

Abide in The Vine

2021-05-16 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on John 15:1-5

CG Flow:

- King of My Heart
- I Am Not Alone (Psalm 23)
- Teaching
- My Jesus, I Love Thee
- New Wine
- The Blessing

Facebook Live Description:

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"Abide in The Vine"

John 15:1-5

May 16, 2021

Ben Deaver

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*Because God first loved you, you exist to love God and love your neighbors!*

Welcome!

Mingle question: What are you looking forward to this summer?

## New Growth: Abide in The Vine...to Bear Fruit

We're in the Gospel according to John this morning. Jesus had a way of simultaneously thinning out the crowds around Him while holding out invitation to any who would respond to Him at any time.

- **John 6:66-69** <sup>66</sup>After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, <sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."
- **John 20:30-31** <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

We are looking at the last of seven "I am..." statements Jesus makes through the Gospel according to John.

1. "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)
2. "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)
3. "I am the door of the sheep." (John 10:7,9)
4. "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25)
5. "I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11, 14)
6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6)
7. "I am the true vine." (John 15:1, 5)

**John 15:1a** "I am the true vine..."

### The Vine

Jesus gives us an extended metaphor related to viticulture, which is the cultivation of grapes especially for wine making. This is also called viniculture. Vine culture. Jesus is interested in producing much fruit to produce the best wine possible.

John 15 is in the middle of Jesus' farewell discourse to His closest disciples.

*John, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* by Colin G. Kruse, p. 310

- "In the time of Jesus a great golden vine hung over the entrance to the Jerusalem temple. Josephus describes it:
- 'The gate opening into the building was, as I said, completely overlaid with gold, as was the whole wall around it. It had, moreover, above it those golden vines, from which depended grape-clusters as tall as a man' (*Jewish War* v.210-212).
- If the second part of Jesus' farewell discourse was given en route from the Last Supper venue to the Garden where he was betrayed, his teaching on the true vine may have been given in the temple courtyard with the great golden vine glinting in the light of the Passover moon."

## Israel as a Vine—Old Testament Backdrop

- **Jeremiah 6:9** Thus says the LORD of hosts: “They shall glean thoroughly as a vine the remnant of Israel; like a grape gatherer pass your hand again over its branches.” How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?
- See Psalm 80; Isaiah 5:7; Jeremiah 2:21; 6:9; Ezekiel 17:6-8; 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1-4
- Israel was the vine through which God would bless the whole world...and yet Israel failed over and over again.
- Here comes Jesus...

**John 15:1-5** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.”

1. Pruning is Painful
2. Abide, Not Strive
3. The Focus is the Fruit

## PRAY!

### 1. Pruning is Painful, Persistent,...and Productive

- Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away...
  - Either referring to Judas Iscariot or...
    - **John 13:11** For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”
    - **John 15:6** 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.
  - Strong’s 142—ἀίρω (airó): to raise, take up, lift up
    - **Matthew 11:29** Take (up) my yoke upon you... NOT Take away my yoke...
- Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes...that it may bear more fruit.
- Pruning is Painful
  - Conversation with Maddox—Tomatoes and cucumbers also grow on vines!
  - What does it feel like to be pruned? Like getting your arm cut off!
  - Is pruning good for the plant? Yes!
- From *How To Grow Grapes* at HomeDepot.com
  - If you’re wondering how fast grapevines grow, the woody vines and lush leaves can grow very fast in the first year. If you mean, “how fast do grapevines produce grapes?”, the answer is that they can take up to three years to bear fruit. Pruning has a lot to do with fruit production.

- For best results, prune away all the sprouts coming out of the ground around your grapevines in the first year. Leave only the strongest sprouts and let four of those develop into the plant's main canes. Use loppers for canes over 1/2-inch in diameter, a pruning saw for thicker canes and pruning shears for small canes.
- In the second year, start training the canes as they grow so they attach in two parallel lines along a fence or trellis. That fall, prune away everything except the main trunk and canes. This should leave about one-third of each plant.
- In the spring of their third year, the vines should produce the growth needed to make grapes.
- “As the vinedresser cuts away what would hinder the productivity of the vine, so God the Father, through loving discipline (cleansing, purging, purifying), removes things from the lives of believers that do not contribute to their spiritual fruitfulness.”
  - Laney, J. C. (1989). *Abiding Is Believing: The Analogy of the Vine in John 15:1–6. Bibliotheca Sacra, 146, 57.*

