

Volume 3, Day 27: Discarding Dead Branches

Jesus says the work of God in our lives is so that our joy might be full because His joy dwells in us. And there's that analogy of the vineyard, which brings us to this vine we're pondering today. Jesus says, "We're the branches and He's the vine, and if we remain in Him, we'll bear much fruit." Why does God want us to bear fruit? Well, I think He'd repeat, "...so that My joy might be in you and that your joy might be full." And then He says that to make us fruitful, one of the things He does is He prunes us.

I've pruned a few thousand grapevines in my life. And we're going to take this one on for just a little bit. The object of trying to prune a grape vine is to find the most fruitful branches to have for the next year. So you're cutting off everything that's not going to be part of the fruitfulness of the vine next year and getting it down to the five or six, hopefully good canes that will bear lots of fruit. We pull the rest of them away. So when Jesus talks about making us clean, this is what he's talking about. He says to the disciples, I've already made you clean. I've pruned away all the stuff that keeps us separate from each other so that you can live your life in Me and bear fruit.

It looks pretty severe on the vine. It looks like a lot of things are getting hurt here, but what we're really doing is getting it back to only the good canes that can bear fruit in the year to come. And when you're down to those last five canes, that's what will be fruitful. If you don't prune the vine, you get lots of leaves next year, but you won't get any grapes. So as the vinedresser, God cuts away the things that will sap our strength and diminish our fruit. It hurts, but it is necessary!