

The Vine and the Branches

John 15 - 16

by Don Falkos

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Jesus said to his disciples, "**I AM** the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **I AM** the vine, and you are the branches. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Then you will produce plenty of fruit. Otherwise the Father will prune you, and you will be like a withered branch put into the fire to be burned.

"My Father has loved me; I have loved you; so stay in my love; and keep loving each other. Then your joy will be complete. There is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. If you do what I command, you are my friends.

"If the world hates you, remember it hated me first. I was persecuted, so naturally you will be persecuted. But I will send you the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, who will support you as you tell the world about me. You'll need that support; persecution is on its way for those who believe in me. So don't grieve because I'm going to my Father; only then will the Advocate come and convict the world of its sin – its sin of refusing to believe in me.

"In a little while, you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again. This will be a time not unlike the birth of a child. You will experience intense pain followed by great joy.

"The time has come when you will be scattered, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I've said all this so united with me you can have peace. You'll have trouble in the world. But don't be afraid. I have overcome the world."