*What is hindering my spiritual fruitfulness that the Vinedresser may be pruning?*

*What good thing may be sapping life from me that needs to be trimmed out?*

- Pruning may look like and feel like a setback for the branch. But it’s not. It’s for deeper roots and healthy growth and ultimately for bearing fruit.
- I believe Tallgrass Church has been undergoing pruning...individuals are being pruned and we as a church are being pruned...and it is painful...and we are looking for the new growth that spring brings...and aren’t yet seeing it.
- Taking things out of our lives that are hindering our growth.
- Pruning is Persistent. Pruning occurred in the spring and in the fall.
- Pruning is Productive.
- Pruning makes way for growth.
- The Father disciplines His sons and daughters for their good...even though it may not feel good at the time.
- **Hebrews 12:5-6** <sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.  
<sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” (Proverbs 3:11-12)
- **Hebrews 12:11** <sup>11</sup> For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
- **Hebrews 12:12-13** <sup>12</sup> Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

## 2. Abide, Not Strive

- Who among us is abiding in Christ?
- A grapevine doesn't strain to bear fruit.
  - **Psalm 46:10** "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"
  - NASB1995—Cease *striving* NASB—Stop striving
  - Do we know how to be still and be present?
- Jesus is The Vine. Jesus is the ONLY source of Life.
- The key to spiritual growth is abiding in Jesus!
- What is abiding? Is it making sure we have all of our spiritual discipline boxes checked? Is it making sure we're all caught up on our Bible reading plan? Or is it something different? Surely it has to do with relational intimacy with Jesus?!
- Abiding in Christ. Remaining in Christ. Connecting with Christ. Drawing your life support from Christ. Presence with Christ. Enjoying the love of Christ.

*Can I be relationally present rather than striving to complete tasks?*

- Story: Elsey grabbing my hand and saying, "Your teaching my class today!" Then Petey reaching up and saying, "Can I hold your hand?"

*Can I be relationally present even when my surroundings feel chaotic?*

- The disciples' worlds were about to be rocked and yet Jesus says to them and says to us...
- **John 15:9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.
- **John 15:11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.
  - Abiding isn't a burden, it is the key to joy.
  - We were made to abide.
  - The entropy of this world only brings us low when we move away from the source of life.
  - We may take many steps away from God over time, but it is only one step back.
- "The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is, the one is great and strong, and the source of strength, the other little and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Even so the believer is, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ. What a life would come to us if we only consented to be branches! Dear child of God, learn the lesson."  
—Andrew Murray, *The True Vine*

*When can I plan to be fully present with Jesus? This is to cultivate ongoing presence with Jesus.*

### 3. The Focus is the Fruit

- **John 15:8** By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.
- **John 12:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
  - Sacrificial Love
- Types of Fruit—Personal Growth, People
  - **Galatians 5:22-23** <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
  - **Romans 1:13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.
  - Firstfruits = The first to respond to the Gospel in an area.
  - **John 15:12-17** <sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

*What is the fruit of my life thus far? What do I want the fruit of my life to be?*

Who's been to Liquid Art Winery?

- There's something so peaceful about drinking the wine of the vineyard in the actual vineyard. So much painful pruning and patient waiting and abiding in the vine has occurred to bring that amazing wine to fruition.
- "Have you ever considered the vast difference between 'works' and 'fruit'? 'Works' suggests a factory complete with pressures, deadlines, and the constant need to produce. But 'fruit' pictures a peaceful, tranquil garden, a place where we are inclined to stay and drink in the beauty while we enjoy each other's company. It's important to realize that God doesn't come to His factory looking for products. He comes to His garden to enjoy its fruit. The gospel of grace invites us to leave behind the smog and pressure of a factory-like life of works and instead bear the fruit that God desires to see in the garden of our lives." —Chuck Smith, *Why Grace Changes Everything*
- We don't know what the future holds for Tallgrass Church but we do know that we we long to receive the painful pruning of the Father, and to abide in Christ, rather than strive, and to bear much fruit to the glory of the Father.

## Vision for Tallgrass Church

- A couple weeks ago Lacey Dunn posted this drawing on Facebook.
- “A church moving towards healthy growth is messy.”
- My journal entry from 4/19/2018—The vision of Tallgrass Church is to have roots in every neighborhood in MHK and the surrounding 40-mile radius by 2025 while planting Tallgrass worldwide.
- Year One—Just get up and running. Difficult year.
- Year Two—Gain some traction.
- Year Three—Covid-19
- Each year has been full of joys and sorrows.
- We’ve been through this difficult winter together and now we’re looking for the new growth of spring.

