

# The Vine and the Branches

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*Leonard Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the importance of being spiritually fruitful through trials, joy, and a deep connection with Christ as the vine.*

**Duration:** 27:27

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:10, John 3:16, John 14:27, John 15:2, John 15:11, John 16:20, John 16:24

**Topics:** "Abiding"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man who mistreats grapes, showing a lack of understanding and appreciation for their delicacy. The speaker then uses this story to illustrate a spiritual lesson about what comes out of us when we are upset or shaken. He emphasizes the importance of having something good and valuable inside of us, like Jesus, so that when we face challenges, we respond with grace and love. The speaker also highlights the power of the Holy Spirit, who can be in a million hearts at the same time, bringing joy and peace.

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## Transcript

If I were to give these folks sitting here, this man a glass of water, this lady a glass of milk, this lady a glass of oil, this man a glass of something else, this man a... And I said, now look, I want you to all walk down this aisle, we'll put the lights out, it's dark, but you walk and see who gets to the end without spilling. And somewhere they're all going to spill. They're all going to be shaky and maybe trip over something.

Now what will come out of the glass of milk? Oil. What will come out of the glass of water? All that will come out of you if you get upset, is what's in you. And if there's nothing in it, it won't come out.

Isn't that profound? Now what did Jesus say? Jesus said, the prince of this world cometh and he findeth nothing in me. Well you say, that's wonderful. But he says, as he was, so are we in this world.

Now when we become angelic and beautiful up there. You see, if the Lord takes anger and pride and all the other things out of your life, if somebody knocks you, you won't spill any more than if there's nothing in a cup. And you knock a man, he's not going to spill it.

If you have a glass, a cup full of water and somebody jolts you, water will come out. If there's milk in it, milk will come out. If there's oil, oil will come out.

But if there's nothing in, nothing comes out. And Jesus says, the prince of this world cometh and he findeth nothing in me. He never rebelled against his father.

You think you have it rough sometimes? Will you remember that one of the most profound scriptures, as far as I'm concerned, is Isaiah 53. And it says, it pleased the Lord to bruise him. It not only let him be bruised, it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

And then later in the scripture, you may remember that it says there, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that just as it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he spared not his own son. Now if he didn't spare his only begotten son, why should he spare you and I? You see, a lot of us want salvation to escape hellfire. That's a fringe benefit.

There was a very fine, I never heard him, I once got a book of Dr. Moffat Gortry. He filled John Wesley's historic pulpit in City Road, London for some years. He was a marvellous man, marvellous appearance, a lot of white hair, tall.

He had about the most elastic vocabulary, I think, of any man I've ever read after. And he said one day, he said, the man that only wants forgiveness for his sins is toying with Christianity. If that's all you want, forgiveness for a lot of lousy sins you've committed, brother, you don't know a thing about it.

You see, he wants to create in us the Christ-like nature. It's not only forgiveness of sins, it's Christ in you, the hope of glory. Now if he's going to do that, again, remember, it's the branch that's bearing the fruit that gets the knife.

Outside of reading the Word of God, there's nothing I like to read more than reading biographies and autobiographies. And sometimes, not even of Christian men, you read the hardship and the trial and everything else. The neighbours were looking at some silly stuff, they were dropping logs of pitchblende at the end of somebody's garden, and wondered what it was all about, and said, well that's Madame Curie, and she's an oddball anyhow.

But remember what she did? I don't know whether she completed it, but she started exploration on x-rays and whatnot, and she went through travail. Almost every man who's pioneered scientifically has put up with as much as a Christian puts up with nearly. And Peter says, don't, don't get disturbed, because the world abuses you.

The man in the world gets abused too. The man in the world has an accident, the man in the world gets bereavement, the man in the world may go bankrupt, the man in the world has trials, there is no resources to go to. And if you live in him, there's a constant inflow, so that there is an overflow, and then there is an outflow.

Because he came, not merely that we might have life, but that we might have life more abundantly. The law of life is reproduction. Read the book of Genesis, everything that had life brought forth its kind.

If I have life, I'm going to bring forth my kind. I'm going to reproduce my kind, because his life is in me. The old life is gone, I have a new life in Christ Jesus.

Every branch that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. All right. One of the fruits is what? Just to take one of them.

