



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
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JESUS SAID 'I AM THE TRUE VINE'

Vicar's five- minute reflection

I AM THE TRUE VINE



There are several word pictures in the New Testament which describe the intimate relationship expected between Jesus and his followers. John 15, for example makes it clear that Jesus wants His followers to be as close to Him as a branch is to the vine. He also uses this word picture to show that the community that evolves from such closeness is one of interrelationship and mutuality.

To get the full sense of this interrelationship, it is helpful to note that in a vine, branches are almost completely indistinguishable from one another. It is difficult to determine where one branch stops and another branch starts. All run together as they grow out of the central vine. What this vine image suggests about the community is that there are no free-standing individuals, and that the fruitfulness of each branch depends on its relationship to the vine. Jesus stands in the same relation to His followers, and they to Him, as the vine to the branches, and the branches to the vine.

The Vine has but one purpose: to produce fruit. Without the fruit, the vine and all of its efforts are wasted. The Vine dresser has the responsibility to prune the branches. The Father's pruning occurs while the children are abiding in the vine that is the Son. Were it not for the vine, the branches would simply wither and die. They would not grow. They would not require pruning; dead branches need no pruning! Thanks to the vine, the branches do grow and consequently require God's pruning. Jesus is the catalyst for this process! Pruning seems an unpleasant prospect, but authentic Christian discipleship will reveal different issues and personal characteristics that will require sharp alteration in light of Christ's call to authentic relationship and obedience.

The branch that
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No branch is capable of surviving for a long time once cut off from the vine. Life is meaningless apart from Christ! Life is tasteless unless one remains in Christ, with the privilege of allowing His word to remain in him or her! Fruitlessness does not in any way agree with the basics of authentic Christian living!

Those who remain in Jesus are blessed. The branch that is detached from the true vine withers and dies. It cannot sustain itself, much less produce any fruit. There is no blessing to be found in a withered, dying, fruitless branch. It is cut off, and tossed into the fire.

What will be the evidence of God's bumper harvest in our lives? How will we know if fruit is being produced through us? When we abide in the true vine, Jesus Christ, we become more like Him, we behave and act more like Him, and we are passionate about God's word, living in obedience to God, and seeking to fulfil His will always. When we abide in the Vine and He is reproducing His life in us, we can rest assured that the fruit that is produced will be honouring to the Lord. This is a liberating truth!

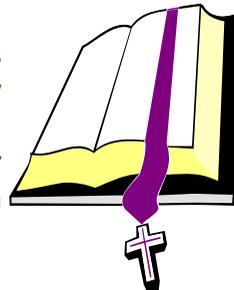
Our decaying world needs Christians, who think like Jesus; speak lovingly and with compassion like Jesus; know and live the Scriptures like Jesus; pray like Jesus and obey the Father's will like Jesus.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

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.

John 15:1-2



PARENTING TEENAGERS



When you talk to a family that has teenagers, what are the typical bottom-line issues? Not surprisingly, the issues for parents are very different from the bottom line issues for the teens.

For the parents, the bottom line issues look something like this: They see the kid they raised from an infant changing right before their eyes, usually getting more and more out of control. Their concerns can run through a whole range of problems - from slipping grades, bad attitudes and little or no communication all the way to depression, running away or drugs. The bottom line is that the parents are scared, and they want their nice kid back.

For the teens, the bottom line issues usually sound something like this: "If Mom and Dad would just get off my back and trust me, everything would be OK. I'm not a little kid anymore!" "I just want to be more and more in charge of myself!"

One useful tip for both sides is to learn to pick your battles. For the parents, not every issue needs to be a battle for control. For the teenagers, not every issue has to be a battle for independence.

There is no denying the fact that parents of today's teenage children are confused. These moms and dads are giving their children more time and attention than their parents gave them, but these kids don't seem to appreciate any of their efforts. It is a truism to say every generation of parents is uncomfortable with teenage offspring. Today, however, that statement carries even more weight. On the wide cultural plain, the efforts of parents are being counterbalanced by the shift to post-Christian post modernism. Our parents might have felt awkward about Elvis and the Beatles, but parents today don't understand how teenagers can be so entertained yet so bored, so filled with information sources yet so

(Continued next page)

Parenting Teenagers (from page 4)

unwise, so pampered yet so untrusting of authority.

