

The True Vine

By Paris Reidhead*

John the 15th chapter I shall read the first eight verses,

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 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. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Let's go back to the first words, shall we, “I am the true vine.” And by the very statement we understand clearly that there must be another vine. For the word ‘true’ distinguishes the vines to which He would make reference. If He is the true vine, is there not another, a wild vine, a false vine. Is there not another source of life another kind of life? And obviously there is. And we understand that that wild vine of Satan's planting in the garden with the first branches, Eve and Adam. And then across the centuries included the whole family of men and finally included you and me. Is the vine the fruit of which bitter and poisonous.

There is evidence, clear evidence that God has been searching across the centuries looking for some branch in this vine that did not have this death in it. For He said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord which search the heart.” (Jer. 17:9,10) And the picture is God's searching each branch that spouts on this vine looking for one the nature of which is not corrupted and not polluted and finding that every single person born into the world possessing human life and nature has the same corruption and the same poison. What is the nature of this? Well, we find that, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23) “And death has passed upon all men for they all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12)

The other evening we spoke briefly to the nature of sin. What is it? Charles Finney¹ once said one hundred and fifty years ago, “I don't preach any longer. I just try to explain what other people preach.” We hear a great many sermons about sin, but seldom do we hear it explained. We have pointed out that sin in its essence is selfishness, self-will, self-pleasing, the deification of self, the making of one's personal happiness the end of his being, the setting up of rules by which one will achieve and secure and enjoy that happiness. It's self-idolatry, self-worship, self-glorification, and it is this that was introduced into the family of men back in the garden. When Satan said to Eve, “ye shall be as gods.” (Gen. 3:5) Choose how to be happy. Make your own rules. Decide what is good for you. And so across the centuries this poison has continued in the heart stream of the race and we call it a vine, a wild vine.

What is some of the fruit? What is some of the evidence that the Word of God has to prove to us that this vine is indeed as poisonous as we would assume from what we've said? I think if you would make note of this Scriptures they would be of help to you in the future. When perhaps you are using this or another portion in your witness to another. And so if you'll turn first to a Scripture to which I come so frequently because it is so pertain and clear and is back in the Old Testament. We seldom find Scripture that are quite as applicable to the human heart as this in the Old Testament, Proverbs chapter 6, verses 16 to 19. Here the wise man, the king is writing for his son has described those things which God hates, which God abominates. And so in these few verses, four verses we have a cluster of the wild grapes found on the wild vines, “These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:” What are they? (Pro. 6:16) First, “A proud look,” be it understood tonight, that God is opposed to pride every kind national pride, racial pride, family pride, pride of standing social standing, financial pride, cultural pride, linguistic pride, fascial pride, education pride, and above all, I think the one that is most abhorrent is religious

¹ Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) An American Presbyterian minister and leader in the Second Great Awakening in the United States.

pride, that which wraps the robes of its improper and incomplete self-righteousness around it. (Pro. 6:17) Tucks in its skirts looks across the way and says, "Oh thank God I am not like other men are." Pride, God hates it. And it is stated here conclusively that this is something with which God cannot find anyway to make peace. God hates a lying look, "a lying tongue," excuse me. "A proud look, and a lying tongue," that which uses the speech organs for the intention of devising for personal gain. "Hands that shed incontinent blood," behind the hands a heart that has the intention to hurt. (Pro. 6:17) And thus God has said, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." (I John 3:15) "Hands that shed incontinent blood," really refer to a heart that has the intention to harm. "A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations," is a lascivious heart. A heart that enjoys immortality in the mental level, that wouldn't perhaps consider active immortality, but would take the thoughts of sin. (Pro. 6:18) "Feet that be swift in running to mischief," obviously has reference to tale bearing feet. (Pro. 6:18) Feet don't bare tales; hearts do men have the intention to use information for the purpose of harm. And so they whisper, but always it is to tear down the one by which the whispering is done. They backbit and so we'll see this elsewhere referred to. God hates, "a false witness that speaketh lies," or one that would attest to something which isn't so. (Pro. 6:19) And finally He abominates "the one that sows discord among brethren." (Pro. 6:19) Now this is a cluster of the grapes that you'll find hanging on the wild vine.