He says in verse 11, these things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Now will you remember this? He's moving right now from this 15th chapter into the shadow of Gethsemane. And his concern is not for himself, it's for his disciples.

And he knows they're going to have the roughest time ever. He says, once I go you'll be like sheep, and the wolves are going to come in. But I want you to have one thing.

Now he doesn't pray they'll be healthy, he doesn't pray they'll be wealthy, he doesn't pray that they won't have any smarts, he says above all that comes, I want your joy, not just joy, but joy to be full. Now skip over a minute into the 16th chapter. And in the 16th chapter he says in verse 20, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Go into verse 22 at the end of it. Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy, no man taketh it from you. And then into verse 24.

Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive it, that your joy may be full. Now he says the pruning will cause joy in your life, there may be some sorrow before you get to the joy. But this is what he says, I want you to have joy, and it's permanent joy, no man can take it from you.

And not only permanent joy, but your joy shall be full. Now he's saying to them, because they did not want Jesus, they could not believe that somebody better would come than Jesus. Oh you're telling us that.

We can't believe the Holy Spirit will be, will be, will be more wonderful than you are. Now that's all right, that's all right saying it, you're trying to cheer us up. Reminds me of the pastor that went to, he had announced to his church that he was going to move to another church, and they were all sorry, but one lady wasn't there, so he went to see the old lady, and he said, well you were not in church yesterday, so I thought I'd come and tell you personally that I've resigned from the church.

Oh no, no, no, no, no my dear, he said, Dr. so-and-so is coming, and he's a, he's a better man than I am, he's a far greater preacher than I am, and she still cried. He said, don't you believe me? She said, well the last pastor said that when he resigned. The disciples could not believe that somebody would come who was better than Jesus.

And Jesus says, look, I am with you. Yeah, you're with us, and we love that. But he said, there's something better than that, he will be in you.

In his flesh Jesus couldn't be in two places at once. But by the Divine Spirit, he can be in a million hearts at the same time. Now he says, look, I want you to have joy.

Now if you go back into the 14th chapter, do you remember what he said there? He says, peace I leave with you. No, no, no, he qualifies it. He says, peace I leave with you, my peace.

This is the peace I've tested. You know, when he wanted to push me over the hill and kill me, I had peace, I didn't panic. I've often thought, I've often wondered what Jesus thought when he was in that boat, and it was nearly going over, and the ship was rocking, and the storm broke on them, and those disciples woke him and said, Master, don't you care that we perish? I'd at least have thought they'd have had decency, Lord, we're waking you up, we thought you might get drowned.

But they said, don't you care that we perish? But Jesus didn't panic, he had peace. So he doesn't say, peace I leave with you, he says, my peace I give unto you. He doesn't say, joy I leave you, he says that you may have my joy, and that your joy may be full.

Now, skip a little further down in that 16th chapter, and it says in the 32nd verse, the hour cometh, yea, it is now come that ye shall be scattered, every one of you to his own, and ye shall leave me alone, but I'm not alone, because the Father is with me. Do you get the point? He says, look, if I can be deserted by all you folk, they didn't think of it that way, if you can be, if I can be deserted by all these people, and my father's going to desert me a bit later, in one sense, but he says, until I get to that situation, my strength is that you can take everything from me, except the presence of my father. Now, if I can go through this tribulation with the presence of my father, you can go through the world with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Because you remember, it says of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the supreme desire of his life was what? What was his joy? Who for the joy that was set before him, and is there any, was there any joy in a cross? Usually for decency's sake, when you see a crucifixion, the, the, the person, the Lord Jesus, the thieves within, they, they have at least a loincloth on, they didn't have that when they were crucified, it was part of their humiliation and shame, to hang there on a cross. And yet the word says, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. When we say his joy was, number one, he was going to defeat the devil, number two, he was going to bear our sins, number three, he was going to have resurrection.

I don't believe that's the order, I believe the supreme joy of Jesus was, this is the will of my father, and I'm going to do my father's will. My supreme delight on earth is to make God happy. Now I don't paint pictures like the good doctor, I, I, I, I do paint sometimes, and uh, and I draw, and my favorite subject is eagles.