Here are eight specific principles about parenting that may be of use to you.

Understand yourself. Find out if you tend to be overprotective or permissive, and also determine your spouse's tendencies. Knowing yourself provides a benchmark for making changes in how you treat your kids. It's never too late to change.

Engage them intentionally. Learn all you can about their culture, and make time to talk. Great conversations sometimes can be planned, but often the unguarded moments yield the deepest level of heart-to-heart talks. Look for those moments. Pray that God will open your eyes to see them. On the way home from a ball game, in the kitchen preparing dinner, God can give us windows to each other's soul if we look for them.

Listen. If you use those precious moments to huff and puff and blow down the teenager's house, the next moment may not come until the next millennium! Ask questions. Avoid condemnation or negative correction. And listen. Kids are looking at the expression in your eyes and listening to the tone of your voice to see if your words and your heart match up. If you say you want to listen but your voice has the taint of condemnation, the door will be shut.

Ask questions. Don't jump in with your absolutely essential, incredibly wise advice--even if you're right! Bite your tongue and ask a few questions. Remember, having the relationship is more important than forcing your opinion on your teenager. Win trust by being patient and asking the second and third questions instead of looking like a know-it-all. Pursue your teenager gently. (to be concluded in July-August issue)

BIBLE STUDY— LUKE 24:13-35

Jesus likened himself to a vine, while the fruit bearing branches here are the disciples. God the farmer is depicted as the one who cultivates the vineyard. He waters and tends the soil, so that the vine is properly nourished. He takes pride in his crop. But this means that he also prunes the vines and removes the dead wood.



We might ask ourselves, "Why did Jesus give them this teaching now?" The answer is simple: They needed it! These men had just been informed that Jesus is going away, but that His work is going to continue, and that it is to continue through them and their lives, John 14:12. If they are to carry on the work of the Lord, then they need to know how to produce that kind of fruit in their lives.

V. 2 The Gardener removes things from the branch that sap it of vitality and strength. Things like sucker branches, useless buds, misdirected shoots, spots, discoloured leaves, etc. Anything that consumes life but produces no fruit must go!

So it is in the life of the believer. Anything that hinders a close walk with the Lord calls for pruning. And "pruning" by its very name sounds painful, because it isn't always easy to cut the junk from our lives, but if we do not do it, the Lord surely will! Notice the advice given in Hebrews 12:1: "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

How is this pruning accomplished? By the Word of God (**v.3**). The Word acts like a mirror, which reveals our true character and gives us directions (cf. James 1:23-25).

(continued on page 7)

Bible Study—Luke 24:13-35 (continued from p 6)

It also acts like a surgeon's scalpel, "cutting through everything, whether doubt or defence, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God's Word. We can't get away from it—no matter what." - Heb. 4:12-13 (The Message).

The Vine has but one purpose: to produce fruit. Without the fruit, the vine and all of its efforts are wasted. The reason the Vine desires to produce fruit is so that the vine dresser might receive the honour. When fruit is yielded in a vineyard, the vine, the branches, the soil, even the fruit do not get the credit. All the glory passes on to the Gardener. This ought to be the burning desire of every Christian: so to live our lives that every waking minute brings glory to our Father in heaven. There is something wrong in the life of any Christian where there is no desire to bring glory and honour to the God who loves, sustains and cares.

And when we speak of fruit, what do we mean? What will be produced in a life that is like an abiding branch? When we abide in the true vine, Jesus Christ we become more like Him, we behave and act more like Him, and we are burdened with the same things that burden His heart. The abiding disciple becomes Christlike as the Vine is reproducing His life in him. We can rest assured that the fruit that is produced will be honouring to the Lord. Some will produce much, some will produce little. It depends upon the will of the Vine. Our duty is to abide!

V.5 The union between the vine and the branch is the closest possible. One only needs to look at the branch to see how it is grown in and woven into the parent stem; in fact, the branch is part of the vine. The life which is in the vine, the (continued on page 12)

NOTICE BOARD

JULY 12

Our Annual summer Barbecue will take place on Sunday 12th July from 12noon –3.00pm after the morning service. Food will be served from 12noon till 2.00pm. Tickets are now on sale at £5.00, £2.50(for students) and £10 for a family with little children.

