

## I Wonder – Remain in Me



The picture above is on the board housed in the Prayer Corner. I wonder if you have been in Church if you have taken a closer look at it, or if you have seen it at a distance online, wondered what was on it? Now is an opportunity to explore it for yourselves asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you do so.

***15 Jesus: I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. <sup>2</sup> My Father examines every branch in Me and cuts away those who do not bear fruit. He leaves those bearing fruit and carefully prunes them so that they will bear more fruit; <sup>3</sup> already you are clean because you have heard My voice. <sup>4</sup> Abide in Me, and I will abide in you. A branch cannot bear fruit if it is disconnected from the vine, and neither will you if you are not connected to Me.***

***<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you abide in Me and I in you, you will bear great fruit. Without Me, you will accomplish nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is like a branch that is tossed out and shrivels up and is later gathered to be tossed into the fire to burn. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me and My voice abides in you, anything you ask will come to pass for you. <sup>8</sup> Your***

***abundant growth and your faithfulness as My followers will bring glory to the Father.***

***Jesus: <sup>9</sup> I have loved you as the Father has loved Me. Abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> Follow My example in obeying the Father's commandments and receiving His love. If you obey My commandments, you will stay in My love. <sup>11</sup> I want you to know the delight I experience, to find ultimate satisfaction, which is why I am telling you all of this. John 15:1-12 The Voice***

Take some time to read through the passage slowly lingering on any words or phrases that the Holy Spirit lights up for you. What is He saying to you?

**I wonder if there is anything that you have noticed for the first time or, overall, how does the passage make you feel? Are there any parts that leave you feeling uncomfortable?**

The Voice adds the following into the Bible passage as way of explanation:

*At a time when all of His disciples are feeling as if they are about to be uprooted, Jesus sketches a picture of this new life as a flourishing vineyard—a labyrinth of vines and strong branches steeped in rich soil, abundant grapes hanging from their vines ripening in the sun. Jesus sculpts a new garden of Eden in their imaginations—one that is bustling with fruit, sustenance, and satisfying aromas. This is the Kingdom life. It is all about connection, sustenance, and beauty. But within this promise of life is the warning that people must be in Christ or they will not experience these blessings.*

Jesus uses the picture of the vine because it was particularly significant for the day. A symbol that could be seen everywhere, and would be known to those who worshipped at the temple because a gold vine decoration could be seen at the front, communicating the idea that Israel was God's Vine, which is extended out through the New Covenant.

The picture of the vine and branch suggests a complete dependence and constant connection between each other and, the purpose of the branch is to bear fruit, and, the act of pruning intensifies the yield for the following year. Equally, a branch that is dying no longer produces fruit and will, in time fall away from the vine, rendering it useless.

**We are invited to remain or abide in Jesus, but I wonder what this means for us? I wonder how intentional we are to stay close to Jesus and if we sometimes get distracted by the circumstances of life?**

Looking again at the picture, there are hints of other Bible References, primarily Galatians 5:22-23

***<sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!***

There is a tendency to think of the text as reading fruits of the Spirit instead of FRUIT of the Spirit – one fruit, nine characteristics.

Take some time to work out which are the strongest in your life, and which characteristics need to be developed more.

For me, there is a significance in the order that they have been placed across the vine and the colours chosen, but I wonder, what would you change and why?

What do the roots and presence of water signify? And why, the butterflies?

The water itself is full of quotes from the Bible.

*Lord Jesus, You are the great I Am,  
the vine in which we are the branches.  
We thank you for your tender care for us,  
the nourishment we receive  
and the chances to grow in our Love for you.  
Help us to both receive the nutrients we need  
and the opportunities to nourish others  
and as we bear fruit for You  
may those who do not know You yet,  
be attracted by the perfume  
and the beauty of the fruit they see before them.  
Amen*

Finally from John Michael Talbot – I Am the Vine

<https://youtu.be/p8gDEydhrg4>

God Bless