We'll join to this another, which I think is equally pertinent in Mark the 7th chapter where our Lord Jesus describes what comes out of the defiled heart. He Himself has been rebuked and His disciples because they haven't gone through ceremonial washing before their meal. And so our Lord says, "That which cometh out of a man, that defile him." (Mark 7:15) And then He said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts," (Mark 7:21) here again a cluster of bad conduct that is expressed by the life of the wild vine and reveals the nature of that life. "Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:22,23)

Again we will turn to Romans the first chapter there we can see the last of what could be many different clusters of that would be appropriate to describe and define the nature of this wild vine of Adam's family. Your nature and mine the fruit of sin or the conduct of those that are committed to the end of self-pleasing. Notice in verse 29, "Being filled," here is a full cluster, "with all unrighteousness," if any is omitted in that which is particular that follows it is here in this general statement. "Fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, and haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." (Rom. 1:29-32)

Now here it is this is what comes off of that wild vine. This is what you'll find and it doesn't all have to be there. You'll notice that each of these omitted some that were found in the others and included some that were not found elsewhere. And so for one to discover that his nature is that described by the wild vine, doesn't mean that he has to have any one of these clusters complete. But anyone of them in abundance is sufficient evidence to reveal the nature of the vine. And my purpose in dwelling on this is to give you some idea as to the difficulty that is expressed here in this first verse of the 15th chapter of John, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." He didn't say my witnesses are. He didn't say preacher are. He didn't say Sunday school teachers are the husbandman. He didn't say evangelists are the husbandman or that personal workers were. You understand we have a part with God in this task of taking a branch out of the wild vine and putting it in the true vine. But our 20th century church is in its debilitated and unblessable state largely because we have usurped the sovereign prerogative of the Holy Ghost and have assumed them to be ours and have neglected the responsibilities that were given to us by God.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Only God can awaken a sinner. You can shout at him, jostle him, frighten him, but you can't inwardly awaken him to his danger, only God can do this. He can do it via any of many means. He can do it by national calamity, but there isn't anything in national calamity to awaken sinners or when national calamity comes sinners would be awakened generally. He can do it by personal accidents, but there is nothing in personal accidents to have awakened sinners, because a multitudes have personal accidents that are never awakened. He can do it by a climatic change such as a drought or a hurricane, but obviously there is nothing in these events to awaken sinners, because many go through them and who are not awakened. He could do it by war. He could do it by sickness. He could do it by financial loss.

But the thing we must understand is that it is the work of the Spirit of God to awaken the sinner and not the natural effect of the event. If we see this then we realize that we can't awaken sinners. Only God can do that. But we can do something for them, we can intercede for them. We can take their place before God and legally represent them at the throne. We can witness to them. We can thus by our words bring a proper class of Scriptures to bare upon their state. Scriptures which the Holy Ghost will use and we can live Christ before them as samples of His grace. These things we can do, but we can't convict a sinner. However, our lives have been used by the Spirit of God to do that. And the Word that we can apply also be in His hand scalpel to divide between soul and spirit. We can't bring a sinner to repentance, though we can tell him he must repent. It is the work of the Spirit of God using those agencies that are consistent with His character and purpose that causes a man to come to the place where he utterly renounce his own right to rule and abandons himself to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. We can tell a sinner that he must receive Christ by faith. But we cannot give him that faith. "I know not how this saving faith to me He doth impart or how believing in His Word brought peace within my heart."² It is the work of the Spirit of God. He is the husbandman.

Now, we are laborers together with Him. But you see what we have done that has caused the tragic condition of the church is that we have reduce the Scriptures down to fit our agency and our abilities. And so some of us did, have done, are doing as I did for many years become personal workers that assume that God finished all that He was doing when He gave us the book (Bible) and the rest is up to us. And so we see a sinner and we say, "Are you a sinner?" "Well, I guess so." "Well, when you die will you go to heaven or hell?" "Well, I guess I would go to hell." "Would you like to go to heaven?" "Sure." And then we get into one verse and say, "Do you agree to that?" "Well, yes. It is in the Bible." The second one, "We agree to that." Third, that one says, "Saved, doesn't it? Now don't make God a liar. See that says, 'Saved.'" And so the person then agrees that it says saved. It is perfectly clear that is what it says, "Saved." You said that if he wasn't saved, because it says there he is saved, he'd make God out a liar. So he doesn't want to do that add to his already mountain of crimes. So he says alright and you smile very broadly, take him by the hand and take him and he assumes he is saved and you thus become the spirit of adoption. You have witnesses to him that he is born of God. And if you usurped the probative reserved to the Holy Ghost and thus with that as the grounds of his assurance he may come into the church and he may take his place as a Sunday school teacher, or as an officer. And all he has ever seen is the fact that there is a hell, he is a candidate for it. Jesus died nineteen hundred years ago and he believes it. Because he believes it he assumes that he is born of God. He has everything, but life. He has been put there by the pastor. He has been put there by the evangelist. He has been put there by the Sunday school teacher. He has been wrapped around the vine. He has been tied to it, but he has never BEEN PLACED INTO IT. He may have been ½ of one percent or 3% or 10% some anyhow, bless God, are through even this means brought to a saving relationship with Christ. So when we would deal with it we're not trying to hurt anything correct or help us to see what happened in our hearts that we may understand all that God has for us.