AUGUST 1

There is a one- day coach trip to Southend on Saturday August 1. There is room for 53 people. Cost of transportation only is £10:00. Please bring along a prepared lunch or buy your lunch at the venue. The coach will leave Crouch End Hill at about 9:30am and leave Southend at about 5pm. If you are planning to come, speak to Sharon Goldson or Renu Anand.

TRACT DISTRIBUTION

Our bi-monthly tract distribution is postponed till first Saturday in September due to our trip to Southend on August 1.

CONFIRMATION

We rejoice with Sarah Patricia Johnson, Zuda Lee Thomas, Sarah Louise Kilmartin and Nigel Jones who were confirmed on June 14 2009. We pray that they will continue to take their place in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ and will continue to be living witnesses for Him.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Please join us again to thank God for enabling us complete the first phase of our “church renovation, redecoration and upgrade of facilities”. A renewed church building deserves a renewed people of faith and praise, so we need a fresh visitation of God’s Spirit. Join us in prayer that we may be renewed inwardly by God’s Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit turned whimps into warriors on the day of Pentecost may He fill us anew and help us to be what God wants us to be— living witnesses for Christ.

NEWS AROUND UK.

The first poll of Britain's churchgoers, carried out for *The Sunday Telegraph*, found that thousands of them believe they are being turned down for promotion because of their faith. One in five said that they had faced opposition at work because of their beliefs.

More than half of them revealed that they had suffered some form of persecution for being a Christian.

The findings suggest a growing hostility towards religion in this country, which has been highlighted by a series of clashes between churchgoers and their employers.

Church leaders, including the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, have urged Christians to "wake up" and defend their beliefs after the suspension of Caroline Petrie, a community nurse, for offering to pray for a patient.

Churchgoers are likely to be further concerned by new guidelines warning that employees face dismissal if they share their faith with colleagues at work. Employers have been given new advice in a campaign, funded by the Government's equality watchdog, that says people who evangelise in the workplace are "highly likely" to be accused of harassment.

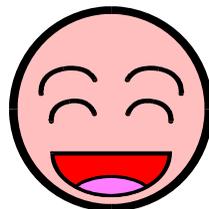
The guidelines have been drawn up by the British Humanist Association (BHA), an atheist group, with the help of a £35,000 grant from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), a taxpayer-funded body. Andrew Copson, director of education at the BHA, claimed that attempts to convert colleagues could amount to harassment under the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. Nearly three out of four of those questioned said that there is less religious freedom in the UK now than 20 years ago, and one in five said persecution of Christians is worse in this country compared to other European nations.

Jonathan Wynne-Jones, Religious Affairs Correspondent
Sunday Telegraph, Published: 30 May 2009

LAUGHTER LINES

I'm fine

Farmer Joe decided his injuries from an accident were serious enough to take the trucking company (responsible for the accident) to court.



In court, the trucking company's fancy lawyer was questioning farmer Joe. "Didn't you say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine'?" said the lawyer.

Farmer Joe responded, "Well, I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favourite mule Bessie into the....."
"I didn't ask for any details," the lawyer interrupted, "just answer the question. Did you not say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine!'"

Farmer Joe said, "Well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer and I was driving down the road..." The lawyer interrupted again and said, "Judge, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question."

By this time the Judge was fairly interested in Farmer Joe's answer and said to the lawyer, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favourite mule Bessie."

Joe thanked the Judge and proceeded, "Well, as I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie, my favourite mule, into the trailer and was driving her down the highway when this huge semi-truck and trailer ran the stop sign and smacked my truck right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting real bad and didn't want to move.

LAUGHTER LINES

However, I could hear ole Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape just by her groans. Shortly after the accident a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning so he went over to her. After he looked at her he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road with his gun in his hand and looked at me. He said, "Your mule was in such bad shape I had to shoot her - how are you feeling?" "I thought my best answer was to say 'I am fine' knowing what already happened to Bessie."

Very Important Colonel

Having just moved into his new office, a pompous, new colonel was sitting at his desk when a non commissioned officer knocked on the door. Conscious of his new position, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the NCO to enter, then said into the phone, "Yes, General, I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir. "Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young enlisted man, he asked, "What do you want?"

"Nothing important, sir," the NCO replied, "I'm just here to hook up your telephone."

