

I am the vine; you are the branches, without me, you can do NOTHING.

Take a few moments to dwell on those words

I am the vine; you are the branches, without me, you can do nothing.

(Pause for a few minutes)

As I think of this past week, how often have I tried to do things on my own? (Comment on the BMO reflection from last Sunday.)

I am the vine; you are the branches. Without me you can do nothing!

On the road, a five mile stretch between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, there are many vineyards.

The people of Jesus' time would have been very familiar with the process of growing wine. But today, we simply uncork a bottle of wine. We may not know the process of growing choice grapes for special wine.

(explain the process of grafting branches onto vines with physical example)

In today's gospel Jesus says that HE is the vine:

The vine is strong; it can fight any disease or infection, even sin and death.

Jesus says that WE are the branches; we are the many kinds of grapes, a unique and gifted collection, grafted onto the vine.

However, we are very prone to disease and death.

Without me you can do nothing; you do not have the strength to battle off sin and death.

When we think we can live without God, we get into trouble.

Then Jesus continues; he says,

My father is the vinegrower

God's Spirit is coming up through the vine who is Jesus into the branches... that is us, to bring fruit and life to our world.

The union of love is not a fusing; it is a mutual indwelling.

Often best demonstrated in Christian marriage.

As stated in the Song of Songs 6:3

You are your beloved's, and he is yours. ([Song of Songs 6:3](#))

In that mutual indwelling, then, there is love, joy, peace, patience and longsuffering. But these very things are fruits of the Holy Spirit. When they grow in you, you are bearing fruit.

(give example of Steve and Carol Lawrence married 50 years.)

He prunes away anything that does not bear fruit

If you are not bearing the fruit of the Spirit, God does one of two things: either he cuts off the branch which is dead or he prunes whatever is not bearing fruit from the branch so that more fruit may come forth.

Here is the key question? “Are you bearing fruit?”

How do we know what God is expecting of us?

Just read the bible, especially the Gospels.

Note about Gandhi reading the sermon on the Mount every day of his life even though he was a Hindu.

The indwelling of God is exactly what we experience in communion.

The very Spirit of God unites us with the living God through Christ.

This is my body given for you

This is my blood shed for you.

Since I dwell within you, go do this, bear fruit, go give life to this weary world.

I am the vine; you are the branches.

Go, become a vintage which brings our world delight.