Now when God's purpose is realized, there has been something you've done, something the sinner has done and something that He's done. Perhaps we could put it this way, all of salvation depends upon you. If you don't pray and witness and live consistently then God's prime means of reaching others is thwarted. All of God's grace depends upon the sinner, for if he doesn't repent and doesn't believe and savingly embrace Christ, he'll perish. We can turn around and say all of God's grace depends upon God. For it is God that awakens. God that brings to conviction and He that stirs to repentance, quicken faith, He that justifies, He that regenerates. He that witnesses. And so in a sense it is depended upon us, it is depended upon the sinner and it is depended on God.

But the text says, "My Father is the husbandman." Notice what He does, the first thing is to awaken the sinner, with an inward awareness of his need, an inward sense of danger, of jeopardy. This is the good work of fear. When he becomes convinced by some inward operation of God that there is that in his life that places him in eternal jeopardy. Awakening. Then on the bases of this a proper application of the Word to his mind and heart he is brought to conviction. Here it is the Spirit of God enables him to see himself as God sees him and causes him to take the same attitude toward himself that God has taken toward him. In other words, he stands on the side of the Law and says to himself, the culprit, "You're guilty!" Now usually the culprit stands on

² "I Know Whom I Have Believed" Words by Daniel W. Whittle and Music by James McGranahan, 1883.

the other side and looks into the face of the Law and says, "I'm innocent!" But when he is convicted of the Holy Ghost he feels the same way about himself that God feels and he takes sides with God against himself and says of himself, yes I deserve everything that God's wrath could bring. He himself is convinced in his own mind of his guilt, of his unworthiness, and of the justice of God's condemnation upon him. But he further more seen the enormity of his sin and so he repents. And it is to this that the Spirit of God brings him, commanding him to repent. The reason sinners don't repent is not because they can't repent, but because they won't repent. And they never would repent if God and grace didn't move upon their hearts. But there are still those upon whom He moves that do not repent. And so we bring it right back to the mortal responsibility of the individual to whom God speaks saying repent or perish! Turn or burn.

So this is the next thing that's done. When the Spirit of God would put branch cut a branch out of the wild vine and put it into the true vine. Then there is repentance produced in the heart by the good auspices of God's grace. Then as the person is brought to that place where he sees what he is and abhorred what he is, turned from what he is utterly changing his direction, and purpose. On the bases of this faith is released in his heart. His mind and spirit coincide with the truth he learns and his faith leaps out cross 1900 years to savingly embrace Jesus Christ. And at that moment of receiving saving faith two miracles happened, in heaven he is justified. This means that all of his sin counted to Christ and the righteousness of Christ is counted to him. And he stands before the tribunal of eternal justice as righteousness' God's Holy Son. He is justified. But at the very instance that he is justified in heaven, he is regenerated in his heart, the Holy Spirit joins Himself to Him in life quickening agency and work, and he knows that he is born of God, because he has the witness of the Spirit. Now this is something of what the Father does as the Husbandman when He cuts a branch out of the wild vine and puts it into the true vine.

Do you anything about horticulture? You wouldn't have to know much to know as much as I do, I assure you. But I did learn this. Years ago when I was down south I saw and later was confirmed in a magazine article. I learned that there was one place somewhere in the hills of Virginia, that they found a tree. A tree that had that no one had remembered planting and hadn't intended it to be that kind of a tree at all. But when it began to bear fruit, everyone in the community was amazed because the fruit had a peculiarly wonderful taste. It was so sweet. And there were 5 little nobs on the end of each apple. And so they just like it. They tried to sell it to one horticulturalist, "Oh no, today we want smooth fruit and that rough fruit isn't going to acceptable." But Stark Brothers Nursery out in Missouri heard about it and they said, "Why there is a fruit that has a built in trade mark." And they came over to Virginia and they found the place, bought the land on which stood, put a house and cage over the tree, tenderly took the branches from West Virginia out to Missouri, grafted them into the basic stock that they used for apples and produced what we call "a delicious apple". Now you know that when they send those three out to Persia and plant them on the hillside and the counties. Water them with irrigation water that they get the same kind of fruit under the Persian sun and in Persian soil that they get in West Virginia, even though that little bud was grafted into to a bitter sour crab apple root that could resist fungus and all the diseases of the soil.

