

The Gardener and the Vine

There's a biblical motif of gardens. There's a biblical theology of gardens.

- Two tests in a garden.
- Two bodies in a garden, brought to life, to new creations. John 19:41
- There's a biblical anthropology of gardens: **to be human is to cultivate.**

John 15:1 *"I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. 2 He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit in me. He prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it will bear more fruit. 3 You are clean already because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.*

The Father is the gardener

- He moves through his garden to look for fruit. Because fruit reflects on the gardener – the more fruit the more glory (v8)
- I have a garden.
 - My identity as a gardener is **connected** to the garden. The more fruitful the better the gardener I am.
 - With God it's a little different: his garden is fruitful because it's his nature to overflow, it's his nature to be fruitful.
 - And it's something he's deposited in us as well.

Verse 2. The Father walks through the garden doing his job as a gardener – looking for good things, looking for bad things.

- He's always walked through the Garden – knowing, but looking still.
- He walked one day and found something wrong and he dealt with it immediately
 - But also dealt with it in the long term
 - He pruned the broken branches
 - But had a plan to graft them back in
- So God walked through the garden and he still walks today
 - Looking in your life, in my life, in the life of us corporately
 - He knows but he cares, so he looks. **He's the gardener.**
 - There might be lots broken in your life – but God has always had a plan to put us where we can have life

And the Gardener, God, he walks and he sees the pride of his Garden – **the vine, Jesus.**

- He sees these things seemingly in relationship to that vine – **branches.** But just because something looks like it's connected doesn't mean that it is.
- Jesus said he is the true vine – there must be false vines

- The things we connect to that don't give us life, but take it away
 - bad things: addictions,
 - good things: relationships careers **ministry**
- False vines are false gods are false givers of life.
- The Gardener, God, can see what we are connected to because there will be fruit.

Inspections can be scary but God as gardener, gives me hope. I hope it gives you hope too.

- For us as a church it gives me hope
- God wants fruit for his glory
- He wants to grow this church to see it fruitful
 - **Will we let him prune us so that we will be more fruitful?**
 - **What does God want us to give up?** Is there something he has been challenging you with?

Conclusion

As an individual Christian this gives me hope

- The good news is that I don't have to exert fruit.
- I allow the gardener to do what he wants to do in my life, painful or joyful, because he sees the big picture.

I have a Father who is a gardener.

I have a Father who is a cultivator.

Maybe I'm in a season of a lack of fruitfulness.

- What's the answer? Work harder? Give up and be depressed?
- The answer has always been to trust in the gardener.
 - He wants fruit. He wants me to be fruitful.
 - There might be pruning, but any cutting is done for my healing.
- This is the season of life, relationship, intimacy and fruitfulness.
 - This is a season to enjoy - embrace what your Father is doing.