



## **Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – February 24, 2024**

The Lord be with you.

I woke this morning with the most wonderful thought, I woke with the thought that I have a heavenly Father who loves me and who cares for me in every detail of my life.

And that was a real God-send for me this morning, because while the last week has been especially difficult, I woke this morning thinking about Jesus words in John 15:1. I am the true vine and my Father. My Father is the vine dresser. And then Jesus says, Abide in me as I abide in you. I am the vine, you are the branches. And so I woke with this incredible truth that Jesus Father, who is now Our Father, is the vine dresser.

Now, if you know anything about Jesus, you know that Jesus loves his father. Jesus loves to talk about his father. As we come here to John 15, Jesus has already mentioned his father no less than 23 times in the gospel John. The Gospel of John opens up with Jesus coming from the bosom of the Father. And then again and again throughout this book, Jesus says, The Father loves the Son. The Father loves to son. The Father and I are one, and I am in the Father and the Father is in me. So just take all that Jesus has said about the father and feel the Father's love. Feel Jesus' oneness with the Father as Jesus says, I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

I don't know much about vineyards and what it takes to be a vine dresser. I was raised on a cotton farm, and I know just a little bit about farming, but I do know enough to know that being a vine dresser or caring for grape vines is very different from being a farmer. In the cotton farm, we sowed seed every year, picked the crop, then plowed the crop under, started over the next year with a totally new crop. Being a vine dresser or caring for vineyard is very different. As a vineyard is more than an annual crop, a vine dresser will have vines that are many years old, even decades old, and the vine dresser has come to know his vines closely. Well, something like a shepherd knows his sheep. Now, I have read that there are no two vineyards that are alike, each vine dresser has to know the particular soil of his vineyard, he has to know the rockiness, the slope of the hill, the orientation of the sun, it's like each fingered and each vine has its own personality, he has to know how a particular vine needs to be state to be tended to be pruned, to be protected from the elements.

So summer, fall, winter, spring, you will see the vine dresser with his vines in them, tending them, tilling, protecting from insects, disease, animals, so there's so much packed into what Jesus says here when he says, I am the vine, my Father is the vine dresser, and you are the branches.

I have an assignment for you.

The next time you see a grape vine... So you, if you can distinguish, if you can tell where the grape vine ends and where the branch begins, you can't... Can you? Because the vine and the branches are one, Jesus and the Father are one. And we throw Jesus or one with the Father, we are loved, accepted and cared for by the father, as Jesus has loved... Accepted and cared for by



## water from rock

abba father. And that's why Jesus teaches us to pray. How? To pray, our father. The father who knows everything from the hairs on your head to the sparrow that falls from a tree that no one ever sees. Your Father is the vine dresser.

Your father is a vine dresser, and he is an expert on knowing you. Your Father knows what you need for life, what you need for abundant life, for the abundant fruitfulness in life.

Now, I used to preach this John 15 passage. I used to teach it as now, you go out there and you bear fruit, and I had it all wrong... I totally missed it. Because nowhere in this passage does Jesus tell you or me to bear fruit... What he does tell us to do is, abide in me as I abide in you, and you will bear fruit. Because apart from me, you can do nothing. So Jesus says, Live your life in me as I'm already living in you, the religions of the world, they tell how they think you should live life. Hey, Jesus gives life. That's the difference.

This morning, I wiped the sleep from my eyes and I realized I am one with Jesus, I actually share life with Jesus and the Father, the expert vine dresser, or the father who gets the eternal blue ribbon for knowing how to raise good vines. Our father knows. And what's more, he cares. And he will see that you and I get what we need for abundant life today, and I hope maybe as you wake up tomorrow morning, that you'll wake up knowing that a Father cares for you.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler in the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening until next time.