

DAY FOUR:

REMAINING IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

In today's Scripture, Jesus uses an agricultural illustration to explain his relationship with his followers. I am sure you will understand what Jesus is getting at but let me try to illustrate the truth in this passage with a different illustration. I have some preschool grandsons that love mowing the lawn with me. They are really keen to help. The problem is that our lawn is very thick and they have no chance of pushing the mower through it. So we come to a compromise. They will let me help them. We both push together, and the lawn gets mowed. We work as a team. They do not know it, but I am really mowing the lawn. Once I stop pushing, they are cactus. They need me to provide the muscle. With my support, we together get a well-mown lawn. Without my support, all their efforts are a waste of time. Now read Jesus' story.

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 15:5-8

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

DEVOTION

At first glance, this illustration has little to do with personal revival. Jesus is challenging the Jews to get linked in with him or otherwise God will discard them and leave them on the scrap heap despite all their religiosity and history. Without Jesus there will be no life or fruit for them.

But there are two themes in this passage that link with what we are learning about personal revival. The first is the emphasis on remaining in the vine. The more we stay connected with Jesus, the more fruit we will see. What does it mean to remain in Jesus? It is staying closely connected with Jesus so that we hear and obey his voice (15:7). It is having Jesus as an intimate friend. It is staying right with God and loving to follow him. These are the foundational elements of personal revival. We need to remain in Jesus.

The second theme in the Scripture is the power that flows from remaining in the Jesus vine. It is not just that we have a pleasant relationship with Jesus and are kept safe from the fire. We will bear "much fruit" and find that whatever we ask for will be answered. Wow. Now this is getting exciting. Revival not only brings freedom from sin through repentance and deeper intimacy with Christ, but it also results in more fruit, greater power and



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answered prayers.

Going back to my mowing illustration. The more we recognise our own weakness and get in sync with Jesus, the quicker and better that lawn will be mowed. Of course, staying with the allegory, Jesus could mow the lawn better and quicker by himself. But in his grace, he chooses to work through us. Jesus wants us pushing that mower with him as long as we realise that he is providing the muscle.

PRAYER RESPONSE

I recognise that I am hopeless and helpless without you Jesus. All my effort will produce nothing if you don't flow through me. To see "much fruit," I need to know your heart, hear your voice and rest in your strength. Draw my heart closer to you. May I be a channel for your authority and influence. May you produce much fruit through me.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

There are a lot of perishing branches all around me Jesus. On the surface, people look like they are flourishing but are dying everywhere. In my church. In my workplace. In my neighbourhood. Among my friends. People are cut off from you and slowly withering. If you don't do something, they are going to be thrown into the fire. My prayer is that you will bring the dead to life. That you will awaken. That you will revive. Please flow in us and through us.

