Being the tree, not working to produce the fruit…

Context: John 15:1-8 NKJV - [1] "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. [2] "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away:* and every branch that bears fruit He prunes,** that it may bear more fruit. [3] "You are already clean** because of the word which I have spoken to you.
[4] "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. [5] "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing**. [6] "If anyone does not abide in Me, he **is** cast out **as a** branch*** and **is** withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. [7] "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. [8] "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

My story…

I'd started working out again. As a personal trainer for many years, I knew not to push hard, but to monitor and progress slowly back into my old workout routines. I thought I'd been very pragmatic in my self regulation to, "just go through the motions" as I did my workouts. But one night just a few days after starting to workout again, my shoulder was hurting so bad that I didn't think I'd be able to sleep. As I laid down on the bed, I tried to get into a side position where my painful shoulder would be elevated and supported (lots of pillows!) so that I could totally relax it and fall asleep. After lots of adjusting and positioning, this just wasn't happening.

I spent 10+ minutes unsuccessfully fidgeting before I remembered something. In the past year or so I'd spoken to the pains and problems in my life – in the name of Jesus, and had these issues go away immediately or very quickly. "Why didn't I remember this?" I asked myself with a hint of self-condemnation.

I immediately spoke to the pain in my shoulder and commanded it to leave in Jesus' name. Certain that the pain would be gone instantly or at least noticeably subsiding, I was shocked that nothing was physically happening to my shoulder pain. This wasn't normal – this was now an anomaly in my experiences and practice from the past year.

What was wrong? Why wasn't **this** working and the fruit of healing coming forth? I pondered this and didn't know what was going on. Then, Isaiah 54:17 came into my thoughts. "*No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD*."

OH!! That is what was missing in this formula! I hadn't "condemned" this pain that was being formed against me, that MUST be it! I thanked Holy Spirit for bringing this scripture to my mind. "*Papa, You're so good to me, thank you!*" is what I muttered before I spoke again to the pain in my shoulder.

Now emboldened with what I was sure was needed, I said, "*Pain, I CONDEMN you out of my shoulder, in the name of my Papa Jesus. Leave my body and never return.*" Then, I checked the pain level in my shoulder, and it instantly,

got,

much,

WORSE!

Wait! I hadn't moved at all, I'd only spoken to my shoulder with my new-found 'correct' verse, and yet the pain clearly got worse. What the what!?!

Now the gloves were off. Now I knew some serious Spiritual battle, or something big Spiritually was definitely being manifested in this situation. I was so gob-smacked that this verse I used, that I believed had been given to me by the Holy Spirit, had not only not 'worked', but that the pain got far worse. I felt like Peter getting his answer from Jesus and walking on the water but then began to sink. And just like Peter, I cried out to Papa, "*Jesus! Help me! What's going on here?*"

It took me a few seconds to fall back to my practice of perceiving Jesus right there with me, not physically, but absolutely there with me so that I could talk with Him directly. (*Face to face as a man speaks with his friend.* Exo 33:11) And in my panic and pain I said, "*Papa, what is going on? What do I need to do?*". And He said to me, very clearly, "*Where am I in this?*".

I answered, "*Well Papa, it's 'by Your stripes that I'm healed'* (Isa 53:5, 1Pe 2:24) *that's where You are in this*." And He responded, "*Yes,,, but where am I in this?*" This confused me because I thought I had the right answer to His question. So I thought for a bit, and then concluded to Him, "*Lord Jesus, YOU are the one who took those stripes for me - that's where You are in this. It was actually You who did this for me*." Again, He said, "*Yes. But where am I in this?*"

Now I'm two strikes down and thinking that I'm about to get put out of the game because I don't know how to answer His question. I tried to come up with scriptures that would answer His question, but nothing worthy came to mind. And so I laid there, in great pain, trying to understand what He was asking me. I replayed the night's efforts and my words to the pain, and to Him, and still came up with nothing. I then muttered His question very slowly to myself, pausing on each word in hopes of seeing something I'd missed. Nada.

