

<p>◆ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.◆ 2. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.◆ 3. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.◆ 4. Abide in Me, and I in you.◆ As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.◆ 5. I am the vine; you are the branches.◆ Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.◆ 6. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.◆ 7. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.◆ 8. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.◆◆ John 15:1-8 ESV

The kingdom of God is a violent realm, requiring as Michael Card writes, ◆ a Violent Grace.◆◆ For Jesus, this reality was stark!◆ Its cost . . . severe!

Much to our enemies delight, we as disciples, seldom frame our faith in this light ◆ nor characterize our state of being, in these terms.◆ However, Jesus◆ figurative language in John 15 begs to differ.

◆ If we are disciples, then we are His!

◆ If His, then we are to bear fruit.

◆ If for some reason we do not perform this natural act . . . we are removed.

To prove we belong, says Jesus, then we must perform.◆ Why?◆ Because with His Spirit dwelling within us, we can do nothing less.◆ Those who prove otherwise, that they are not of the vine, are tossed as refuse into the fire!

Dainty as we have become, this is unsettling, unnerving, causing most of mankind to search for alternatives.◆ But for those who know, they understand that the Kingdom ◆ from the Garden forward ◆ is a violent place!

◆ Dale</p>