

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCH | RED LETTER TALKS

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Well, I want to welcome everybody gathered across all of our locations and those of you joining us online wherever you may be tuning in from around the world. We are thrilled that you are here.

If you have a Bible, go ahead and find John 15. John, chapter 15 is the passage that we are going to walk through together today.

When Lindsay and I were first married, the first place that we moved into was a little rental home that her grandparents owned. It was a modest little home, barely 1,000 square feet, if you held your breath. And we had to do a little bit of work in order to move into that house because the previous tenants had neglected it. That's kind of putting it mildly.

So, when we got the keys and were ready to move in, we had to tear out the carpet and I had to rent a tiller and till up the yard and reseed it because it was so bad. And when I did, I dug up all kinds of interesting things—chicken wire, Miller Light cans, a Leonard Skinner t-shirt, so this begins to tell you a little bit about the people who lived there before us.

But maybe the most disturbing thing I had to do was I had to get a power washer, not for the outside of the house, which is where you normally use a power washer, but for the inside. The cabinets and the drawers were so bad because of an ongoing neglected cockroach problem. I know this is disturbing, probably a little bit too much information, but the only way to get rid of the cockroach carcasses was to power wash them out. It was gnarly. It was wild.

But we had to do some work in order to attempt to move in and make this ours.

Now, since that time, thankfully, we've moved into a number of apartments and homes over the years and it's never been that bad. But we've always had to do at least a little bit of clean up, renovation, redecorating in order to make the home ours. And you've likely had to do that as well if you've ever moved into a dorm room, an apartment, a house.

The changes can range from small, like maybe just a fresh coat of paint or some new furniture, or some fixtures. Or maybe big changes like you've got to knock out a wall or have a kitchen island rebuilt because the previous owners decided to steal it and take the island with them. True story. I think the island needs to stay with the home, but they didn't think so.



Now, in any case, there is always some... You get the keys. You own the property; there are some renovations, some redecorations that need to be done to make it yours.

I say all of that to say this. Do you know that when the Bible speaks about the place which God lives, that God describes you as His house. Check out 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 19. It says:

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.” 1 Corinthians 6:19 (NIV)

Now understand, in the Old Testament the place where the Spirit of God resided was a place called the Temple. But then, after Jesus, the Spirit no longer resides primarily in a temple or a cathedral or a sanctuary or a church building of any kind. He resides in His people, in individuals. So, God’s Spirit is here, not because this place is any more sacred than any other but because God’s people are here.

So, God decides to move into you. Here’s the gospel message. The gospel is that you and I come to the end of ourselves, we recognize our sin and rebellion, we turn to God, we confess sin, we repent of it, and we invite Jesus into our lives, not just as Savior but as Lord. God purchases our redemption through the blood of Jesus and then it’s move in day. The Spirit of God shows up with a U-Haul truck and He wants to move into your life.

Now with all of that in mind, here’s the question. Would God be comfortable to move into your life as is? Or is there some demo work that needs to be done? Is there some renovation or some redecorating that needs to take place?

I want to be really clear about this because I don’t want you to misunderstand. God purchased your salvation; there isn’t anything that you bring to the table, no downpayment that you make. He purchases you as is.

I’ve talked to a number of people over the years who assume that they can’t come to God until they know more, or until they do more, “You know what? I’ve got a bunch of stuff I’ve got to clean up in my life and then I’ll come to God.” That’s just silly. That’s like saying, “You know what? I’ve got to clean the cup up before I let God clean the cup up.” You just bring the cup to God as is and He signs the deed, you are His. He purchases you by His blood.

And we are all fixer uppers, by the way. All of us are fixer uppers. Romans 3 says, “Nobody is righteous, not even one.” So, just like when you purchased a house, your name is on the deed, and God signed His name. You are His. And now He goes to work in the words of that great book by Dallas Willard, “To renovate your heart.” That’s a lifelong process—just renovation, knocking a wall down, redecorating. And here’s the word, it’s Lordship and it’s sanctification.

Many of us love the idea of Jesus as Savior, “Of course, man. Save me from my sins. Save me from my difficult circumstances. But He also says, “I want to be Lord of every room in your house.” That’s hard.

