read many times these wonderful words:

supporting **Ephesians 2:8-9** (KJV) "For by grace are ye saved **through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works**, lest any man should boast."

Salvation is *through faith, not through yourselves*. Yet at the same time the Scripture further says:

supporting **Ephesians 2:10** (KJV) "For **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

that the Christian saved by faith *is designed to work for the Christ who saved him!* John even went so far as to say that

supporting **1 John 5:4-5** (KJV) "For **whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. {5} Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"**

Christian faith *works to overcome the world*. The follower of Christ should be *more enabled* to overcome the world than the followers of Islam and Judaism. Judaism contained the shadow of Christ, and through the Law foretold of the Messiah - Jesus Christ - who came to pay the penalty of our sin. Islam is a religion that springs out of the children of Ishmael, the child that Abraham our father had through the slave Hagar. This is *not the*

*child of promise*, but it is the child of faithlessness. As the Scripture tells us:

supporting **Galatians 4:31-5:1** (KJV) "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. ... {5:1} **Stand fast therefore in the liberty** wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

We are to *stand fast in the liberty* that Christ has given us, yet the liberty of God *does not* give us the right to do things that are *offensive* to God. Christianity was *never* designed to be a faith that had *no impact* on your life outside the Church. Christians are *ordered* to follow Christ in all things, not just at Church.

So what's the answer?

In our text today our Lord Jesus is sitting with His disciples. He's just looked around and, seeing Judas, He sent that *professor who was yet in the world* out of the room (**John 13:30** c/w **John 14:22**). Jesus then took the remains of the *Passover* meal and celebrated the first *Lord's Table* with His remaining disciples - the eleven faithful (c/w **John 13:30** with **Matthew 26:25-26**). The words that He was going to say at this time were *for those who were truly saved, the Church*. This Judas had to leave - the faithful were now going to receive His final instructions. From **John 13:31** through **John 17:26** our Lord Jesus spoke words that applied - not to the *heathen, the pagan, the professor who never knew Him as Savior* - but to the *saved, born again child of God by faith in Christ Jesus*.

Reference	Specialized Teaching For The Church
John 13:32-33	God's Mission - Glorify Him
John 13:34-35	The New Commandment
John 13:37-38	The Inability of The Believer (You will deny me, Peter)
John 14:1-6	The Only Bridegroom The Only Bride
John 14:7-10	The Ignorance of the Believer (Peter - Show us the Father)
John 14:11-14	The Church Shall Do Greater Works Than Jesus
John 14:15-29	The Spirit of Love and The Spirit of Power
John 14:30	The Devil and the Spirit of Evil
John 14:31	The Spirit of Obedience - Jesus Obeyed To The Death

It is important that you understand that our focal text today is addressed to the Church - not to the Judas Iscariots, not to the *nominal* professors. Everything that led us up to this point in our Biblical context (from **John 13:32** up to this point) is addressed to the *saved, born again believer*. Let's look at our focal text for today's message.

**If You Are A Christian, You Are Tied To The True Vine**

focal (**John 15:1, 5** KJV) "I am the true<sup>1</sup> vine<sup>2</sup>, and my

Father is the husbandman<sup>3</sup>. ... {5} I am the vine, ye are the branches<sup>4</sup>: He that abideth<sup>5</sup> in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much<sup>6</sup> fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

In this wonderful text Jesus shares a wonderful truth to each and every Christian. First, Jesus establishes Himself as the *true* or genuine vine [²gk. ampelos {pronounced am'-pel-os}]. This is one of the I AM statements that our Lord made while on this earth. I AM the GENUINE VINE. There is ONE VINE - Jesus Christ - and ONE GARDENER [KJV calls this *husbandman*<sup>3</sup>], God the Father. There is One Vine, One Gardener, but *many branches* - those lovely arms that come out of the Vine. YOU are the Branches if YOU are true Christians.

Now, I want you to think about a Vine, and the Branches from that Vine. Let's look at this point by point:

1 You have no power to attach yourself to the Vine that is Christ.

When you walk out in the woods you see branches extending from trees of all types. Oak trees, maple trees, pine trees. There are branches coming from vines, from ground plants, from all different types of things. None of these branches got where they were *by their own power*. The Branch has no power to attach itself to the Vine.

