

Pruning for Production: Conclusion John 15

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Sept 18th

The Picture: Vs 1,5 *"I am the true vine, my father is the Husbandman...ye are the branches."*

The Purpose: vs 16 *"I have chosen you and ordained you ... to bring forth fruit"*

The Process: Vs 3 *"Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit"*

Reflection:

1. The Point Of Pruning/Purging. Vs 2,3 Purgeth: Kathai'ro has a double meaning:

A. To Cleanse: vs 3, 1 Jn 1:5-10

B. To Cut: Removing infected branches and Redirecting unproductive ones.

2. The Purpose of Pruning/Purging. 2,3

A. Not Simply To "Remove", But To "Renovate" Ro. 12:1,2

B. Not To Harm Us, But To "Help" Us Grow. (2 Cor 4:17; Ro. 8:28,29)

C. Not To Terrorize Us, But To "Test" Us. (James 1:2,3)

3. The Patience Of Pruning: (James 5:7-11)

A. There's a summer season between the pruning and the production of fruit. Heb. 10:36

James 1:4 *"But let patience have her perfect work,* (teleios: complete, from telos: to reach the goal)

that ye may be perfect and entire, (holok'lēros: from holos {whole} and Kleros {inheritance} *lacking nothing."*

Direction:

4. The Pattern of Pruning.

A. Pruning usually involves a "trust test".

1) They ultimately involve the "trial of our faith." (James 1:3; 1 Peter 1:7)

2) God asks us to yield something of value to Him,

even when we feel we have a legitimate right to retain control. (Ro. 12:1,2)

Mt 16:24-27 *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.*

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

a) Abraham. Genesis 22 *"Take now thy son Isaac... and offer him as a burnt offering..."*

b) Widow of Zarephath 1 Kings 17:9 *"I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."*

c) David and King Saul: (1 Sam. 24:10; 26:23)

d) The Rich young ruler. (Mark 10:17-23) 21 *"Jesus beholding him loved him, ... One thing thou lackest: Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, & thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."*

B. God Knows Just Where To Probe And Prune. (David in 1 Sam. 25)

Jer 17:10 *"I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins,* (baw-khan': test, investigate, examine, prove)

even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

1) David had been anointed to be King, yet spent years as an outlaw, running from Saul's jealousy.

2) He had protected Naboth's property, and received a cruel rejection. *"Who is David" Vs 10*

3) In his anger, he was about to destroy Naboth when Abigail appealed to him to look beyond the pain of his circumstance, and "pass the trust test." Vs 29-31

C. God Normally “Prunes” In One Of Four Areas.

- 1) **People (Our Relationships).** Mat 10:37 *'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.'*
- 2) **Perspective (Our Reasoning):** (Genesis 22)
- 3) **Possessions (Our Rewards/security)** (2 Cor. 8,9)
- 4) **Pride: (Our Reputation)** (Phil. 3)
(Prov 29:25) *'The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.'*

CONCLUSION: (Philippians 3:7-15)

- 1) Paul realized that God had a purpose for his life, and this purpose involved a process of pruning. Vs 7
- 2) Paul was not a passive participant, but had to make choices along the way.
(Notice the 13 “I’s” in this passage.)
- 3) Each “choice” he made opened up new paths and new choices.
- 4) Each “choice” was a “trust test”, bringing Him into closer harmony and fellowship with Christ. *“That I may know him...”* (Vs 10)

APPLICATION:

- 1) **In what area is God currently “pruning” you? (Circle)**

Relationships

Reasoning

Rewards

Reputation

- 2) **What is your choice? (Circle)**

1) **Trust and Obey.** (This produces Grace and Growth. James 4:6-10)

2) **Resist and Object.** . (This produces Grumbling and Grief. Mark 10:22; Phil. 2:13-15)

An evangelist told the following story in one of his campaigns. He said, "I have a friend who during the depression lost a job, a fortune, a wife, and a home, but tenaciously held to his faith -- the only thing he had left.

One day he stopped to watch some men building a stone church. One of them was chiseling a triangular piece of rock. 'What are you going to do with that?' asked my friend. The workman said, 'Do you see that little opening way up there near the spire? **Well, I'm shaping this down here so that it will fit up there.**' Tears filled the eyes of the heart-broken man as he walked away. It seemed that God had spoken through the workman to explain the ordeal through which he was passing."

Perhaps you have recently suffered a great loss. Or maybe you are experiencing physical or emotional pain. The outward man seems to be "perishing." Yet, if you know the Lord as your Savior, you need not despair. All these things are under the loving hand of your heavenly Father, who is using them to prepare you for heaven. (2 Cor 4:7-18)

In the pictures of the ancient Roman method of threshing grain, one man is always seen stirring up the sheaves while another rides over them in a crude cart equipped with rollers instead of wheels. Sharp stones and rough bits of iron were attached to these cylinders to help separate the husks from the grain. This simple cart was called a tribulum -- from which we get our word "tribulation."

When great affliction comes to us, we often think of ourselves as being torn to pieces under the cruel pressures of adverse circumstances. Yet as no thresher ever yoked up his tribulum for the mere purpose of tearing up his sheaves but to disclose the precious grain, so our loving Savior never puts us under the pressure of sorrow and disappointment needlessly.