I like to draw eagles. They're very fascinating birds, I think. Somebody came in my office one day and saw a sketch I'd just about finished, and they said, uh, did you do this? I said, yes.

Um, I said, uh, yeah, can I have it? That's what you're going to say, can I have it? I said, sure you can have it. I can. Oh, I'll treasure this, I'll frame it, I'll put it up.

Oh, by the way, would you just get your pencil and autograph it? I said, no. You want autograph it? No, no, that's the worst eagle I ever drew. I don't want anybody to know I drew that eagle.

I'm not autographing that thing, I'd be embarrassed if somebody said, oh, I saw a drawing of yours in so-and-so's house, an eagle. And I'd say, uh, hmm, the weather's going to change, isn't it? Don't you think it, you know, I'd switch him off, I didn't want to talk about that, it's a mess. Now let me ask you this, when you finish living a day on earth, do you think the Lord can autograph your life? Do you know why? Because the Word of God says, we, you and I, we are his workmanship.

Now at the end of the day, either you've lived in the flesh or in the spirit, either at the end of the day I'm an embarrassment for the Lord to sign my life and say, that's his workmanship, my workmanship. Can he autograph your life at the end of the day and say, that's my workmanship? I'm glad that child of mine lives in Marshall or lives in Jefferson or wherever you live. Nuggerdoches, is it, or somewhere like that, a fancy name.

Why didn't he call it Smithborough, it would be easy to remember. But if you lived out, wherever you live, can the Lord say, look, I put that man there in that factory, in that bank, in that hospital, in that office, he's

my workmanship. And at the end of every day I'm glad to sign my name at the bottom and say, that's the kind of saint I can produce.

In a rotten, materialistic, selfish world, full of sensuality, everything that's vain and vulgar and vicious, is promoted. And the good book says that you and I are to think on whatsoever things of pure and lovely heavens. Where will you find them? Outside of the sanctuary, the saints of God and the Word of God.

Everything's contaminated and rotten, it's got the devil's mark on it everywhere. And God sets us up. I reminded you the other day, it says that there were saints in Caesar's household.

All right, I'm going to have to let you go. I'm not too willing, but I will. But anyhow, let me say this.

You see, grapes are lovely, but most folk don't like grapes that way, they like it liquid. They like wine. There's only one way you can get wine.

I remember we were out on the west coast and I said to Martha, let's stop at this vineyard. And we stopped. There's a fellow there smoking a big stogy there, smoking away, and he's talking about football or something, he's swearing and carrying on, and he reaches for a bunch of grapes, literally this size, like this, and he takes a knife and slashes it like that and bangs it down into a big basket.

Then he picks the basket up and threw them in a dump truck. Well, is there anything more tender than a vine? When you see a vine and you see the grapes with the blush on them, those blue grapes with the blush on them, and oh, they're so lovely. And this big husky guy didn't know a thing about that.

He gets them up and he slams them there in the basket and he slams them in a truck. And then they take them into a factory and, oh, well, they do it different now. They used to have a rock about the size of this desk and hollow it out, and it had a little hole at the front.

And the man would come with his grapes and stack them up, and then he'd roll his trousers up and jump on top. Did he wash his feet? Sure he did, while he was doing the grapes. And he stamps the grapes through like this, he stamps away, and the juice comes out at the front, and he bottles it very, very carefully.

Oh, isn't that a terrible business? You look after a vine and you prune it and the sun shines on it, the flowers come first, and the bees come, and insects come, and then the grapes come. And when you get the precious things, you pulverize them and knock the shape out of them, and look what you get out of them. Now that's a law of life.

It says in the Old Testament, bread corn must be bruised. You don't think of that. You dear ladies that work so hard, at the end of a Monday the ladies are so tired they've been pushing buttons all day.

And on the washer, and the dryer, and the toaster, and bread comes already sliced, and soon they'll have it buttered for you, you won't have anything to do. But what about when they put that corn in the ground? I mean wheat. And you put it in the dirty ground, and you cover it over with dirt, and it stays in the wet, and the rain, and the snow comes.

And then it comes up a little, and a bit more, and a bit more, and then it gets ripe, and then you cut the head off it with a threshing machine. Then you put it in a machine and toss the thing around till you get all the calf off. And then you put it in something else, and you scrub the hard husk off it.