So it is with the Christian. As the Scripture declared at the beginning:

supporting **Ephesians 2:8-9** (KJV) "For by grace are ye

saved **through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works,** lest any man should boast."

You cannot work yourself to a point where you *attach yourself to Christ*. You enter the Christian life by faith, by believing that Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin FOR YOU. You come to Christ *recognizing your inability to save yourself* then, *repenting* of your old way of life, you turn fully to Christ.

I have known people to come to the altar weeping, sorry

1. Do I have the power to attach myself to the Vine? Who attaches me to the Vine? (**John 15:1, 5; Ephesians 2:8-9**)

in themselves that they had sinned, but not turning fully to God they went away *unattached to the Vine*. Your tears are not the glue that ties you to the Vine. The Bible says:

supporting **2 Corinthians 7:10 (KJV) "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."**

There is a *sorrow of the world* and there is a *godly sorrow*. The rich young ruler came to Christ and arrogantly asked, "**what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?**". You see, he figured he could *work his way* into the Vine. Jesus told him that he had to *surrender everything he had - even his possessions - and*

come follow the Vine. That boy went away sad (read **Matthew 19:16-22**) - the King James says "**sorrowful, because he had great possessions**". You can't work your way into the Vine - God must *graft you into Christ*. It is a *supernatural work of God* that begins when you *surrender your life* to Him.

2. Is *being sorry* enough to bring me into a state of salvation? What is the difference between *godly sorrow* and *the sorrow of the world*? (**2 Corinthians 7:10; Matthew 19:16-22**)

3. What does *godly sorrow* lead to?

4. What is a good Biblical illustration of *worldly sorrow*? What about *godly sorrow*? (**Matthew 19:16-22; Acts 16:25-32**)

The Bible talks about the time Paul and Silas were *beaten terribly* for telling others about the Vine - you see, it wasn't *politically correct* to be a *real Christian* back then, either! Though they had been beaten and tossed into a bug infested cave - not the *modern prisons* we have now, but a real hole in the ground - these two Branches *began to sing and praise God*. Why in the world would someone praise God after being beaten and tossed in a hole to die? Because, and here's another point:

2 You the Branches are grafted into the Vine by the Father. The Father can *lift you up* from the Vine, but you

will *never lose your salvation no matter how you feel*.

In **Acts 16:25-32** Paul and Silas, saved by faith, grafted into the Vine by God's hand, "**prayed, and sang praises unto God**". About midnight the Hand that grafted them into the Vine broke down the walls of that prison, setting the captives free. But Paul and Silas *stayed right where they were*. They didn't go running out, even though it was dank, buggy - imagine the roaches and other things on the walls - and smelled awful. Why didn't they run from the prison? Because *when you're keenly aware* that you're attached to the Vine - then how you feel or where you're at doesn't matter. The Vine is what matters! What the Vine wants is what matters!

Paul and Silas sat there singing, praying, and praising God. All around them the moans of other beaten men, flayed with *scourges* that tore the flesh - those moans began to cease. Initially you can imagine some men cried out "Shut up! What do you have to pray about? Shut up you retards!" Yet as they sang the glory of God began to spread throughout that stinking prison. Suddenly the Light of Christ pierced the darkness of human cruelty and Satanic powers. Demons screamed as Satan fell from his throne. Death ran, and the prisoners began to praise God with Paul and Silas. We do not know what song these blessed disciples were singing, but we know that they were remembering the words of the Vine Who said:

supporting **John 8:12** <sup>(KJV)</sup> "... **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**"

Did they feel good? Does it feel good to take a beating? Absolutely not! Physically they hurt. But Branches grafted into the Vine have the help of the Vine in the bad times as well as the good. So Paul and Silas *sang*, for that was all they could do. They *prayed* and *praised Jesus*, for that was all they could do. And as they prayed, praised, and sang, the moans around them ceased. The prisoners around them began to stop moaning, and began to join in with the praise.

A mighty Hand began to graft once more, and more Branches came into union with the Vine. The *keeper of the prison* woke and, realizing that the doors of the prison were opened, began to kill himself. Rather death by his own hand than by the cruel Roman method of crucifixion. He had perhaps seen the One they called Christ hung on that Cross, bloody and beaten, nailed helpless and painfully to that terrible tree. "No", he thought, "that's not for me! Better by my hand than by theirs!". But just as he would do himself harm out of the darkness ...