Come in

An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him, "Tommy, how do you expect to get into heaven someday?"

The boy thought it over and explained, "Well, I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the gate until St. Peter says, 'For heaven's sake, Tommy, come in or stay out.'"

Bible Study—Luke 24:13-35 (continued from p 7)

sap that circulates there, is also in the branch and produces the fruit. If the branch is separated from the vine, it withers away and dies. Apart from me (*Choris emou*) you will wither and die as there is nothing but death that awaits a broken off branch (cf Ephes 2: 12) What Jesus is saying is clear. The disciples should receive their strength from Jesus. He is the true vine. If they break away from Him they will be like un-productive branches and die bearing no fruit.

Who was Jesus thinking of when He spoke of the fruitless branches? First, he was thinking of the Jews. They were branches of God's vine. That's the picture painted by many of the prophets. (cf. Isaiah 5; Jer 2:21; Ezekiel 15;1-5). The prophets show how the Jews refused to listen to God and accept Him. Therefore, they became withered and useless branches. Secondly, Jesus was thinking of people whose Christianity consisted of profession without practice, words without deeds; he was thinking of Christians who were useless branches, all leaves and no fruit. And he was thinking of those who heard the message and accepted it but then fell away, renouncing their beliefs and becoming traitors to the Master they had once pledged themselves to serve.

If you observe carefully, you will see that the Vine itself does not bear fruit! Its fruits are in the branches. The branches have the obligation of bearing fruit. The Vine supplies its life to the branches and they take that life and use it to bear fruit.

How do we apply this picture language of vine and branches in our daily life? First, it means we must bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. Second, it means there is such a thing as an unproductive life. Third, it means we must cultivate a relationship with Jesus Christ as fruit bearing is impossible without abiding; but it is inevitable with abiding. The quality and quantity of the fruit may differ, but the fruit will be inevitable.

(Concluded next page)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

- Give to God what is right not what is left.
- Man's way lead to a hopeless end ... God's way leads to an endless hope.
- A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.
- He who kneels before God can stand before anyone.
- In the sentence of life, the devil may be a comma, but never let him be the full stop.
- Are you wrinkled with burdens ? Come to the Church for a face-lift.
- When praying, don't give God instructions... Just report for duty.
- Don't wait for six strong men to take you to Church.
- We don't change God's message ... His message changes us.
- The Church is prayer - conditioned.

Bible Study Luke 24:13-35 (continued from p 12)

The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit. People don't raise grape vines to look at the pretty leaves. They take the trouble to cultivate, plant, water and tend the vines so that fruit can be enjoyed. In this sense, we can say that the fruit represents Christian character (such as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5). Fruit also implies inherent reproduction. Virtually every piece of fruit has seeds within it, seeds that are meant to reproduce more fruit. In the same way God desires that our lives bear fruit that will abide for Him.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE OVERWORKED BELIEVER

(Luke 19:11-27)

Have you ever wondered why in each church only a few people are doing everything while the majority are mere spectators? That mystery is explained by Jesus in the parable of the Ten Minas. Ten servants were each given one Mina (3 months wages) to invest.

Two servants took their work seriously and made a profit. One servant was lazy and did not invest the money so he returned the Mina to the Master. There was no report from the remaining seven servants - maybe they squandered the money on themselves.