And then that's not enough, you put it in a mill and grind it into flour. And my dear mother used to buy, we used to buy it by what we call a stone in England, 14 pounds at a time. And she used to put it in a big old pot there, and put water in, and yeast, and punch it, and punch it, and punch it, and then put it by the fire, and it would rise up like this, and she'd say it's ready to go in the oven, and then she'd bake it.

Oh the poor thing's gone through enough tribulation, why roast it to death? A few weeks ago it was freezing. And then you put it in a machine, and tear it apart, and then you put it in the oven, and bake the thing. Then you bring a knife and slice it.

Then you give it to the cannibals around the table, they tear it with the teeth. I mean your relatives, sorry. And, and, and, and they, they tear it with their teeth.

Isn't that a painful business? But we don't think of it, you just, just now, pass the bread please. The white, the brown bread. You don't eat white bread.

The whiter the bread the sooner you're dead. And so you, you, you take this nice brown bread. But look at all the processes it went through.

It's taken months for that bread to get to your table. You don't think that much about it. But everything God uses he breaks.

He took bread and break it. A woman bought an alabaster box of ointment, and she break it. And Jesus said, this is my body which is broken for you.

The old Hebrew scholar in Scotland, if you ever look, see his book anywhere buy it, the sayings of Rabbi Duncan. He was a little fellow. He wasn't a rabbi, but he was so profound in Hebrew they named him the rabbis in the University of Edinburgh, New College.

And whenever he taught Hebrew grammar he used the scripture, he used the Hebrew Bible. And he was teaching one morning on Hebrew, on Isaiah 53. And he came to that verse where it says, he was wounded for our transgressions, and he was bruised for our iniquity.

His soul was made an offering for sin. You see we get sentimental about Jesus hanging on a cross with nails. Well the thieves suffered the same didn't they? But it was soul that was made an offering for sin.

He says, all my billows are gone. The blackest, most inexplicable thing in history, that Jesus not only took sin, he became sin. I don't know how deity, you, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and yet you compress him into the matrix of the Virgin Mary.

How do you put a holy God that fills eternity into the matrix of a woman? How does a man, how does God become man? Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man. He became a babe. It's a mystery.

But then he became sin. And the old rabbi stood there, they said that morning with his old Hebrew Bible, the tears rolling down his face. Ah, he says, gentlemen, his soul was made an offering for sin.

Ah, he said, closing his eyes and the tears spilling down his little beard, he said, gentlemen, ah, he said, it was damnation. And he took it joyfully for us. He pleased the Lord to bruise him, to break him.

You can't take corn out of the ground and put it on the table. It goes through a dozen processes, it gets burned, it gets cut, and you tear it, and then you get your bread. You can't make wine without crushing the life and shape out of grapes.

And if you read Oswald Chambers, you remember more than once he uses a phrase, he wants to be broken bread and poured out wine. One simple thing. We were out in Idaho some years ago, and you know what Idaho's famous for, those enormous potatoes.

But do you know that they're the biggest apples I've ever seen anywhere in the world? And as we came back from lunch at the farm, pastor said, could I drive you down this way and it won't take long? And I said, yeah. And as we turned in the lane, he stopped and he said, look at those trees. Do you know those, those apples seemed as red as those red stained windows up there? The road was just red with apples, as though somebody had sprayed them with a, with a powerful spray of red paint.

And I said, well, that's a wonderful crop. I'm glad you brought me, I've never seen such fruitfulness. Oh, I didn't bring you for that.

Oh, he said, let's go, and we went down the road. And when we got there, you know what a tree is, a tree is like this with its branches up. All right, then you've got little sprays coming off little twigs, and on those twigs you get blossoms, they look beautiful.

And when the blossom blows off, the little seed box becomes an apple. Now, if you've got five apples on a tender twig like that, it doesn't strain the, the, the twig to hold, uh, blossoms. And it doesn't strain the twig to hold little apples, but as they get bigger, they go down and down and down, and the weight begins to pull on the tree like that.

And the weight was so great that this man had got crops like this and put them under the branches. And these looked all like red umbrellas. The whole of his orchard was propped up.

He had a super abundance of fruit. And he said, this man knows how to prune trees better than that. He'd some good fruit, but look at the fruit here.