<sup>supporting</sup> **Acts 16:28 ...** Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, **Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.**"

This poor man, as ready to take his life as Abraham was ready to sacrifice Isaac, fell to his knees. Why didn't they escape? The keeper of the prison put away *everything that tied him to this life*. He looked at Paul and Silas and said, "What must I do to be saved?" These dear disciples answered,

<sup>supporting</sup> **Acts 16:31 "... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

Suddenly the hand of the Master Gardener came upon

5. Who's hand grafted me into the Vine? Can I become *ungrafted* by my own efforts?

6. If I am grafted into the Vine and *having a bad day*, as a Branch I should continue to focus on \_\_\_\_\_ and not on the trial. (**Acts 16:25-32; John 8:12**)

7. When I allow Christ to work in me what happens to the world around me? (**Acts 16:28, 31; John 8:12**)

him and *grafted him, too, into the Vine*. Now the keeper of the prison took Paul and Silas into his house and treated their wounds. Which brings us to another point:

3 You the Branches are bound to the Vine - but you are also bound to one another.

The keeper of the jail became *less* a keeper of the jail and *more aware* of his relationship to the Vine and the Branches. We read:

<sup>supporting</sup> **Acts 16:33-34 (KJV) "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. {34} And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all**  
12

his house."

The jailer now recognized that he was in Christ along with the others. He *took them that same hour* and washed the blood off of their bodies. He tended to them, then they tended to him. He washed them, then they *baptized* him in *obedience* to the command of the Vine (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

If you are a Branch, tied to the Vine, then you are *also* tied to all the other Branches in the Vine. Listen Beloved: what you do or do not do matters to both the Vine and the other Branches. If a Branch is rotted on the vine, it hurts both the Vine as well as the other Branches. Look at our focal text:

<sup>focal</sup>(**John 15:1-2** <sup>KJV</sup>) "**I am the true<sup>1</sup> vine<sup>2</sup>, and my Father is the husbandman<sup>3</sup>. {2} Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away<sup>7</sup>: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth<sup>8</sup> it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**"

There are *two actions* that the Father uses with the Branches that the King James calls "**taketh away<sup>7</sup>**" and "**purgeth<sup>8</sup>**". *Both* of these actions are *predicated or determined* on the *amount* of fruit that the Branch produces. Remember we said that you are *not grafted* into the Vine by your own efforts - God does the grafting - but you are *nonetheless* expected as a Branch grafted into the Vine to *produce fruit*. Your production of fruit determines whether God "**taketh away<sup>7</sup>**" or "**purgeth<sup>8</sup>**" you.

If you're NOT SAVED this doesn't matter one way or the other to you, for if you're not saved the Master Gardener has *not* grafted you into the Vine. You are, the Scripture says,

<sup>supporting</sup>**John 3:18** <sup>(KJV)</sup> "**He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**"

condemned right now. If you die, you will NOT go to Heaven. You will be like the rich man Jesus spoke of in **Luke 16:19-23**. You are going to hell! But if you are saved God the Father does one of two things with your life.

<b>taketh away<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>purgeth<sup>8</sup></b>
<b>airo</b> {pronounced ah'-ee-ro}, Present Active Indicative, to raise up, lift up, carry away, cause to cease. EXACT same Greek construct in <b>Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12; John 10:18</b> , et al	kathairo {pronounced kath-ah'-ee-ro}, Present Active Indicative, to <i>cleanse</i> of <i>impurities</i> , to prune away, to trim, from where we get the English <i>catharsis</i>

If you are a Branch grafted into the Vine and *are not producing fruit* God **airo(s)** you. That is, the Father *takes you from this life* and moves you into Heaven. This is the thing that the Bible refers to called *the sin unto death*. God does this - not because He's *mean* or *cruel*, but because a Branch that *does not produce* for the Vine draws the entire plant down. The Church on earth has a *very clear set of marching orders* which we have read many times in **Matthew 28:19-20**. The fruit of the

Branch is to work *together with the Vine* to tell people about the Vine - Jesus Christ. When your life draws the Vine down instead of *lifting up Jesus*, then the Father *lifts you up* in love and takes you home.

