

# LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

## 8 MARCH 2021

Lent Devotion/Day 20/Monday, March 8, 2021

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."

**Meditation:** The promised land had been filled with grape vines, with branches everywhere, weighed down by enormous bunches of fruit. The grapevine had become a symbol of the people of Israel, and gold clusters of grapes hung over the temple gate. Those listening to Jesus knew that Israel was the vine that God took from Egypt and planted in the promised land. They knew from the Psalms, from Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel that the vine had been a disappointment when it failed to produce fruit. It was a symbol of their intended purpose, but it was also a reminder of their failure. Leaves and fruit on a grapevine were good, but branches that did not produce were not strong enough to build anything with; their only use was as firewood, and God had told them this.

So when Jesus opened his mouth to speak of a vine on this day, they may have been holding their breath. Or they may have noticed that he said he was the "true" vine, and that may have stung a little. But if they listened closely, they would see that Jesus was giving them another chance.

Branches that produce fruit must come from a reliable vine. Here stood that reliable source giving the people of Israel an opportunity to overcome failure, to live to glorify God again. They had been chosen by Jesus, their source of strength (see John 15:16). If they would remain in loving union with him and find their life purpose, their strength and their deepest pleasure in him, they could produce something that would last forever and be truly significant. If they understood what he was saying, they would see that this was an offer as gigantic as a six-pound bunch of grapes. And if we are wise, it is ours to see it this way too.

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, you are the true vine, and without you I can do nothing of lasting value. As a branch derives its life from the vine, may I remain in you and draw upon your resources rather than attempting to live in my own power. I know that it is only as I maintain this connection with you that I will be able to bear fruit that will endure and glorify your name. Teach me the joy of living in utter dependence on you, of seeing you as the conduit of real life. It is only from you that I draw the nourishment necessary to be sustained in this dry and weary land. Grant that I may know you in a personal way, and may that growing knowledge create in me a thirst to share you with others. As I grow in my love for you, may I also grow in my obedience to you so that I will be known as your true disciple. In your life-giving name I pray. Amen.*

-from **once a day/40 Days to Easter**, Kenneth Boa and John Allen Turner, Zondervan