

Day 41

- Good Morning! I hope you are all enjoying the reading you are going through the Bible about King David.
- Jumping off of what we talked about yesterday and have several times throughout these devotional days, let's look at a picture of what it means to be "a man after the LORD's own heart."
- I am going to take us through a journey in John 15. Why, you may ask? Well, first and foremost, I am sensing the Holy Spirit wanting me to start here, which is all I need, but second, if we are going to understand the heart of King David and learn from His life, there is no better place to begin than with Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)
- "I am the true vine, and My father is the vinedresser." John 15:1. Let's stop and look at this a bit. For those of us who live in wine country, we already have a picture of what this means in our heads, and if any of us work directly with vines, then this is an amazing word picture for us.
- "I am the true vine." These are the words of Jesus. Let's zero in on the words "true vine." I think we can definitely pull from one aspect of the definition for true here: True - being that which is the case rather than what is manifest or assumed. So, when Jesus is saying, "I am the TRUE vine," then He is telling us that there is a counterfeit out there, a poser, one who wants us to believe in him and not the "TRUE Vine."
- Remember when I said that Satan's greatest desire is to completely distort and destroy people's view of Who God actually is because then he can destroy us and God's plan for us. "The thief [satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." (John 10:10).
- Let's look at the "true vine" picture in nature. I am a gardener; I have been since I was quite young; it is something that has always called to me. I enjoy working with the soil, loving the plants, and even weeding. The only enemy of the real gardener is time — to truly have an amazing garden takes a lot of time. A large garden is actually equivalent to a full time job if done well.
- In all the years I have been gardening, which includes learning all about plants, herbs, and soil, I began to see an amazing thing happen before my eyes. I know our land quite well; I know what plants grow on it naturally, which ones are weeds, and which ones actually have culinary and medicinal value. How do I know this? Because I have looked them up and studied them.
- Each time a gardener clears a piece of land to plant something, or even adds new plants among the landscape (something I love to do), something nearly unbelievable happens — a plant, that has never grown on the piece of land before will begin to grow up, either right next to the plants you have added or in the vicinity of them.
 - Example: I love oregano, not only for its culinary uses, but more importantly, for its amazing medicinal uses. Because of my love for oregano, I have planted it all over our property. As a matter of fact, by now those plants might think they have been growing naturally on our property all along. Not too long, maybe months, maybe a year, I was walking down the path from our hay barn, and I stopped abruptly; my eyes had spotted something. Now, I know my oregano; know it — its color, its smell, the size and shape of the leaves, even how the leaves cluster on each stock. I know exactly what the plant looks like small and at every other stage of its growth — as I would say, we've met. As I walked down that path that day, I saw a plant I had never seen on our property, and it LOOKED ALMOST identical to my oregano, but it was absolutely NOT oregano.
 - Literally in that moment I heard in my spirit, "there is always a counterfeit to the true."
 - So, when Jesus tells us in John 15:1 that He, "is the true vine," He really wants us to understand that, so we will INSTANTLY recognize the counterfeit when we see

it, as I did that day on our property. How do we do that? Great question! Let's keep going through the scripture.

- That verse also says, "My Father is the vinedresser." Again, for people in viticultural, this word picture makes perfect sense to you. Expanding off of my analogy, a vinedresser is like a gardener. The vinedresser knows his vines so well, he recognizes disease, new maturity, the effects of the soil on the vine, the need for water and food in the right times, and extremely importantly, he knows when it is time to prune, and he also recognizes a sucker, and quickly cuts it off and burns it.
 - If I know my land and what grows on it as well as I do, I can only imagine how well Father God knows His Son, the true vine, and us, His branches on that vine.
 - Why is pruning necessary? Well, in the plant and tree world, if we don't prune, cut back or cut off, parts of the plant or tree, it actually becomes what gardeners and farmers call "WILD," yep, wild. Think of when we see a child, who's parents have set no boundaries, nor taught any manors or structure to him or her...what do we call that child? A wild and unruly child.
 - To be wild means, no one cares for you; no one is willing to do the hard job of pruning back your unruly places because that is best for you. There are no boundaries; no branches have been tied back or propped up or thinned out so the sun can get in and nurture the plant and its fruit. And any good farmer or gardener knows, a wild plant or tree is worthless in regard to harvest time. It either will have little to no fruit, or it will be riddled with disease and bugs, or both.
 - Without a vinedresser, without the farmer, without the gardener, all vines, trees, and plants will go wild, and eventually become worthless. And I have even witness with my own eyes in the plant and tree world, that if something is left to go wild, it will even start to change in appearance. What the original leaf structure was, shape and size, will become distorted, usually become larger, and often the plant will begin to grow crooked and gnarled, until it barely resembles its original form.
 - So, the Vinedresser is extremely important. Boundaries in each one of the earthly kingdoms are vital. Structure, instruction, correction, pruning — these are all acts of amazing love. The counterfeiter, the sucker on the vine or the counterfeit plant next to the real, it wants to draw all the nutrients and sun to itself, yet it is worthless; there is no fruit or nutritional value in that thing. It must be cut off, pulled out, or it will eventually destroy the branch or plant and any possibility of good healthy fruit.
 - God doesn't give us commands and structure because He is mean, angry, controlling, and condemning — NO! That is what the sucker, counterfeiter wants us to believe. He plants himself close, if we allow it, or even better for him, he attaches himself to us and grows right with us, sucking the very life out of us, and greatly hindering us in bearing fruit of any kind.
 - God is LOVE; and perfect love casts out fear. (1John 4:18). Perfect love is willing to have us mad for awhile during times of correction because perfect love knows that structure and correction will allow us to become who we were designed to be, and it will also protect us from all of the vile plans of the enemy who is always walking about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1Peter 5:8).
- To open our lives up to the fullness of God relationship, to His amazing blessings, and to truly see Him for who He is, we have to submit our lives to THEE Vinedresser, trusting Him in all His ways, and not leaning on our own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5).
- Tomorrow, we will continue in John 15 before we move onto the life of King David. A firm foundation is vital to anything worth building. The greatest building we will ever do is our relationship with God Most High.

- I bless you as you go about your day, that your hearts will be turned to God, that your ears will be tuned to hear His voice, and that your eyes will be searching diligently to not miss anything He has for you.
- Be greatly encouraged because our God's perfect plan is unfolding before our very eyes, and His Greatest Awakening of all time is building. Do you see the mountains tremble? Do you hear the earth cry out for the glorious liberty of the children of God? (Romans 8:21). Do you see the darkness getting darker and angrier? Satan only gets this angry when he knows he is about to lose! Rise up mighty children of God and look around you with spiritual eyes, and see King Jesus is lifted High, and He will bring forth His kingdom on earth AS it is in heaven, but He will bring it forth through us, His children!!
- "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10.