<sup>focal</sup>(John 15:1-3, 6 <sup>KJV</sup>) **"I am the true<sup>1</sup> vine<sup>2</sup>, and my Father is the husbandman<sup>3</sup>. {2} Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away<sup>7</sup>: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth<sup>8</sup> it, that it may bring forth more fruit. {3} Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. ... {6} If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."**

8. Branches are bound to the Vine, but also to \_\_\_\_\_
9. Branches are designed to \_\_\_\_\_ for God. (Acts 16:33-34; Matthew 28:19-20; John 15:1-3, 6)
10. The unsaved *cannot* be grafted into the Vine. Why not? (John 3:18)

When you draw away from where the Father grafted you - the Vine - and wander back into the world then you become subject to the *things of this world*. Instead of relying on the Vine you begin to rely on *other, untrue vines* that draw you down.

In Georgia I have a *huge* pecan tree, so big around that

two men can barely circle it with their arms. Pecan trees, as you know, are somewhat *self pruning* - at least mine is. Every so often a branch falls from the tree and onto the ground. When that happens I take that branch, drag it into the back yard, and burn it. At the base of this tree I have my detached garage. A few years ago I had a rather *heavy branch* fall off of the tree during a storm and - amazingly - this thing fell *through* my garage roof. What a mess! The branch was so heavy I had to take a rope, tie it to my van, and tow it away from the house. Then I drug the thing to the backyard and burned it.

If you are a Branch and have begun to walk away from the Vine in your actions, then you are subject to being *burned by the world*. Many people look at our focal verse:

<sup>focal</sup>(John 15: 6 <sup>KJV</sup>) **"I am the true<sup>1</sup> vine<sup>2</sup>... If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."**

and try to teach that this is reference to hellfire. Beloved, its no such thing. Jesus said **"and MEN gather them, and cast them into the fire"**. When you begin to live your life as a Branch as if you *aren't a Branch*, then you become subject to the same terrors of life that the unsaved creation is subject to. From that point you become the *toy of mankind* instead of *victors in Christ*. Your faith ceases to give you power to *overcome the world*, but now the world says "dance" and you dance.

It is the love of the Master Gardener Who "lifts up" the *unprofitable* branch, lest you be gathered by men and become a prey. There is a sin unto death (**1 John 5:16**), and many Branches have left this life under that sin (see **Acts 5:1-11; Psalm 118.17-18; Jeremiah 9.16; 44.12; 1 Corinthians 11.29-31; 5.1-5; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 1 Chronicles 10:13-14**). Love will lift up the Branch that begins to live as if it is not attached to the Vine - Jesus said so - and that Branch goes home to be with the Lord.

It is important that you, the Branches, *work together with Christ and with one another* to glorify God and reach the lost. It is important that the Branches be *in one accord* with one another and with the Vine.

I have read the Apostle Peter's sermon that he preached on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:14-37**). At the end of his message *three thousand people* came into the Church, for they suffered *godly sorrow* which leads to repentance. On the other hand we see the Evangelist **Stephen** who, after preaching the *near exact same message* (**Acts 7:2-57**), was murdered. Did Peter do righteously, and Stephen sin? No, not at all! But I want you to notice the difference. Before Peter preached the Bible says:

supporting **Acts 1:14** (KJV) "These **all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication**, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

supporting **Acts 2:1** (KJV) "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, **they were all with one**

**accord in one place.**"

When Peter stood up to preach, the Church of the Upper Room stood up with him. They were one unit, moving forward, doing the will of the Vine that bound them together. They were not individual Branches each doing a separate thing, but they were a unified whole *with Christ Jesus our Risen Savior*. They "**were all with one accord in one place**". The Branches worked together with the Vine, and together the Body of Christ led the lost to new life in Jesus. On the day of Pentecost the Master Gardener grafted *three thousand* more Branches into the Vine. The Church grew.

And what of that good man Stephen? He was not sinning

11. There IS a sin unto \_\_\_\_\_. This is the action of the Father in \_\_\_\_\_ the unproductive Branch. (**Acts 5:1-11; Psalm 118.17-18; Jeremiah 9.16; 44.12; 1 Corinthians 11.29-31; 5.1-5; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 1 Chronicles 10:13-14**)

12. Compare Peter's sermon with Stephen's sermon (**Acts 2:14-37; Acts 7:2-57**). Why do you think each sermon received the response it did?

when he preached his sermon, but he stood *alone* against overwhelming odds. God used Stephen's death to reach a young man who helped in his stoning - Saul of Tarsus, one day to become Paul the Apostle. But I want you to understand this.