Now you say what is there excited about that, nothing. That's just the law of nature when you graft from one tree into another the branch produced it bears the kind of fruit characterizes the tree from which it came. But notice what that would means that if you took a branch out of the wild vine and put it the true vine. When the life of the true vine came into the branch it would still bear the kind of fruit that characterized the wild vine. That's nature. Notice what happens when God the Husbandman, everything gets revised. He cuts a branch out of the wild vine and then He brings that branch over and He puts it in true vine and when the life of the true vine surges into the branch, the nature of the branch is changed. Because it bears the fruit that characterized the vine into which it's come not from which it has come. And so we find that very branch that the Father puts in begins to bear some fruit. And if the branch is there and it doesn't bear fruit it is cut out. When the Father does the work there is the evidence of the genuineness of His work, because it bears fruit. And then you see the Father isn't satisfied with fruit, He wants to take all of the influence and all of the effects of that wild vine and so He begins to purge. And He cuts here and He cuts there and when a sprout comes that characterize the wild vine He cuts on that. And pretty soon the branch gets a voice of its own, it begins to complain and say, I never knew what temptation was till I was born again. Oh may how hard it's been for me to...ever since I become a Christian.

I just heard on the radio this evening from my friend out in Lincoln something that thrilled me. He told about a man who had gone into the peach business. And he had planted his peaches. He bought the land, fertilized it, put the peaches in. And then

they got to the place that they got big enough to bloom and they were all blooming and they had a frost. So he didn't come to church for one week and then he didn't come to church for two weeks, he didn't come to church for three weeks. Finally, the preacher went to see him and he said, "No, I am not going to go to church anymore. God knows how hard I worked to get this peach orchard. And just waited till my peach trees got in bloom and then He sent a frost. And I'm just not going to go to church and support church when God does things like that to people." The preacher looked at him and said, "Wait a minute. Did you know this, God isn't in the peach raising business? God is in the business of raising men. And whereas it would be much better for the peaches if you didn't have a frost. Many times the only way you can make a man is to have a frost." And God is more interested in you than He is what you are doing. And He is more interested in making you like Christ than He is making you prosperous. And so He has just sent this along to purge you of a lot that He has to deal with.

And you understand that this is what God does is grace. His purpose in grace isn't to make you successful and prosperous. His purpose in grace isn't to make you famous. His purpose in grace to make you like Jesus Christ and so He says, "Every branch in Me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it." Do you know anything about pruning? Have you ever seen an expert horticulturist go into his vineyard or go into his orchard. Have you ever seen the way that knife cuts? It cuts here. It cuts there. And if you stand back and scream at him and say don't you're ruining the tree! He said no. Not ruining the tree. I am just cutting away what isn't important and He snips and he cuts. He snips and he cuts. Pretty soon you think there is nothing left. Come back this fall and we'll see what is left. And when you come back, you find all that he cut away that which would have drained the life off and kept the fruit from forming.

My dear friend, when He put you into that vine it wasn't just to secure you against the fire into which the branches are cast that bear no fruit. That wasn't it. Oh, where we get the idea that God's purpose and grace was to save us from hell? That was the prime object. Blessed be His Holy Name! He has intended to do that and He will do that, but that's not His primary object. His primary purpose is to save us from sin and save us from ourselves. And so for that reason He has to use something to cut and He does. He uses friends and He uses circumstances and He uses accidents and failure and sickness and everything kind of thing that could possibly come to a member of the human family. And it comes when you're in Christ for one end and one only is to shape and mold and purge you, so that you can bring forth more fruit.

Well, we read, "Now may the God of peace give you joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost." And the first fruit of your being born again, well is that the burden of sin is lifted and you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And you know that your sins are gone and you can call all mighty God, Abba Father. And you know you are saved.

