

“I Am The Vine”

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

I was preaching in the far removed community of Bandana, North Carolina, for my dear friend, Pastor Jonathan Thacker. Some special folks in the church, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Buchanan, had us over to their house for Sunday dinner and a time of rest. Then, before the evening service, we were asked to come next door to their son’s house to eat a light meal with more precious people, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Buchanan and family.

Between their two houses was a small old house that had been turned into a shed. They had also turned the shed into a vineyard of sorts. It is difficult to explain, but all the way around the structure, covering all the sides and growing to the top of the shed, was a thriving grape vine. Growing out of the main roots of the vine, the beautiful branches had been allowed to climb up the walls.

You can tell it got my attention, can’t you? I confess that I was spellbound for a few minutes. Of course, my preacher-mind couldn’t help but think of the above text. When the Lord Jesus exclaimed, “I am the Vine,” the seventh and final “I Am” statement recorded in John’s Gospel, we don’t know if He had just seen a vineyard or not. But He said enough to let us see more of Himself as the life of His people.

Jesus used this image to speak of a life of vital relationship! When Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches,” He was emphasizing His union with believers. As branches are joined to a vine and only have life in that union, so we are joined to Christ and His life. We are brought into oneness of life with Him. He lives in us and we live in Him. Although it is not precisely stated in this text, He is our life!

Jesus used this image to speak of a life of constant responsibility! While Christ is in us and we are in Him, we are presented with the necessity of abiding in Him. We are never to be passive in our wonderful relationship with Jesus. We are to respond to Him, to constantly draw from His sustaining life. To the believer who cautiously and constantly abides in Him, Jesus promised, “the same bringeth much fruit.”

Jesus used this image to speak of a life of total reliance! A life of abiding in Christ is not a life of self-dependence. As the vine does not depend upon its branches, but the branches upon the vine, we are totally dependent upon the risen Lord. “Without Me,” Jesus explained, “ye can do nothing.” Jesus is the Life of life, and as we rely upon Him alone, His life flows through us and produces fruit for His glory. God grant it to be so!