

## Daily Devotion For March 23, 2021

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't bear fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more fruit" John 15:1-2.

For the past 6 years since I returned to Monterey, I have made my attempts to prune an oak tree in my yard. My attempts at pruning have been mostly to keep the branches from getting tangled with the telephone wires. Since I am not a "professional" gardener, the poor oak tree looks rag tag.

So this morning, our church gardener James came and pruned the tree for me. It looks so much better. When I did some research, I discovered that gardeners prune trees for basically two reasons. 1.) To strengthen the healthy branches by removing unproductive parts of the tree. 2.) To allow more air and sunlight to reach parts of the tree that would otherwise be inaccessible. This is important for the center of the tree to be free from disease.

In John 15, Jesus says that his Father prunes both the good and the bad branches of our lives in order that the fruitful branches may be even more fruitful. It seems like we are eager to have God remove the painful things of our lives but how willing are we to surrender the good things to God's pruning so that we might be even more fruitful?

**Thought For Today:** Is the Lord pruning you today? In what ways? What does it mean to bear fruit as a Christian? Are you bearing fruit?

**Today's Prayer Focus:** Pray for God's grace, mercy, and compassion as you go through the pruning process. Continue to pray this week's prayer fuel. Deo Volente.