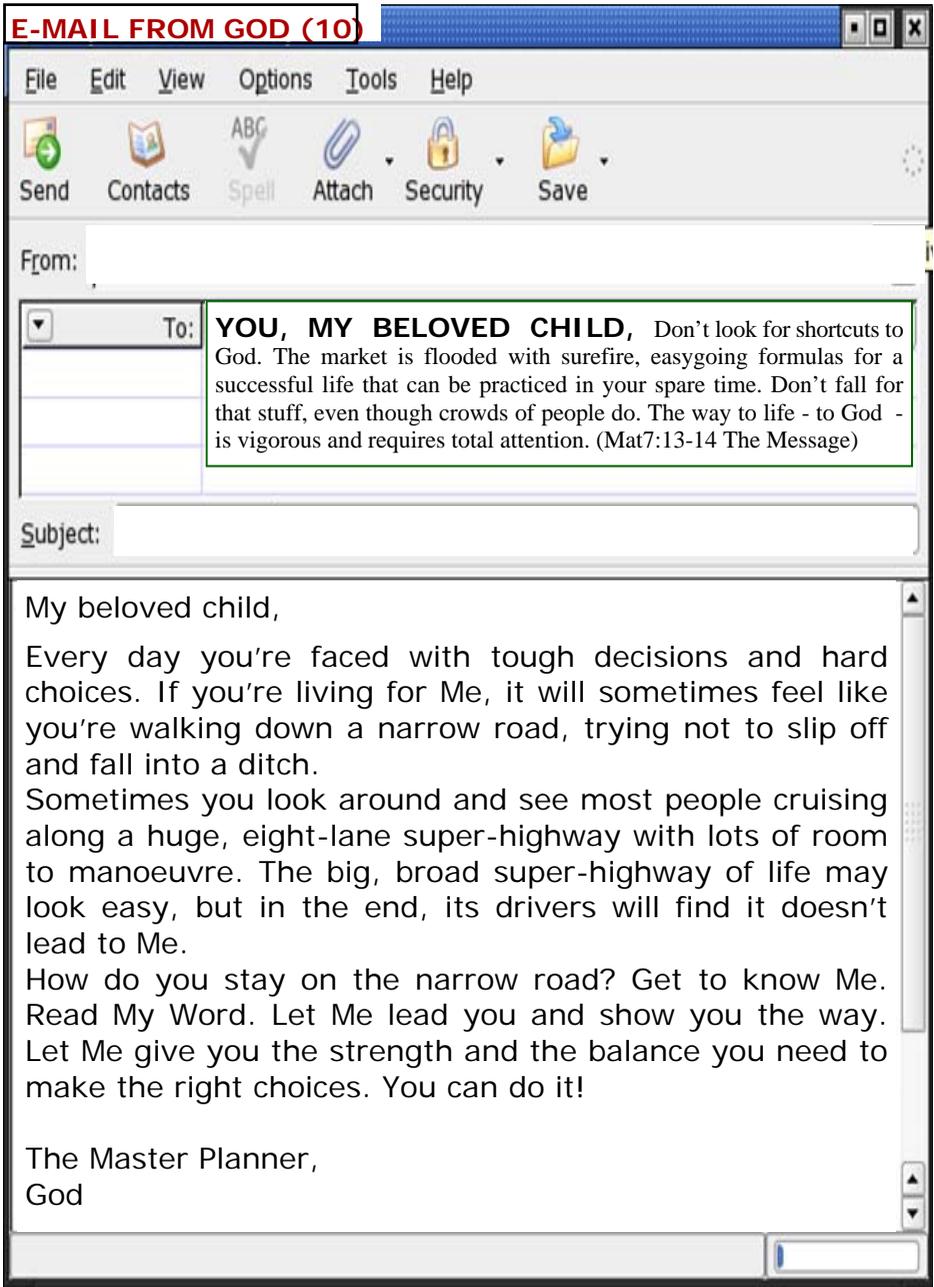
Statistically, 20% invested their Mina and made profit; 10% did nothing, just sat on the fence; 70% cared only about themselves and even opposed the Master for attempting to engage them in His service.

"Then he said to those standing by, "Take his Mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten Minas." Vs. 24. The 80% who will not serve the Lord have their responsibilities taken away and given to the 20% who are willing to serve.

This is why you sometimes feel that you are doing too much in the church while others are not. Do not worry and do not step back. You are a faithful servant that God can count on and He is entrusting the Minas that have been left redundant by the "unfaithfuls" to you to further invest wisely. He will also give you strength equal to the tasks He has given you.

Sunday and Grace Bwanhot

HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE



Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

MOTTO/TEXT FOR THE YEAR

“I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH” *PHILIPPIANS 4:13*

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are trying to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ. As a body of believers, we offer to all who come, regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resources in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities. You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday** - **8.00am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- **10.30am.** Main service with Crèche facilities

There is family/parade service once every month– usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.

- **6.00pm.** Evening worship

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Sunday - Choir practice in church (**9.30 am**)
Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**10.00 am to 12 noon**)
- Brownies meeting in church (**5.30 pm**)
- Next Prayer meetings in church - 15th June, 6th July (**8 pm**)
Wed.- Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**7:45 pm for 8.00pm start**)
Friday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**2.00 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in church and hall (**6.00 pm**)
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566

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YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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