And that would be a good place to stay, except God doesn't want us to stay there. We would be content, but He isn't. So the first you know pretty soon He takes away a little of that joy. And He presses us to the Word and then He takes away a little of that peace. And He begins to make us restless then He allows us to be tempted. And occasionally there may times when we might fall and fail Him. And so in our despair we cry out, Oh God what is this? And He brings us further to the Word and closer to Himself. And He says, now this must go and so He snips here this must go and that. And He is purging and He is cutting, so that there will be more fruit, more fruit. But you know that which does the purging isn't just circumstances, it isn't just events, it isn't just accidents or sickness or something else. These things God uses, but I think they are just sort of the prelude, just the beginning. Because He has something far more than that, the purging that I see here is that which brings us to the place where instead of the knife trimming around the edges the knife goes right to root of the problem and the heart of the matter. And I believe that the purging to which our hearts at least would bring us, whether you make direct reference of not I make direct reference to it, "Every branch in Him that beareth fruit, he purgeth." Do you know where that pruning takes place? I'll tell you, it takes place right at the cross. Up until that time there is preparation you say, Oh God I want You to give my victory of my tongue. I am so nasty mean to my children. I just lose my temper so. And then you say, Lord give me victory over my thoughts. I don't use my thoughts, I think such critical thoughts. And so you allow your heart to be purged by praying for separate things. Pretty soon it gets too much for you. And you say, Lord it doesn't seem to help. I get victory over scolding my children, then I scold my husband. I get in trouble with my neighbors. My problems seem...I can't keep up with it. The sprouts grow so fast Lord that I just can't get around the bush fast enough to trim them off. Isn't there something better?

A letter came to someone here the other day about a person who said some years ago they'd heard the message of the cross down in Georgia. They said it has been such a long process. Does God have sort of something equivalent to a good old automobile accident where you can get it done in a hurry? And I plan anticipate writing to this person whom I have known in the past and telling them there is an accident, but not an automobile accident. But it is worse. It's at Calvary and that's the place where the cross instead of just trimming along the edges goes right to the heart.

You hear about the little boy that was given a puppy and according its breed, its tail should be docked. And so he said, daddy, please let me take care of it, because I'm afraid you'd hurt it. Pretty soon the little dog died. And his daddy went to him and said what happen? Well, I don't know. I was just cutting his tail off an inch at a time, so it wouldn't hurt him so bad. And he seem to just die of the pain. And there are some people that seem to prefer this they want to have the problem, just cut it off an inch at a time. It'll never do. It'll never do. The place of purging here is when you come to that point where you see it isn't just something that's the matter with you. It isn't just some problem that you have if God will help me here. That isn't going to solve the problem at all, because everything grows out of the place has the same smell just as everything.

Years ago when I was boy, there was a man up in the country near us north Minneapolis. I worked on his little truck garden. One of the jobs I had to get money enough to go to the YMCA camp was to bunch onions. I hope you've never done it. If you have I feel as sorry for you as I feel for myself when I tell about it. But for about three weeks 10 hours a day at \$.10 an hour I peeled these onions. Then I bunched them together. You know what, it took me all summer to get my hands clean. If I ate ever so nice a piece of candy, I was eating onions. If it was roast chicken it was onions. If it was mother's apple pie it was onions. Anything that got up here, it was onions. I'd wash it off, soak my hands in perfume, and then they would dry, perfumed onions. Onion perfume. I just couldn't get the onion off! And I thought I was hard put to, but you know there came a time when I found that it was something worse than onions. I began to deal with some other problems I had and I said, Oh God, if You'll save me from my critical mind. I wanted Him to purge me there. It didn't help my censorious spirit, my sarcastic tongue. It was all onion. Peel it off here and it came back there. It didn't make any difference.

