

Life on the Vine—The Vinedresser

John 15:1-8



The symbol of the Vine is a powerful biblical picture of what the Lord means for our life with him to be.

- Jesus is the *Heavenly Vine*.
- We are his *branches*.
- The purpose of our living union with Christ is to *bear fruit*.
- Today we learn that the Father is the *Vinedresser*.

Relax, your Heavenly Father is in charge.

1. **Ownership**: you belong to the Father—you are a branch on his heavenly vine.

John 15:1–8

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”



The Old Testament often pictured *Israel* as God's vine—a powerful picture of believers' living union with God.

Isaiah 5:1-4, 7

“My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
² He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? . . .

Isaiah 5:7

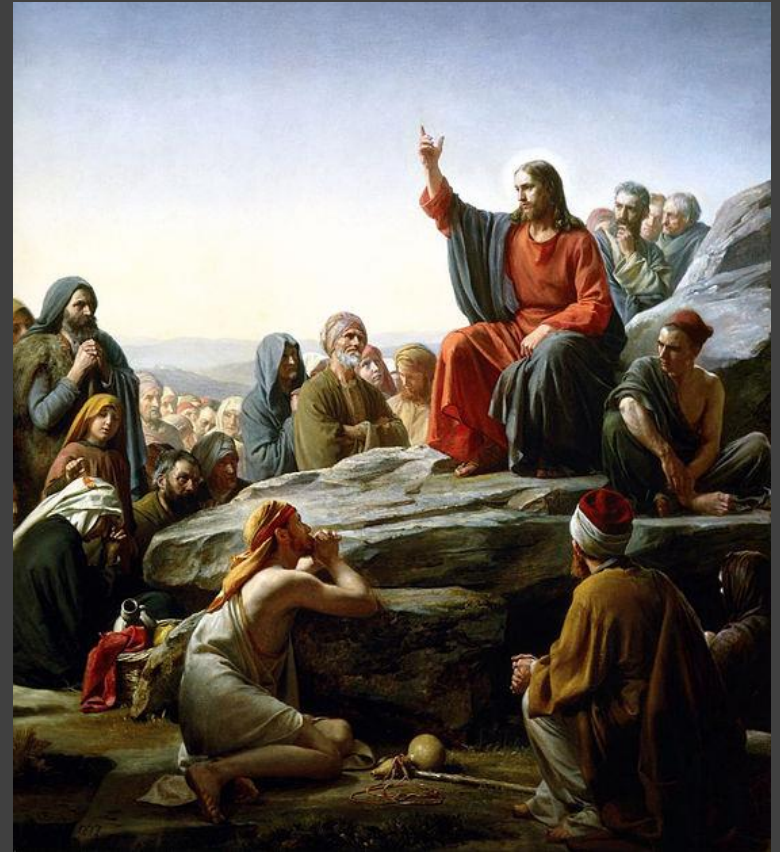
⁷ “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting.”

Isaiah 27:2–3

² In that day, “A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! ³ I, the LORD, am **its keeper**; every moment **I water it**. Lest anyone punish it, **I keep it** night and day.”

- Jesus' Farewell Discourse in John 13-16 is one of the richest portions of scripture revealing God as **our Heavenly Father**.
- 11 times during this conversation with his disciples Jesus refers to God as "**my father**."
- But he refers to him as "**the Father**" 35 times.
- *Jesus is impressing upon them that **his Father is their Father as well**.*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had taught them to pray *“Our Father who art in heaven”* and told them to be anxious for nothing because *“your Father knows what you need before you ask him”* (Matthew 6:8).





By the time Jesus teaches his disciples the parable of the True Vine, they knew that God the Father was **not only his Father**, but—because they would be united with and abide in Christ—***their Father as well.***

John 14:20–23

²⁰ In that day you will know that **I am in my Father**, and **you in me**, and **I in you**. ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And **he who loves me** will be **loved by my Father**, and **I will love him** and **manifest myself to him**.” ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?”

John 14:23

²³ Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.**



If the *nation of Israel* could be called
God's vine, how much more are *we his vine*
because *his very Spirit lives in us*.



- Every believer who has been united with Christ is a branch of God's heavenly vine.
- The Father is your Vinedresser.
- *You belong to him.*

2. **Provision:** Because we are branches on the Father's Vine, he will provide whatever we need.

John 15:1–8

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the **vinedresser.**”

Isaiah 27:3

³ I, the LORD, am its keeper; **every moment I water it.**

- There are two strong pictures of provision here: **Vinedresser** and **Father**.
- Father's *provide what children need*. We often say of a good father that he is a good provider.