**No matter how eloquent your preacher.  
No matter how tirelessly he works.  
No matter whether his name is well known or not.  
No ONE man is the Church.**

Each Branch works together with one another and with the Vine, Jesus Christ, to bring the lost and dying to a knowledge of salvation. Stephen died, I believe, because the other Branches were not with him in prayer and supplication. Perhaps I am wrong, but that's how I see it. The **Church** which is both the Vine as well as the grafted Branches work in harmony to spread the Gospel message.

Let me say this, too. There are *no small gifts* in the Vine. If you are Branches grafted to the Vine, you are *gifted* - you must produce fruit!

<sup>focal</sup>(John 15:1-5 KJV) "I am the true<sup>1</sup> vine<sup>2</sup>, and my Father is the husbandman<sup>3</sup>. {2} Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away<sup>7</sup>: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth<sup>8</sup> it, that it may bring forth more fruit. {3} Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. {4} Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. {5} I am the vine, ye are the branches<sup>4</sup>: He that abideth<sup>5</sup> in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much<sup>6</sup> fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Every Branch in the Vine is *designed by God* to produce - not just fruit, but the King James says "**much<sup>6</sup> fruit**"

[<sup>6</sup>polus {pronounced pol-oos'}], literally *many fruit*. The Branch is grafted into the Vine to be a *producer* of fruit, but not under your own power. The Vine is the Source of your power. If you are a Branch, then you are *clean* because you are bound to the Vine.

### **What Must I Do?**

What must you do?

a Determine your state of salvation. Are you saved? I heard an evangelist say this the other day, and its a good saying. He said "If I can talk you out of it, then it's probably not true". If you are *born again* by faith in Christ, grafted into the Vine by God's own hand (**Romans 11:17-20**), then you know that you know Jesus. He is in your heart, and you know Him. Christians are Branches who have accepted salvation *by faith in Christ*, and God, because it pleases Him, has grafted you into the Vine that is Christ. If you are not saved, then kneel in your heart and in your physical body and *call upon the name of Jesus* and you shall be saved.

b Determine the state of your relationship with the Vine. Do what Jesus said in verse 4 of our focal text- "**Abide<sup>8</sup> in me, and I in you**". This is the Aorist Active Imperative of meno<sup>8</sup> {pronounced men'-o}, which means *remain or rest* in Him. Increase your time in prayer and supplication. Are you spending two or more hours a day focused on that television, and mere minutes in prayer to Jesus? Make a vow unto God at this moment that you

20

will spend more time reflecting on the Vine, seeking His will. Do you only touch your Bible on Sunday? Make a vow unto the Vine that you will read the Scriptures for a certain amount of time daily - let's say, fifteen minutes *to start*. Let God speak to your heart. Remember the Scripture:

**1 Corinthians 11:31-32 (KJV) "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. {32} But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."**

© Refuse to allow Satan to get you off track and into unbelief. Satan led Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit. Israel lost the Promised Land, and wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Israel continued to *abide* in the Law and to *abide* in satisfying themselves - and the Father separated them from the Vine. The Scripture warns:

**Romans 11:20-23 (KJV) "Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: {21} For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. {22} Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. {23} And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again."**

d If you are in Christ, attached to the Vine, and

producing fruit for Jesus, then do not stop doing what

13. I am *commanded* to \_\_\_\_\_ for the Vine. (**John 15:1-5**)

14. When I do NOT bear fruit, what might happen? (**1 Corinthians 11:31-32; Romans 11:20-23**)

you do. You may be going through trials, but this is no more than the Father *pruning* you so that you can produce more fruit. Praise God for the trials!

Abide in Christ! Abide!

**Like a river, glorious is God's perfect peace,  
Over all victorious in its bright increase;  
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,  
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.  
Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,  
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;  
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,  
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.  
Every joy or trial falleth from above,  
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of love.  
We may trust Him fully all for us to do;  
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true!**

Like A River Glorious, Frances Ridley Havergal