Papa Jesus just 'sat' there and didn't give me any hints. As I looked to Him, I saw that He knew I was about to understand His question. Suddenly, I got it. "Oh my!", I thought, Jesus Himself was not IN, ANY of the 'things' or words I'd been speaking. I was only speaking the practiced, tried-and-true principles that had become my habit for these problems. I'd been speaking my "miracle-working" words using "in Jesus name" at the end – to (attempt to) connect my doings to Him and give Him all the credit and glory. But there wasn't any living connection to my Papa in my words. What I was doing had become a fruitless 'branch' of Him and His word - a 'technique' that had been working for about a year for me. But then I realized that Jesus Himself was not involved with me in this, it was simply the protocol that I'd been using.

There was no personal relationship, no oneness in Jesus, no new-creation man operating in this life "as Jesus is…" (1Jo 4:17). I was "doing" this by myself, while wearing my "Jesus" shirt - but not doing this together as one with Him. This was now a fruitless practice because my words

were not spoken in oneness with Him, even though originally they came from Him – the Word. What I was doing was now 'withered" – like a branch that does not abide in and receive the life from the root. I saw that this didn't mean I was to be cast out myself, but this practice I'd been doing was no longer in union with Him.

"Papa, I'm so sorry! YOU were not in ANY of my proclamations or practices regarding my shoulder pain tonight."

I was so excited to have this revelation that what He desires is to live my life WITH me – in all "my" situations! He desires to live my life not just in me, as a tool to overcome these pains & problems, but to overcome these issues with me, as me, as the new-creation-me-in-Him-and-Him-in-me!!

I wasn't sorrowful or condemned, I was overjoyed to know that He only loves me and wants me to live in and as the new-creation in/of Him in this world! He want's "US"!! And I was thrilled to see this situation the way He desires! *"All you want is me!"* I joyfully said to Him as He replied with even more joy, "***YES!!***"

The 'enemy' of pain was still very much right there. The fruit of healing hadn't tangibly manifested, but right then, I was focused on feasting at this table that He had prepared for me – and it was wonderful, even in the presence of my pain! (Psa 23:5) I realized that with Him in me & as one with me, my next words to the pain were going to bring an amazing result.

I said to Him, "*Papa, LET'S,* (I paused for emphasis), *You and I as one, speak to this shoulder pain.*" To which He nodded to me in the confident pride of a Father whose beloved son had just learned this lesson and was now seeing the love his Papa has for him. I said to Him, "*I'll tell You what, I'll speak out the words with my mouth, and Your voice will be behind those words.*" Papa positively nodded again and said this to me, "***Atta boy!***"

I then spoke to the pain in my shoulder with the confidence that was all His, but now mine as well. "*Pain in my shoulder, in the name of Jesus I command…*" I didn't even finish the sentence and the pain was instantly gone. Going from extreme pain to absolutely no pain in an instant would have been my testimony from that night, but it was overshadowed by Papa's love for me - calling me into more intimacy and oneness with Him – in this life of mine, of Ours. And the removing of the 'branch' that had become fruitless in my life was such wonderful growth! The lessons He taught me as I (finally) turned directly to Him instead of my practices, we're and are, priceless to me.

Papa made us for this blessed, wonderful relationship – two **as** one in Him. (Eph 2:14) The physical things we experience can never change who we are in Him, they only have the potential to change our fruitfulness if we let **them** become our source of life instead of staying/abiding in Him. As Jesus said, "*… the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine,…*" We're the planting/tree of the Lord, the beloved 'offshoot' of our Father who desired each of us, and Fathered each of us in Christ for His great joy and pleasure.

As I learned that night, when we choose the one thing that's needed (Luk 10:42), which is to abide in the personal, intimate, conversational, active, oneness-relationship with our Father in

Christ Jesus, the fruit that is produced from that intimacy is always better than what we can think or imagine – because it's His fruit!. *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works IN us*, (emphasis mine) - Ephesians 3:20 NKJV

Jesus is in you and you're in Jesus! (Col 1:27)

Agape!

Tim

* takes away = (G142) aírō, ah'-ee-ro; a primary root; **to lift up**

** prunes = (G2508) katharós, kath-ar-os'; of uncertain affinity; **clean.** Note the "prunes" and "cleans" are the same Greek word.

***not the tree itself, but cast out LIKE a dead branch. A bad branch can be removed from a tree and the tree will still thrive. You are the tree, the planting of the Lord. Isa 61:3