How many of you have that room in your house? You know the room. It’s where you throw all of the stuff whenever you have guests coming over. Do you have that room? It’s like that closet, that attic, that basement—just throw... And the house looks pristine. Just don’t go into that room. You open up that door and it’s going to be an avalanche. We’ve all got that in our hearts as well.

Or like, “God, You can have all of these rooms, just stay out of that one. That’s mine. God, can you please stay out of my bank account? Can You stay out of my bedroom. Those are the things that I want to do.” And 1 Corinthians 6 says that you are not your own. You were purchased at a price. God owns it all.

I say all of that to simply say this. When it comes to the reno work, the demolition work, the clean up that needs to be done, how does that get accomplished? Because I say some of that to you and some of you are going, “Oh, man. I’ve got a lot of work I’ve got to do.” Wrong. This isn’t work that you can do. And that brings us up to John 15.

Now, if you’re just now joining us, last week we started a series called Red Letter Talks. We are going to be in this all the way up through Easter. And what we are doing is we are looking at, in the gospels, some of the red letters. Now, the red letters are the words that Jesus spoke directly, Himself. So these are conversations He had. These are messages that He preached. These are things that came directly out of His mouth.

You might be like, “Okay, well what is the difference between that and the other stuff?” Well, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are biographies of Jesus’ life. So, these are the things that Matthew, Mark, and Luke either saw or heard Jesus say and do, or they talked to others who saw Him say and do these things and they recorded them.

The red letters are the words directly from Jesus. The reason why it’s so important to read the red letters is, if you want to know what God would say, look at the red letters, because Jesus is God in the flesh.

So as we’re going through this, last week we were in John 14. John 14, 15, and 16 in the gospel of John, these passages are known as The Final Discourse. What that means is, these are the final conversations that Jesus is having with His closest followers, His disciples, before His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. These are some of the primary things He wants them, and us as well, as disciples, to know and to apply to our lives.

Last week we were in John 14, Jesus met the disciples in the Upper Room, they are sharing the Lord's Supper, and He says something that is astounding to them. He goes, "Hey, guys. I'm getting ready to go away. You're going to do the same things I've been doing." And then He one ups it. He goes, "You're going to do even greater things."

Last week I said greater things is a reference to salvation. It's a reference to conversions. People seeing their lives changed, moving from darkness into light. And we've just seen that through history. There have been more people becoming Christians in the last 150 years than in the previous 2,000.

We're seeing these awakenings and there is this spirit right now of fear and division and anger and anxiety and at the same time we can feel God on the move directing people's hearts more and more toward Him. So, those words of Jesus are coming true, "Even greater things." And He says this to the disciples.

Now, as we come to 15, if I'm one of the disciples, I'm thinking to myself, "How are we going to do these greater things?" And so they leave the Upper Room, they are walking to the garden of Gethsemane. It's the cool of the evening. And they walk past some ancient vineyards that have been producing fruit for decades.

This prompts a metaphor that Jesus is going to use that is so vivid and helpful for us in our understanding of whose job it is to renovate our hearts and to produce some fruit in and through our lives. So, let's look at these red letters of Jesus. I'm just going to read the first 8 verses of chapter 15. Jesus says:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine.

"Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."
John 15:1-8 (NIV)

Jesus says, "I am the vine." Now if you study that metaphor throughout Scripture, you'll find that that metaphor was used often in the Old Testament to describe God's people, the Israelites. But it was often used as a rebuke. So God would say to the Israelites, "You guys are like a vine that bears no fruit."

And the disciples would have been very familiar with those passages of Scripture. So, when Jesus uses it, they would have understood the indicting metaphor. But something changes when Jesus uses the metaphor. Jesus says, "No, I'm the vine." And they would have immediately picked up on that. Something had changed.

In other words, Jesus is going, "You're not the vine. I'm the vine. It didn't work before when you tried to be the vine." The Israelites tried to be the vine for decades and they couldn't produce any fruit.

"I am the vine." What does that mean? Well, that means that Jesus wants to do for you and me what we could never do on our own. He wants to accomplish in you what you could never do. He wants to produce some fruit in your life that you haven't been able to grow on your own.

Okay, so He's the vine. What do we do? You're the branch. Just be the branch. Well, what do branches do? Branches only have one job. Stay connected to the vine. Well, what does that mean? Well, let me just give you a couple of suggestions here. Jot down some notes. Reflect on this later.