Oh I am so glad that there came a day when I went down to a little conference on the west coast of Florida and I hear a man say, "Some of you have been trying to get victory over yourself, in your nature and your traits and your disposition for years and years and years. And you haven't gotten anywhere. You've been cutting it off a little at a time and trimming here and trimming there. Praying about this and working about that. It hasn't done any good. And you know what's your problem?" And when by that time there was only two of us there, as far as I was concerned, him and me. I almost shouted out in the meeting go ahead tell us what is it, I'm anxious to know? And then he said, "Your problem is that when you came to Jesus Christ, the only thing you were concerned about was the sin that was going to send you to hell. And you saw Christ dying for you to take away the sin that would send you to hell. And you received Him as your substitute. You received as the One who died and scarified His life for you and all you believed for you got. And all you asked for was forgiveness. All you asked for is pardon. And you got everything you asked for. And ever since then you've been trying to live the Christian life in your own energy and your own strength and you thought you could produce something for God. And you've been falling on your face and stumbling and crawling getting up with good resolution and new determination only to fall again. And all of your problem comes, because you've never looked at the cross from the inside." And I as much as shout it out, "What do you mean look at the cross from the inside?" And then he said to the congregation, "Shut your eyes." And he took us up by imagination to the cross and then he said, "Now, walk around under that arm, the left arm of the Lord. And under the cross turn around and look up to see those nails. Do you see how far they have protruded though the board? And look do you see there is a form there like a person. Can you see who it is? Don't you see now? Why that person on the other side of the cross is you. Didn't you know that that there were two people on the cross? That Christ not only died for you, but He died as you. And when he was there for you, you were there with Him. You know what your trouble is?" And I almost shouted, "What, what?" You've never put your back up to the cross and put your hands over those nails and said Lord from tonight on as long as I live I will stay right here, crucified with Christ. If you'll do that and understand that God couldn't figure out anyway to separate the good and the bad, but that in His eyes it is all bad. And that you are the one that died there that day. And that the day Jesus died, you died. But you're prepared to come and just as you saw Him dying for you back there you see yourself dying with Him and you'll stay there with your

hands on the nails. God for the sake of His Son will in the time of your temptation release the life and power of His Son into you, that you can have victory. Will you do it?

You know what I did? I went home. I took a piece of paper and I draw up a contract. I, my name, the time, the place, the date, do hereby declare that this day on as long as I shall live, that I that I am by nature. Then I described it as God had shown it to me, proud, arrogant, lustful, sensual, deceiving, thieving, devout, earnest, praying, hardworking, for it's a mixture you see. It is a mixture. And I put it all down that I that stood outside the cross and plead for mercy I count from today on to be on the cross crucified with Christ. Oh it's wonderful. It's wonderful to know the purging that He offers comes right to the root of the matter. So that life that we carried with out of the wild vine, that nature life, that self-life, that I, God has dealt with. So it doesn't have to impeded the life of the true vine and interfere with the fruit that would be bore. And so part of God's great grace it to provide for us a place where we can bring what we were and find that staying there brings release and deliverance from what we are.

But you'll notice He wasn't satisfied with just some fruit proving the genuineness of His work and more fruit proving that He had purged. But it says, Here in is My Father glorified that you bear much fruit, much fruit. But how is this? "Abide in me, and I in you. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." So if you are prepared to abide in Christ, crucified with Him and you might like to write that down Romans 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ." And if you are prepared to abide in Christ, buried with Him. For what happen to Him happened to you, for in Romans 6:4 we read: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." And if you are prepared to abide in Christ, quicken with Him for in Ephesians 2:5 we read: "We are quickened us together with Christ." And if you'll abide in Christ, raised with Him for in Ephesians 2:6 we find that we have been "raised up together with Him." And if you'll abide in Christ seated with Him for in Ephesians 2:6: "We've been seated together in heavenly places in Christ." In other words, if you will count that everything that Jesus did for you, you did with Him and will live in Him crucified with Him to have victory over yourself, buried with Him to victory over the world, and seated with Him to victory over principalities and powers. If you want to abide in Him, then invite Him and allow Him and want Him to abide in you, then there will be much fruit borne. And it won't be you, but it will be HIM! But He can't abide in you.

Oh how many people there are that have never understood the secret to the book of Romans. And because you are Bible students and you have your Bibles and I am going to tell you the secret to the book of Romans for the Christian life. Do you know what it is? Well, here it is, it's profound, Romans 12:1 and 2 comes after Romans 6! And no one can ever understand and experience Romans 12:1 and 2 until they have experience Romans 6. And the jump from Romans 3 and 4 justification to Romans 12 and omit Romans 6 is an impossibility! You can't present your body to Him a living sacrifice while it is still a vehicle of your own personality and the instrument of your egotism. It'll be impossible to "present your bodies a living sacrifice," until you have presented yourself to the cross. (Rom. 12:1) And so unless you are prepared to abide in Him, to live in Him, to dwell in Him it is utterly impossible for Him to abide in you and live in you and dwell in you. And there has to be both aspects of this. Our identification with Christ and Christ union with us. For if you understand this then you are seated with Him. What the Lord is saying is when you abide with Him there is a conscience union on your part with Him faith that when the Lord did certain things for you, you did them with Him. Not only was He crucified for you, but you were crucified with Him. Not only was He buried for you, but in the mind of the Father there were two people in the tomb you were buried with Him. Not only was He quickened for you, but since there were two people there in the mind of the Father you were quickened with Him. Not only was He raised up for you, but since you were there in your substitute you were raised up with Him. Not only was He seated there for you to interceded for you, but since He was as substitute and representative you were seated there in Him and with Him. And therefore you must abide in Him if you are to allow Him to abide with you.