## Better Together? Exploring Kingdom Possibilities

Tallgrass at The Well on Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

- Tallgrass Church has been invited to explore the possibility of a new Kingdom work partnering with The Well. We want to share more about this idea two combined Central Gatherings with The Well on Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. Who knows? This could be part of the answer to our prayer for the new growth of spring after a difficult winter.
- The Well is a church that meets just three blocks from here.
- Possible reasons Tallgrass Church and The Well may be better together:
  - Shared theology, vision, mission, and values...we think
  - Complimentary demographics
  - Complimentary teams
  - Possible synergy from combining our communities
  - We truly are curious if we may be better together
- Non-negotiables
  - Keep our teams together.
  - Neighboring and deep discipleship is the mission of the church.
- Zoom audio is available for anyone who wants to hear our conversation from last Wednesday.
- We wouldn’t be this far along this exploration process if there wasn’t some sense that God may be in this. We aren’t going to strive to make something happen. We want to abide in Christ and ask what He wants to have happen.
- We invite you to explore this Kingdom possibility together. Who knows what God might do in and through Tallgrass Church and in and through you this spring?!

**PRAY!**

**Psalm 80**

# The Chopping Block:

## Notes:

- Israel as a vine—See Psalm 80; Isaiah 5:7, Jeremiah 2:21; 6:8-9; Ezekiel 17:6-8; 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1-4
- **Hosea 10:1-4** Israel is a luxuriant vine that yields its fruit. The more his fruit increased, the more altars he built; as his country improved, he improved his pillars. <sup>2</sup> Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt. The LORD will break down their altars and destroy their pillars. <sup>3</sup> For now they will say: "We have no king, for we do not fear the LORD; and a king—what could he do for us?" <sup>4</sup> They utter mere words; with empty oaths they make covenants; so judgment springs up like poisonous weeds in the furrows of the field.
- **Isaiah 5:7** For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!
- **Jeremiah 2:21** Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed.
- **Ezekiel 19:1** And you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,
- **Ezekiel 19:10-14** <sup>10</sup> Your mother was like a vine in a vineyard planted by the water, fruitful and full of branches by reason of abundant water. <sup>11</sup> Its strong stems became rulers' scepters; it towered aloft among the thick boughs; it was seen in its height with the mass of its branches. <sup>12</sup> But the vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered. As for its strong stem, fire consumed it. <sup>13</sup> Now it is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land. <sup>14</sup> And fire has gone out from the stem of its shoots, has consumed its fruit, so that there remains in it no strong stem, no scepter for ruling. This is a lamentation and has become a lamentation.
- "The word results is often heard in conversations among Christian workers, but this is not actually a Bible concept. A machine can produce results, and so can a robot, but it takes a living organism to produce fruit. It takes time and cultivation to produce fruit; a good crop does not come overnight. We must remember that the branches do not eat the fruit; others do. We are not producing fruit to please ourselves but to serve others."
  - Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Transformed (John 13-21): Christ's Triumph Means Your Transformation (The BE Series Commentary) (Kindle Locations 821-826). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.
- **John 15:6-9** <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.
- **John 15:10-11** <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.



- **Psalm 80:7-19**

<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved!

<sup>8</sup> You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
you drove out the nations and planted it.

<sup>9</sup> You cleared the ground for it;  
it took deep root and filled the land.

<sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered with its shade,  
the mighty cedars with its branches.

<sup>11</sup> It sent out its branches to the sea  
and its shoots to the River.

<sup>12</sup> Why then have you broken down its walls,  
so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?

<sup>13</sup> The boar from the forest ravages it,  
and all that move in the field feed on it.

<sup>14</sup> Turn again, O God of hosts!  
Look down from heaven, and see;  
have regard for this vine,  
<sup>15</sup> the stock that your right hand planted,  
and for the son whom you made strong for yourself.

<sup>16</sup> They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down;  
may they perish at the rebuke of your face!

<sup>17</sup> But let your hand be on the man of your right hand,  
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!

<sup>18</sup> Then we shall not turn back from you;  
give us life, and we will call upon your name!

<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O LORD God of hosts!  
Let your face shine, that we may be saved!