Being the branch means: finding significance in who I am, not what I do.

Success and significance in your life aren't based on what you do, but who you're connected to

Being the branch means, first of all, finding significance in who I am. A better way of saying that is who I now am in Jesus Christ. Not what I do. So he told them in the Upper Room that they were going to do the same things that He had done and even greater things than these. So, how are they going to do these greater things?

Now, Jesus nowhere in the passage says, "Okay, guys. Huddle up. Here's how you're going to do these greater things. I've actually gone to the liberty of evolving five-year strategic plans for each one of you. Based upon your Meyer's Briggs, your Gifts profile, your StrengthsFinder all cross correlated with your Enneagram number and your Wing. Alright? And if you can just follow this strategic plan to a T then you're going to find your life's purpose and you're going to fulfill the Great Commission and there will be a nice little bonus for you at the Rapture."

No, Jesus doesn't say any of that. That's what we do. That's what we say. Here's what Jesus says. Here's how you're going to do these greater things: Understand your role, "I am the vine, God is the gardener, you're the branch. Just be the branch."

"Oh, okay. I think I've got it. But what does that mean?" Well, it means that success and significance in your life is not based just on what you do, but it's who you are connected to. Oftentimes, tragically, especially within the church, in our individual walks with the Lord our focus has a tendency to be on doing. But Jesus keeps putting the emphasis back on being.

And can I just say this to you right now? Can I just confess to you that, as your pastor, this is the part of the message that I wrote specifically for me. Now if that helps the rest of you all, that's great. But this is primarily for me. What you need to understand about me, as your pastor, is that I'm in recovery. I'm an addict. I am addicted to accomplishment, progress, and productivity.

Here's how bad this sickness has gotten. At night before I go to bed I usually pull out a to do list. I've actually got an app for that. I pull up my to do list and I create a to do list for the following day and by the next evening, my sense of worth, value, and identity is more closely tied to the clearing of that list than what I would like to admit.

So, the next night I just kind of look at the day, I look at my list, I look at the calendar and I determine my worth. I determine my value. I determine how good I am by what I got done.

I want to know how many emails I returned. How many decisions did I make? How many words did I write on my sermon? How many errands did I run around? How many projects did we get completed? What did I accomplish today? And if it was a good day and I cleared the list I want a little recognition for that. I'm like a dog. I roll over and I say, "Oh, come on. Rub my belly. Rub my belly. Tell me how good I did. Oh, that feels so good."

It's a sickness. That's vine life. It's finding my worth in my ability to produce. But branch life is prioritizing connection over production. Now, some of you fellow accomplisners (or could I say addicts?) you are pushing back at me right now, "What's wrong with production? What's wrong with to do lists and clearing the list? You've even got a Bible verse for that. Doesn't it say go to ant you sluggard? Proverbs talks about hard work."

I had somebody come up to me between services out in the lobby and he was like, "Hey, can you tell me what app you use?"

There is nothing wrong with production. There is nothing wrong with hard work. We've just got to make sure that we get the order right. You don't produce so that you're worthy and have value and identity so that you'll get connected. You connect and then you let God do the production through you. That is fundamentally different.

I'll just give you an example from my own life. And then you can contextualize it to yours, because you're going to have to contextualize it to what you do.

So, for me, I set a deadline every week for Wednesday at noon when I've got to have the message for the weekend done. There are a number of reasons for that because it has domino effects. The production team needs my notes. Worship needs my notes. Discipleship needs my notes to do all of the things that they are going to do.



I also like to have the message done a few days in advance just to let it marinate. So, noon on Wednesday. This creates a lot of pressure on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday morning.

So, here's what has a tendency to happen. I wake up really early in the morning. I get my cup of coffee. And I need to spend some time connecting to the vine, but I'm too busy preparing a sermon. I'm too busy preparing words from God to give to you, and I don't have time to connect to the vine. How jacked-up is that? "God, I'd love to spend time with You, but I've got to speak for You in a few days."

Here's one of the things I've noticed. Oftentimes getting up on this platform, I don't know what is going to happen. Now, here's the thing. Please don't hear me say that I shouldn't prepare because I believe that the Holy Spirit can work in preparation just as much as in the moment. But what I will say is that oftentimes I'll get up here and sometimes it's like riding a lightning bolt and sometimes it's like riding a dead donkey. And I'm like, "I don't know what is going on here, but nothing is happening."