Now you'll notice this is not automatic. It doesn't have reference to being placed in the vine. It is something subsequently to and apart from. It is something you can deliberately do it is in imperative mood, if you do it, good! If you refuse to do it, it will not be done. He said, "Abide in me." He doesn't make you dwell in Him. He makes it possible for you to and great blessing flowing from it. But you tonight can say, "No, I do not wish to pay the price. I'm not prepared to go to the cross. I'm not prepared to abandoned the right to my name, my reputation, my time, my energy, my strength, and my possessions. I'm not prepared to meet Christ on His terms of identification with Him. I refuse to recon myself crucified with Him. I am preceding to

live as though my life were still my own.” You may do that. I sincerely trust you won’t. For God won’t make you do it. But hear me my dear, He will make you wish you had. And so He said, “Abide in me.” Abide, live, dwell, reside in Me. Whatever it is going to cost you to do that it is going to cost you infinitely more if you don’t. And so the consequences is this, the Lord Jesus said it is quite possible for you, it is My specific plan for you, it is my intension for you, that you should deliberately, intelligently, and permanently reside in Me, crucified with Me, buried with Me, quicken with Me, raised with Me, and seated with Me, so that I can abide in you. I want to live in you unhindered. I want to live in you unimpeded. I want to live in you unrestricted. I do not want your hand grabbing the wheel. I do not want your foot on the brake. If you’re going to turn your body over to me as the vehicle for my workings, you’ve got to get out of behind the driver’s seat. And therefore it is necessary for you to abide in Me and dwell in Me and reside in Me if I am to be able to abide in you, dwell in you and reside in you. And so when our Lord Jesus spoke of this great salvation to which He has added the warning that we are in great danger if we neglected He said, If you abide in Me, I will abide in you and when I do abide in you, you will bring forth much fruit.

Now I ask you tonight, are you abiding in Him? Have you consciously and deliberately brought that you know you are by nature to the back side of the cross? Have you been prepared to abandoned the right to your rights? For this is included. You have a right to your name, your time, your talents, to your strengthen, this isn’t sin. We’re not taking about sins. We’re not talking about the things we read about early the fruits of that wild vine. We’re talking now about that which you were. We’re talking about yourself. We’ve expect it if you are born of God, you’re going to when sin accords you are going to confess it with great concern and great burden and longing. But we are talking about deliverance from the tyranny of yourself and your will and your plans and your purpose in order that the Lord Jesus can have in your brain and in your faculties in your body a vehicle. I use the word again a vehicle for His working. You present your brain to Him, so that living in you He can use your brain to think His thoughts. You present your ears to Him, so that He can use your ears to hear the wails of the sheep caught in the briers of sin. You present to Him your heart, so that He can have your heart to be moved with compassion. You present to Him your feet, so that living in you He can use your feet to go anywhere He wants to go. You present to Him your hands, so that living in you He can use your hands for whatever services He pleases. You present to Him your lips, so that living in you He can use your lips to speak or refrain from speaking. It will no longer be you it will be Christ living in you. And you are relinquishing all right to your body, your personality, you are turning it over to Him and asking Him to fill you, possess you and control you. To live in you and live though you His own life. This is what we have here. This is His intention with the branch that the Father puts into the vine.

Now it is my experience that those who give good evidence of being born of God, want this. I wouldn’t want to go as far as to say that those who do not want what we are talking about are not born of God. I wouldn’t make that assumption, because I know in my own life there were many years when I heard these truths and they fell on powdery dry ground. But I still believe that it is the will and purpose and grace of God to contradict all of the pressure of nature and all of the teachings that are contrary to His Word and then to bring us sweetly and gently and persistently to the place where above everything else that we want Jesus Christ to abide in us. In His high priestly prayer He said, Father that they all may be in union in just the same way You’ve lived in Me and done your work through Me. And I have lived in You and enjoyed all that You are. I want them to live in Me and enjoy all that I’ve done for them. I want to live in them and do My work through them. And so He said, “Abide in Me and I in you.” Are you prepared for that? Will you do it?