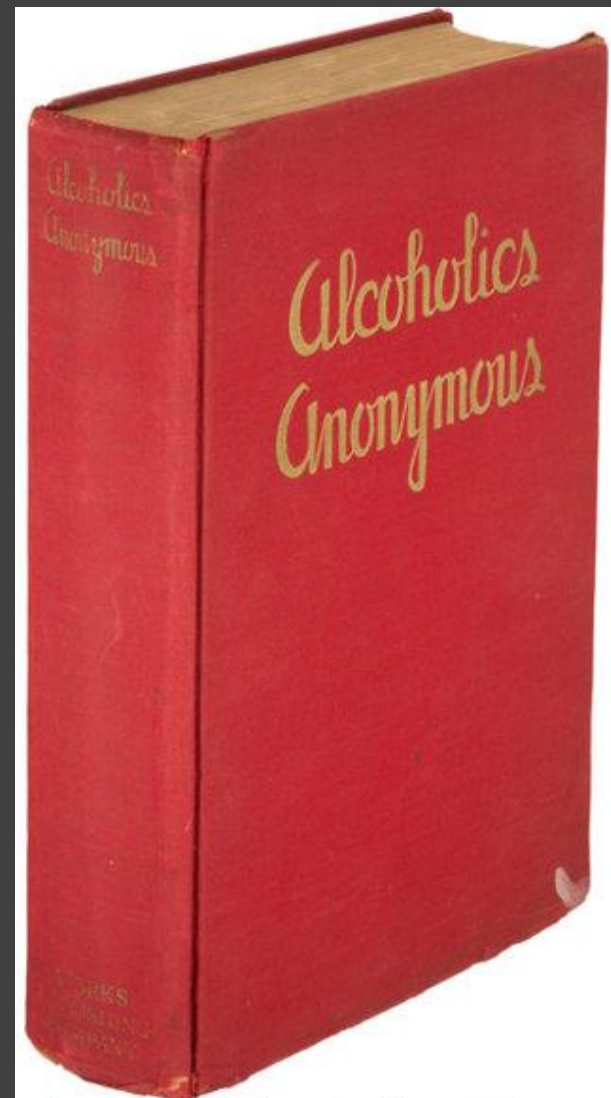
A vine needs a vinedresser to *plant* it and *prepare the place* where it is to grow, to *water* it, *feed* it, *prune* it, and *protect* it.

- At the very root of the Christian life lies the truth that *God works in us*, and that *our one work* is to *give ourselves into his hands* and *abide in Christ*, confident that he provides all we need.

All of us are in need of a Twelve-step program!

The original twelve-step program by Alcoholics Anonymous begins with this:

1. We admitted we were **powerless over alcohol**—that *our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *We came to believe that a **Power greater than ourselves** could restore us to sanity.*
3. *Made a decision to **turn our will and our lives over to the care of God** as we understood Him.*



- Surrendering to God isn't just for alcoholics and drug addicts.
- We're **all addicts**.
- We are all bound by **fatal attractions**—by **idols** of our own making.



- The first step to an abundant life is recognizing that by ourselves, we are powerless to produce anything good.
- But *Our Father is the vinedresser.*
- *Our fruitfulness is his business.*

3. **Protection**: Because we are branches on the Father's Vine, he protects and cares for us.
- God not only provides for his vine, he *protects* it as well. Look again at God's word about his vine from Isaiah 27:3.
I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish it, I keep it night and day.

Even the troubles that come to us
must first pass through the Father's
wise and loving hand.



When a child is in his father's arms,
nothing can touch it without his father's
consent.



If an earthly parent thus cares for his little one, how much more will our Heavenly Father, whose love is infinitely greater, and whose strength and wisdom can never fail, care for us.

- Nothing can touch us except by the Father's permission.
- Our troubles may *originate* in difficult circumstances of this fallen world or the evil actions of sinful people that are opposed to the Father's will.
- *But by the time those troubles reach us, they have become God's will for us, and may be accepted as directly from his hands.*

No man or company of men, no power in earth or heaven, can touch that soul that is abiding in Christ without first passing through him and receiving his permission.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

When Joseph's brothers hated him, plotted to kill him, then sold him as a slave to the Egyptians, **God used** their evil, hateful actions to accomplish his plan: to protect his family from famine and multiply generations of Israelites there until God was ready to move them to the Promised Land.

Genesis 50:20

“You intended to **harm** me, but God **intended it for good** to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

- Life is filled with broken dreams, shattered plans, and lost hope.
- The **loss of a job** can shatter dreams of financial security, professional advancement, and comfort.
- A **divorce** can shatter dreams of home, family, and a loving relationship.
- A **serious illness** can shatter dreams of a vibrant, active life full of accomplishment.
- The **death of a loved one** can shatter dreams of companionship and years of gracefully growing old together.

- So what do you do when your dreams are broken, when your plans fail, when insurmountable barriers stand in the way of your vision for the future?
- You can **give up** and say, “It’s not worth the effort,” and then just be and do the least you can with the rest of your life.
- You can **grow bitter** and lash out at God, and others, living a life that's sour to you and all you touch.
- You can **live in the past**, the good old days, and miss God's present and future blessing and victory.

- Or, you can *trust your Heavenly Father*, knowing that everything that happens to us is for *our good* and *God's glory*.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Conclusion

- Jesus himself perfectly modeled absolute **surrender to** and **dependence upon** the life and strength of the Father.

John 14:10

“I am in the Father and the Father is in me. The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.”

The same will be true of us as we abide in Christ as branches of the True Vine, tended by the Heavenly Vinedresser.







Alnilam, the middle star in Orion's Belt is 2,000 light years from earth.

Psalm 8

¹ O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. . . .

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is man that **you are mindful of him**,
and the son of man that **you care for him**?

- The Heavenly Father is the Vinedresser.
- You are a branch on his vine.
- You **belong** to him.
- He will **provide** for you.
- He will **protect** you.
- **Relax, your Heavenly Father is in charge.**