So, a week and a half ago, Worship Night, if any of you were here, I had no idea what I was going to say. I knew that they had given me a time to jump up on the platform and say something. And I got up and most of that was impromptu, from the hip, in a Spirit led moment.

I actually went back and watched it for the first time yesterday. It was the first time I'd seen it. I don't even remember saying a lot of those things. It was one of those Holy Spirit, riding a lightning bolt things. I didn't prepare any of it. And I had a number of you come up to me and say, "That was the best message we've ever heard you preach." And I was like, "Shut up. I work hard every week, man."

THE VINE LIFE

This is what I'm talking about. It's this idea of focusing on connection and letting Jesus the vine do the production through you. Production itself is not a bad thing—all of you non-productive people are like, "Amen. Say more to that." It's about making sure that we get the order right. It's not production, then connection. It's connection, then production.

Look back at verse 1. Did you notice that Jesus uses a qualifying word before He says vine? Look at your Bibles. What did He say? He says, "I am the true vine." And that's an indication that there are imitation vines that are out there. Here's the thing. You're a branch whether you are connected to God or not. The question is: What are you connected to?

All of us are connecting ourselves to something that we think will give us worth and fulfillment and value and purpose—the question is, is it a real vine or is it an imitation



vine? And these imitation vines could be something that is destructive, maybe an addiction or maybe an unhealthy desire for more.

Oftentimes, though, the thing that we're connected to, this imitation vine, is not a bad thing. It can actually be a really, really good thing, but what makes it bad is that we turn it into a god thing. The Bible word for that is idol. The action point of this is worship.

Whatever we're connected to could be a false vine. A false vine could be something good like your career, your work. A false vine could be money. It could be sex and sexuality. An imitation vine could be working out. Whatever it is that you're connected to that you think is your identity or the thing that gives you worth, value, and purpose. But it's an imitation vine that will either produce no fruit or imitation fruit or fruit that just simply doesn't last.

So, I've got up here with me a vine with a couple of clusters of grapes, some fruit. And at a distance you may not be able to tell much of a difference between the two, but one of them is real fruit, I could pluck off a grape and eat it and it would be real. And the other is imitation fruit, it's plastic. In fact, this one is the imitation and this one is real. This one almost looks better [imitation grape cluster], just in its form. And if you were to look at it from a distance you'd be like, "Oh, man. They look the same."

Oftentimes the world looks at Christians, those who say that they follow Jesus kind of like this. They are like, "Well, they both look kind of the same but one is connected to the vine authentically, one is connected to an imitation vine in the name of Jesus, but it's imitation fruit.

So the world gets up close to Christians and then they taste what it is that we are offering, the fruit in our lives (remember the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians) and they are like, "Oh, man. This is plastic and it's tasteless." And they walk away from the church and say, "They are just a bunch of hypocrites." Guys, that's what is at stake.

We need to connect to the true vine, not an imitation vine. And many of us, we settle for the imitation vine. Look again at what it says in verse 2. Jesus goes on in the teaching and says:

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit," and then this next part is tough to hear, "while every branch that does bear fruit," what does He do? "he prunes," Why? "so that it will be even more fruitful." John 15:2 (NIV)

I can understand the first part, but that second is a difficult teaching. He says for those of us who are bearing fruit, expect some pruning. And pruning comes in different forms. Pruning involves loss of some kind. Pruning involves the conclusion or the end of something that you perceive to be good. Why? Because it's bearing fruit.

So it's a role that gets phased out. It's a program that gets cut. It's an opportunity that goes away. It's a relationship that ends. Pruning is always painful and, in the short term, it is very confusing.

Jesus says, "Please understand. God is the gardener, and He prunes, not to punish, not to stress you out, and it's not that He's distracted. He prunes so that you can bear more fruit in your life. That's the whole purpose of pruning.

You don't prune things that are dead. You prune things that are alive so that they flourish even more.

I was talking to somebody who knows a thing or two about vineyards and he said, "If you were to show up at a grape vineyard on pruning day, to the untrained eye, you would perceive that pruning to be excessive. You would assume the gardeners were destroying the vines, they were cutting so much back." But he said, "Pruning is essential for the juice of the fruit to be even sweeter." He even said this, "The more stress you put on the branches, the sweeter the fruit."