Perhaps I could close with something that touched my heart two or three years ago. When, then the president of the Christian Missionary and Alliance spoke one afternoon at our deeper life service in New York. He was district superintendent up in New England he heard this and there are historical grounds for it, I am sure, but he could trace the actual member’s party. There was a young man whose parent’s aspired for him to be a doctor. It was a brilliant family. There had been doctors in the family, but his particular branch of the family were very poor. So they saved their money for many years so their son could go to medical school. Then the father in an accident, died. The mother was left with the vision and so in addition to the work she was doing, she took on laundry and at night she was a chare woman cleaning out offices. The hard she worked the more she saved, seemingly the faster he went. He won one scholarship after another, but the higher he went the more sophisticated and proud he became. So that when he graduated with his MD, he told everybody in his class that he didn’t have any parents. And he

never told his mother of the graduation, because she was so bent and her hands wore she'd disgraced him. And so he pretended that he didn't have any family.

And then he went to Boston with a doctor and soon was in society. He became an outstanding surgeon. Married in society a very prominent young woman and told her that he had no family. He sent some money through the family lawyer to his mother. But only once a year would he go see her on a pretext of something else. And he never wrote to her always her letters were forward through the family lawyer. But then she began to get a little older. And so he got a letter from the lawyer saying your mother will not go to a home. She insists that you are her son and that she come to you. And he wrote back and he said I told everyone that I no family. I will take her on one condition and that is that she tells no one that she is my mother.

And so she agreed to come on that bases. He told his wife there was a woman when I was a little boy who did our laundry and cooked for us and took care of us. Julia was her name and she needs a home, would you mind if she came. If we fixed up that upstairs. And his mother took her maiden name. And so it was that the mother came and went up to that third floor. They kept it up very well and never let anyone guess that the woman up there was his mother.

But one day a letter came addressed to Mrs. and the young doctor's wife thought it was hers. She opened it and began to read it. And to her amazement it began, "Dear Julia" and then she discovered the woman on the third floor was her husband's mother. She was filled with loathing. She despised him. She abhorred him. She hated him. She couldn't wait for him to come to tell him what she thought of him. The contemptible person he was. And then she began to think about the agony he must have gone though. How he had been living a lie. What he must have felt like. And that probably part of the guilt was hers. So when he came home, she faced him with it. Like a little child caught stealing, he fell down right at his wife knees and put his head down on her knee and sobbed like a baby, confessed it the pride, the arrogance, the rebellion of his heart. She said, I'll forgive you on only one condition and that is that immediately you and I go up and do with your mother, both of us, what you've done with me. And so they went up to the third floor and both the doctor and his wife knelt at the chair where the aged mother was seated. And like little children they confessed their sin and she by this time had joined her heart in guilt with his. And then when they were finished, the young woman looked up and she said, oh mother, we want you to come downstairs. Tonight! Right now! But we are going to take the front bedroom and make it a parlor. You can have the little connecting bath and the back bedroom and it'll be yours. And then we are going to have a party and we are going to invite in all our friends. And we are going to tell them who you are and what we have done. And that you are the honored matron of this home.

You listen to me and say, that's impossible, that's impossible. No, it's not impossible. I know people that asked Jesus Christ to come into a room and saved them from hell and even saved them from some of their sins. But they've just kept Him in that room and they want to live the rest of their life to their own choosing. They want Him there and they wouldn't want Him to leave. But they're not willing to go up and fall at His feet and tell Him that He desired the whole house and the place of honor. And they are just going relinquish their right and turn it all over to Him. And so they have crowded Him up to a little garret room called Sunday morning and Sunday night and I do what I want to do and these are my plans and Lord, You bless me. And so they have robbed Him of the possibility getting out of their lives the joy and the glory that He deserves. Oh, that's infinitely worse than what I have described. And it could be you. It could be you. You're so glad you were cut out of the wild vine and put in the true vine. But you've never gone to the cross. You've never deliberately decide to abide and live crucified with Him and buried with Him. Seated with Him. You've never presented your body as a house and invited Him in to fill it. And you've been content to go on this way robbing Him of the glory that He only can get when there is His presences, uninhibited and there can be much fruit in your life.

But you can change that tonight. You can change it right now. If you are still in the wild vine you come to Him and He will put you in Christ. If you are still with that which of the old vine come to Him, He'll purge it, He'll carry you with Him to cross. If you've never known what it is to have Christ move up and in and take up His lasting dwelling place in your heart, He'll do it tonight. He is such a wonderful Lord. He loves you so much. Amen.

* Reference such as: by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.