And I went, I got out of the car and I went. I have never seen. It was amazing.

You couldn't see leaves, you couldn't see anything, but those massive, beautiful apples all together. And they were bending over so you could just pick them as easily as you like, instead of climbing up on a ladder. Well, I said, thank you, I'm glad I saw that.

I think that's wonderful. But he said, I didn't bring you to see that. Oh, come on, what did you bring? Wait a minute.

We got in the car and he stopped. He said, look. And I looked, and the whole ground was as red as these beautiful red velvet things you're sitting on.

Well, I said, how come? I never seen that. Well, look again, he said, because it wasn't clear at first. But you see, he ran out of crops.

And so this branch has been working all the year, maybe many years, to get a superabundant. Do you know what it did? That branch pulled itself out of the stem of the tree. Just as though you're taking... And that branch was so loaded, that rather than yield its fruit, it pulled itself out of the stem of the tree, just as

though you cut it with a knife like that.

And the trees were all lying on the floor. They looked like cartwheels, loaded, loaded, loaded with fruit. And I turned, and I looked across the road, and there was a tree.

It had some fungus on it. Nobody bothered with it for years. He said, oh, that's, he doesn't bother with his orchard anymore.

He's ranching, he doesn't bother with fruit trees. But there at the top were two apples in the breeze, like this, shaking like mad, as much as to say, hey, look at us, look at us, look at us, look at us. I learned a few lessons from that.

I learned that the tree that bears the most fruit is the humblest, it's the lowest. I learned something else from John 12. Though the law of reproduction is on and in life, it's death, it's death.

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die. And I remember Norman Grubb, oh my, gives my age away. Let me see, he came to a meeting I was in in 1932, that's a few years back.

C.T. Studdard just died, the founder of that mission. And people were saying, you know, no movement ever survives its founder. Methodism went down after Wesley died, Salvation Army went down after Booth died, and the work will go down now, the founder's dead.

And I remember he stood there and he said, well, if it does, that's fine. The sooner it dies, the better. But he said, the law that we have had in this fellowship, and he was a son-in-law of C.T. Studd.

And C.T. Studd wrote that little epigrammatic thing, if Jesus Christ be God and died for me, no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. Now remember Norman standing there, this young, fine-looking man there, and he said, if it dies, fine. But he said, the law of reproduction is death.

Except a cone of wheat fall into the ground and die. And he said, this is where our society dies right now. We're just caught in a bind.

Our leader has died. We don't have much prestige. They've been split away from their group because they thought C.T. was too severe.

And he says, this is either death or resurrection life. I don't know how many missionaries they had then. I guess they've about 1,500 around the world right now.

And they never asked for a penny. And if they came here and spoke, they wouldn't ask you for a penny. They've lived by faith all the time.

God meets all their bills. The law of life, the law, pardon me, the law of pruning, and the law of life are the secret of success. But if we'll abide, we'll abound.

If we have union, we know the secret of communion. And if we abide in him, and his word abide in us. Because this is what it really comes down to.

While this chapter is on fruit bearing, it's on prayer too. That when he's pruned away all the superfluous things in our lives and got us down where he wants, then we shall ask what we will. My daddy was talking

to a man one day in the hospital and the man said, well don't talk to me about God.

He doesn't answer my prayers. I've prayed with problems and he's never answered me. And my father just said this, supposing the Prince of Wales walked in this room, and King George was standing here, he was our king of the time.

Supposing you said to the king, uh king I'm a subject of, of your kingdom, uh would you give me a hundred dollars please? Do you think he'd give it to you? He said no. He said well, supposing the Prince of Wales said father I need a hundred dollars, do you think he'd get it? Oh well sure immediately. He said why? Well he said because he's his son and he pleases his father.

And father said that's exactly the thing. Because we're children, because we're the sons, because we do those things of the pleasing to the father, he hears us. And whatsoever we ask in his name, according to his will he gives to us.

So if he's doing some pruning, that's all right, the fruit will be better when you get further up the road. He only takes away what's unnecessary. He's only seeking my dross to consume, to change the figure, and my gold to refine.

Father we thank you for your word. Thank you for all it means to us, and we pray that we may discover more and more, that you bring things new and old out of your treasury. Dismiss us with your blessing we ask in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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