And that falls right in line with what Jesus says in this passage.

I know some of you right now are in a season of pruning and it feels excessive and it feels painful and it feels like it never ends. And I want you to know that it's not because God is neglecting you or is absent or punishing you. It is, quite possibly, because He's the Master Gardener and He's playing the long game. He wants to see sweeter fruit from your life.

So to recap from the passage there are a few different kinds of branches. He said there are branches that are connected but maybe it's a false vine or they are not really producing any sort of fruit. Then you've got branches that are bearing fruit and they get pruned. And the last thing that Jesus says is that you've got branches that are on the ground because they are no longer connected.

Every spring I know that we're going to have some pop up thunderstorms that are going to roll through and high winds and rain. And I always know every time one of those comes through in the spring that I'm going to have some clean up to do because there are branches that were connected to the trees in my yard that are going to break off and they are going to fall on the ground.

And when a branch breaks off and falls on the ground, it is no longer a branch. It's a stick. And I've got to go through and I've got to pick up sticks. It can be pretty tragic, actually. Because when you look at it you see all of the carnage after a thunderstorm. You kind of see where that branch used to go. But now it's kind of like, "I can't glue it back on. I'm not going to tape it back up there. The only thing I can do is throw it in the brush pile that I burn a couple of times a year. Which is exactly what Jesus says here in the passage.

But it wasn't that the storm caused the branch to fall off the tree because not all of the branches did. Some of the branches were able to endure it. Some of the branches stayed connected. What the strong, unexpected storm does is it reveals the strength of the connection between the branch and the tree.

And when the storms come into your life, and by the way, they always come, the connection gets revealed. All the storm did was it revealed the strength of the connection.

So, I'm going to have some branches fall off my trees this spring that didn't fall off last spring because over the course of the last year the connection has been getting weaker and weaker. There is maybe some robbing that is going on underneath the surface that just to the blind eye you wouldn't be able to see, but it's there under the surface.

And, guys, the effect of that is what sin has on our lives. You can look at somebody and on the surface you go, "Man, everything kind of seems..." Have you ever heard of somebody who kind of completely blew his life up and you are like, "What happened?" Well, it had been there all along underneath the surface.

See, sin that is unchecked or unconfessed weakens the connection between the branch and the vine. Sin that is scheduled and planned. Sin that continues to be justified and minimized, "God will forgive me. It's what He does. I'm going to go ahead and do this." You're weakening the connection between the branch and the vine. It's like an infection that spreads.

Most stick stories that I know are stories that involve unexpected storms and unchecked sin. Then Jesus says, "At that point, what do you do? What can you do?" Sometimes sticks don't want to be branches again, so you just gather them up and you throw them into the pile. And He says that it's thrown into the fire.

Fire in Scripture is the symbol of judgment and punishment. Jesus is not threatening us. He's warning us, "Man, stay connected to Me. Abide in Me. Remain in Me. Be the branch." And remember when He's saying this, He's doing this teaching on the way to Calvary, on the way to shedding His blood on a cross.

Here's why this matters. When Jesus died on the cross, He made a way for sticks to become branches again. He died so that what was once dead could live again.

And some of you maybe even today are like, "You know what? There was a time in my life when I felt connected to the vine, I felt connected to Jesus, but a storm knocked me off." Or, "Unchecked sin kind of severed my relationship. And, man, my fruit bearing days are over." No they are not. They are not. Because of the blood of Jesus you can be grafted back in.

GRAFTING

I was reading this last week about something called grafting. And grafting is defined as a process in which one part of a plant is surgically connected to another so that they can become one plant. Apparently, I can take those sticks and put them back on the tree.

In grafting here's what happens. The gardener—and who's the gardener in the passage? God. He will make a V cut or a wedge into the vine. In the passage, who is the Vine? Jesus. Gold star. You guys are awesome. So, God is the Gardener and Jesus is the Vine.

The gardener will cut a V wedge into the vine and then he'll take the stick and he'll place it into the wedge and graft it in. And that process is called, get this, bleeding. So the gardener makes the vine bleed so that the stick can be grafted back in once again. And then he seals it with wax. Then what happens is the bleeding of the vine gives nutrients to the stick, turning it into a branch once again so that it can bear fruit.