**John 15:12-17** <sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

- Thrown away?! Is this hell? NOT if they are believers.
- Possibly referring to Judas Iscariot.
  - **John 13:11** For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."
  - **John 13:27-30** <sup>27</sup> Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." <sup>28</sup> Now no one at the table knew

why he said this to him. <sup>29</sup> Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. <sup>30</sup> So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

### 3 Keys to Interpretation:

1. Interpret the unclear in light of the clear
  - a. Romans 8:1
  - b. John 6:37
  - c. John 10:27-28

| Clear                                                                 | Unclear                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| You can't out sin God's grace                                         | Bad branches may or may not be believers         |
| Christians are not to live in fear of judgment                        | What "taken away" or "lifted up" is referring to |
| Fruit means a LOT of different things...character, service, love etc. | If burning in this context means Hell            |

### 2. Context

- a. Is Jesus preparing them to carry on the work? Or is He trying to warn the disciples about being thrown into Hell?

### 3. Literary format matters

- a. The Vine and the Branches are allegory
- b. Be careful not to pull more out of the allegory than the author intends, especially when it is unclear.

So, is there any point to the warning?

- Yes! Don't be a branch that doesn't bear fruit (no matter who it is)
- Allow yourself to be grafted into the vine
- Receive all the good things God has for you
- Let those things pour out of you into the lives of others
- Don't be complacent
- When Jesus says, "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit" (Matthew 7:18), he is making the point that what we do comes from who we are, that good fruit emerges naturally from deep and healthy roots. The bad fruit of continuous scandals indicates that something is profoundly wrong with the roots of our discipleship. One key contributor to our predicament is the isolation of our local churches, denominations, and movements. We are willfully and needlessly cut off from our rich history and the wisdom of the wider church. –p. 19
- What might God be up to in the church post-Covid-19?!
- John the Baptist
  - As it happened, John's ministry lasted less than two years. And yet, Jesus said of him, "Of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11 NLT). –p. 21

- Even while terrible world events swirled around him, John sunk his roots deeply into God. Rather than rushing in to address every need, John waited on God. In allowing the Word of God to penetrate the core of his being, he became the message that he ultimately preached. –p. 22
- Bear fruit 7x
- Abide 11x
- Vine 2x
- Love 8x
- Revelation 3:15-22 <sup>15</sup> "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
- Amos 8:11-12 <sup>11</sup> "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it."
- **1 Samuel 8:4-22** <sup>4</sup> Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah <sup>5</sup> and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." <sup>6</sup> But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. <sup>8</sup> According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. <sup>9</sup> Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." <sup>10</sup> So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. <sup>11</sup> He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. <sup>12</sup> And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. <sup>13</sup> He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup> He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and

olive orchards and give them to his servants. <sup>15</sup> He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. <sup>16</sup> He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. <sup>17</sup> He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. <sup>18</sup> And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day." <sup>19</sup> But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, <sup>20</sup> that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." <sup>21</sup> And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

#### Types of Fruit—Personal Growth, People, Praise

- Romans 1:13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.
- Galatians 5:22-23 <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- Romans 15:28
- Hebrews 13:15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.
- Colossians 1:10 ...so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...
- Matthew 3:7-10 <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
- Matthew 7:15-20 <sup>15</sup> "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.
- Matthew 12:33-34 <sup>33</sup> "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
- Matthew 13:18-23 <sup>18</sup> "Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises

on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

- Matthew 21:33-46 <sup>33</sup> "Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. <sup>34</sup> When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. <sup>35</sup> And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. <sup>37</sup> Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>38</sup> But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' <sup>39</sup> And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. <sup>40</sup> When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" <sup>41</sup> They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."  
<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"  
<sup>43</sup> Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. <sup>44</sup> And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him." <sup>45</sup> When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. <sup>46</sup> And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.
- Matthew 26:29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."
- Luke 1:41-42 <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"
- Romans 6:20-23 <sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 7:4-6 <sup>4</sup> Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup> For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup> But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.
- Philippians 1:9-11 <sup>9</sup> And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure

and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

- Philippians 1:21-22 <sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.
- Philippians 4:17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.
- James 3:17-18 <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup> And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
- James 5:7-8 <sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
- James 5:16-18 <sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. <sup>18</sup> Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.
- Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
- The Golden Vine was one of the most remarkable in all the Temple precincts. Middot records that "A golden vine stood over the entrance to the sanctuary, trained over posts; and whosoever gave a leaf, or a berry, or a cluster as a freewill-offering, he brought it and the priests hung it thereon." This vine was so famous that even Tacitus (History 5.5) wrote about it. While keeping the Passover in Jerusalem, Christ may also have alluded to this very feature of the Temple when he said in John 15. 1: "I am the true vine." –Ritmeyer Archaeological Design
- **Ezekiel 17:1-10** The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, propound a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel; <sup>3</sup> say, Thus says the Lord GOD: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar. <sup>4</sup> He broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade and set it in a city of merchants. <sup>5</sup> Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil. He placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig, <sup>6</sup> and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out boughs. <sup>7</sup> "And there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage, and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him and shot forth its branches toward him from the bed where it was planted, that he might water it. <sup>8</sup> It had been planted on good soil by abundant waters, that it might produce branches and bear fruit and become a noble vine. <sup>9</sup> "Say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers, so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull

it from its roots. <sup>10</sup> Behold, it is planted; will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it—wither away on the bed where it sprouted?”

- **Ezekiel 17:11-21** Judgment in Babylon. Israel failed over and over again. We’re in good company.
- **Ezekiel 17:22-24** <sup>22</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD: “I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. <sup>23</sup> On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar. And under it will dwell every kind of bird; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. <sup>24</sup> And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.”
- 2018 WOTYs
  - Dan Chitwood—intentionality
  - Paxton LeMoine—intentionality
  - Dilan Oglesby—clarity
  - Maris—serve
  - Ben—compassion
  - Stephanie Chitwood—rebuild
  - Kassi Chapman—marriage

### *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship: Moving from Shallow Christianity to Deep Transformation*

1. Be Before You Do—Slows down our lives to cultivate a deep, personal relationship with Jesus amidst the hurry and distractions that routinely overload us.
2. Follow the Crucified, Not the Americanized Jesus—Offers guidelines to determine how much the values and goals of Western culture have compromised, or even negated, the radical call of Jesus to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him.
3. Embrace God’s Gift of Limits—Makes provision for surrendering to, rather than fighting against, the gift of God’s limits in our lives.
4. Discover the Treasures Buried in Grief and Loss—Integrates sadness and loss into our following of Jesus. As a result we no longer miss out on the treasures God has buried within them.
5. Make Love the Measure of Maturity—Provides clear criteria to measure spiritual maturity by how we are growing in our ability to love others.
6. Break the Power of the Past—Connects how our family of origin and personal history influence our discipleship in the present. We no longer treat deep patterns and traumas from the past with a quick fix.
7. Lead Out of Weakness and Vulnerability—Embraces weakness and vulnerability as core to accessing God’s power and offering his love to the world.

### Interview Taylor Hillegeist

1. How have you sown into your relationship with God? What are you reaping?
2. How have you sown into your soul? What are you reaping?

### 3. How have you sown into your neighboring? What are you reaping?

God, the Gardener:

- <https://fiveforfruit.wordpress.com/2017/06/14/who-shall-care-for-our-souls-pastoral-care-for-pastors-part-2-of-4/>

Passages:

- <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/august/finding-right-church-planting-model-part-5-organic-house-ch.html>
- **1 Corinthians 3:5-9** <sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup> He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. <sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.
- **1 Corinthians 4:1-5** This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. <sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.
- **Galatians 6:7-10 MSG** <sup>7-8</sup> Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life. <sup>9-10</sup> So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.
- **Galatians 6:7-10 NLT** <sup>7</sup> Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. <sup>8</sup> Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.
- **Galatians 6:7-10** <sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. <sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup> And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup> So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.



- **Isaiah 61:11** For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.
- **Isaiah 61:11 MSG** For as the earth bursts with spring wildflowers, and as a garden cascades with blossoms, So the Master, GOD, brings righteousness into full bloom and puts praise on display before the nations.
- **Hebrews 10:36-39** <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. <sup>37</sup> For,  
"Yet a little while,  
and the coming one will come and will not delay;  
<sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith,  
and if he shrinks back,  
my soul has no pleasure in him."  
<sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.
- Satan reaps what he sows. See Ezekiel 28.
  - **Ezekiel 28:18** By the multitude of your iniquities,  
in the unrighteousness of your trade  
you profaned your sanctuaries;  
so I brought fire out from your midst;  
it consumed you,  
and I turned you to ashes on the earth  
in the sight of all who saw you.
- We reap what we sow.
  - My story: Gym, Soul Care, therapy