



## THE SIGN OF HIS LOVE

**BIG IDEA:** God's pruning is a gift of His love and for our good.

**DATE:** Sunday, March 22, 2026

**SCRIPTURE:** John 15:1-17

## OPENING QUESTION

**What's the longest you have ever gone without electricity? What was that like? What did you miss the most?** *When the electricity goes out, we discover just how reliant we are on our kitchen appliances, laptops, cell phones, and even hair dryers in everyday life! We forget how difficult life can be when we are not connected to our power source. The same holds true in our spiritual life.*

## SETTING THE STAGE

To understand just how radical of a statement it was for Jesus to declare Himself "the true vine" we need to look at what the vine symbolized. Above the temple in Jerusalem was something the people were very familiar with - a golden vine, sculpted in incredible detail, hanging over the entrance. Ancient historians described the vine as a masterpiece, its grape clusters as large as a grown man. For those who entered the temple, it was more than an architectural wonder - it was a symbol of Israel, God's chosen vineyard.

## SCRIPTURE READING

### JOHN 15:1-17 (CSB)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

<sup>9</sup> "As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> "This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> I do not call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you. I

appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.<sup>17</sup> "This is what I command you: Love one another.

## DISCUSSION

### A PROMISE TO PRUNE

READ John 15:1-8

- Let's note who each phrase describes – the Father, Jesus, or His disciples. What do these descriptions teach us about the character of the Father and Jesus?
- What spiritual truths about our relationship with God emerge from this gardening illustration?
- When have you grown because of His pruning? Why were you better for having been pruned by Christ?

### THE PROMISE OF FRUIT

- What does it mean for us to abide or remain in Christ and Christ in us? What does abiding look like in your life? How do you do it?
- How would you define spiritual fruit?

### THE PROMISE OF JOY

READ John 15:9-17

- Summarize what Jesus said about joy in verse 11.
- What promises from Jesus in John 15 stand out most to you today? Why?
- What spiritual disciplines or practices help you continue to remain in Jesus? How can you engage in these more often?

## RESPONSE

As God prunes us, He makes us more fruitful people who reflect His love, joy, peace, and truth to the world. Let us approach the Word with open hearts, inviting God to do His work in us – this is pruning. Like a vine in the hands of a skilled and caring gardener, we can trust that every cut, every correction, and every moment of renewal has a loving purpose: to help us bear more fruit for His glory. Let us stay connected to our power source so we can truly flourish.

## READING PLAN

3/22 – John 17; 3/23 – John 18; 3/24 – John 19; 3/25 – Mark 15; 3/26 – Hebrews 2; 3/27 – Psalm 22; 3/28 – Psalm 69; *Memory Verse: Galatians 3:26-27*

Next week we talk about the ultimate sign of Jesus's divinity – the resurrection! Read John 20 and come ready to discuss.

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*The Gospel of John: Savoring the Peace of Jesus in a Chaotic World* by Melissa Spoelstra. LifeWay Press. Copyright 2024.