Guys, that is the gospel message. In Ephesians, chapter 1, it says in Him we have redemption through our bleeding Savior. Because He shed His blood on a cross, we can be redeemed and reconciled and restored before a holy God.

Romans, chapter 11 says we've been grafted into the family tree. None of us deserves this. We've been grafted in. God is a God who works miracles. Jesus bled so that sticks could become branches once again.

And today is the day where maybe you need to come to the realization of something in your life. I know that right now, whether you're at a physical location or whether you're watching online, maybe, right now you're going to finally see, like scales falling from your eyes, what the gospel message is and what it isn't.

Because you thought it was religion. You thought it was, "I've got to be good enough for God to receive me and then keep all of the rules." That's not what it is. You can be grafted into the family tree of God. And all that Jesus would want you to be is just be the branch. Just be the branch. Stay connected to Jesus Christ.

You can do that right now, today. Right where you are, simply by recognizing that there is a God and you are not Him. And in your sin and your rebellion you turned from God and now you're coming to Him in confession and repentance and you're asking Jesus to be Savior of your life, but also Lord of your life, which means that you're going to unlock that storage closet and let Him in there too.

Now, you allow Him to do some renovation of your heart for the rest of your days on earth, preparing you for eternity. And that is called connecting to the vine.

Right now there is somebody listening to this and you are receiving this for the very first time. You are asking Jesus to be Lord and Savior. That's happening right where you are in an instant in your seat. And I trust that right now somebody just moved from darkness into light. Some of you just moved from being severed from the vine to being grafted into the vine.

We're going to celebrate that right now. Whoever you are, wherever you are. Maybe you're at one of our campuses right now. Maybe you're in your car on your way to work listening to this later in the week. Maybe you're on the treadmill, you stop and pray. Don't hurt yourself. But that's you right now.

There are others of you though, you need to apply something different from this teaching. Some of you are realizing that maybe you've been calling yourself a Christian but you've been connected to an imitation vine. And there is a reason why you haven't been bearing fruit or bearing authentic fruit, because you've called yourself a Christian but you're actually into this thing over here.

It's the reason why you are scared to death about the election. Not because whoever we vote in there isn't important, but because that's actually become your functional savior. The Bible says that where the Spirit of God is, there is no fear. Perfect love drives out fear. And so that could be an indication that that's your imitation vine.

For some of you, it's work. For some of you it's a relationship. For some of you it's your productivity, which is why anytime you get feedback or criticism you fall apart because that's an imitation vine. And you need to be connected to the true vine, Jesus Christ.

Some of you right now are realizing that you're still connected to the vine, but man, that connection is getting weaker and weaker and weaker because of unchecked sin. And today you need to always be confessing, always be repenting. Repentance isn't something that you did at church camp when you were a kid and you became a Christian, repentance is what you do every single day. Why? To strengthen the connection.

Some of you have gotten out of the habit of coming to church. You're just like, "I don't need to go to church every week to be a Christian." That's true but you need to be with a collection of people because what we're doing right here is strengthening your connection to the vine, strengthening what connects you to the vine because for some of you storms are coming, storms are coming and they will reveal the connection.

Some of you, maybe you've been broken off from the vine and you're wondering if there is a way to ever be connected again. And there is. There is. Jesus can graft you back into the family tree by His blood. All you've got to do is come home.



So, right now, wherever you are, whatever you need to apply, whatever the Spirit of God is saying—because He’s saying something to everybody, that’s the genius of these red letters. Jesus knows what you need to hear and how you need to apply it to your life. So, would just take a few moments to do that. Just be. Just be. Remain in Him.

Father, we love You. Thank You for being the Master Gardener who knows when we need pruning even if we don’t want it. Thank You for sending us the vine, Jesus Christ. By His blood He reconciles us with You.

Father, thank You that You are a God of miracles, that You can take sticks that are on the ground and graft them into the family tree so that fruit might be borne through our lives once again.

So, whatever it is that we need to hear, whatever the Spirit of God is saying to each one of us, may we be open enough to just receive it and maybe just practice a little bit of what we just heard, just to abide, just to be in Your presence. To not race ahead too far into our day or the week that is coming up, or the to do lists that need to be done. All of that is there. We just want to connect with You and allow You to do what only You can. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

