

Friday - March 8

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 bear even more fruit...I am the vine and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15: 1-2, 5

When we face difficult situations, we tend to rely on ourselves. We think we need to work harder, to pull ourselves up by our boot straps. As a familiar current saying goes, how's that working for ya?

Jan and I recently heard a speaker named Kyle Idelman. I have been reading his latest book *When Your Way Isn't Working*. Idelman's point in the book is that we all need help in tough times and there are two sources we can rely on. The first is our connection to Jesus and through Him to the Father. The second is our connection to each other.

Remaining connected to Jesus - the vine - provides the nourishment needed to be strong in the face of trouble. Cut off from Him, we are dead sticks. In a vine, the branches are intertwined and support each other. Similarly, we need to rely on each other in difficulties, accepting support and help when you need it.

If you are separated from the vine, don't give up hope. The gardener is willing to pick you up, clean you off and graft you back into the vine. The process of preparing the fallen branch and reattaching it to the vine is called bleeding, something Jesus already did for us.

Don Moore

Prayer: Father, Keep me attached to You. Remind me I am not alone - that I can and should depend on You and on the other branches of the vine. Amen.