

THE WANDERING BRANCH



One morning the little branch woke up and said to itself, “I’m tired of being stuck in this one spot forever. I think I’ll shake myself loose and take a little walk around the farm to see what’s going on.”

The little branch pulled and tugged until it was free of the Vine.

“It’s my constitutional right to be a free branch,” said the little branch as it tumbled to the ground.

The little branch walked down the road and came upon a crowd of branches gathered on the edge of the apple orchard listening to a tall branch dressed in a fine suit with clusters of gold hanging where grapes should be.

The leaves on this well-dressed branch were yellow and shriveled. But what an eloquent speaker he was!

“Trust me,” said the branch dripping with gold, “I will show you how to prosper.”

There was a stirring of admiration in the crowd. But the little branch was wary. “Why were those leaves yellow and shriveled?” said the little branch to itself.

“Hey! Over here!” came a voice from the onion patch. The little branch drew near and saw a branch wrapped in pure linen with a golden sash around its chest.

“All these years you have languished on that Vine and you still don’t know how to heal the sick and cast out demons. Listen to me. I’m going to teach you the secret of spiritual power.”

A crowd of branches came running to hear what this magnificent branch had to say.

“I will show you how to perform miracles. Come join me, and together we will change the world.”

The little branch was fascinated and came closer. But it noticed the leaves on this magnificent “spiritual branch” were brittle and brown.

As it turned away the little branch had the shock of its life. Its own leaves were beginning to shrink and shrivel.

“I don’t belong out here,” said the little branch to itself, and hurried back to the Vine.

Trembling with shame, the little branch cried out to the Vine, “May I come back? Will you take me to yourself this one last time?”

“Come,” said the Vine, and scooped up the little branch and fixed it back in its proper place.

“I am the true Vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

Each branch has a direct connection to the Vine.



Growth

Signe Flink

No preacher, no prophet, no spiritual advisor can be its source of nourishment.

Only the Vine can sustain the branch.

If we keep our connection to the Vine strong, we bear fruit.

If our connection is weak, we bear no fruit.

There are independent branches that offer prosperity, spiritual power, wisdom, and even grace.

But if we connect with them, our leaves wither and our fruit dries up.

Only the Vine can sustain us.

And the Vine can sustain us only if we are rooted and grounded in him.



A Place Where I Can Grow

“The one who abides in me, and I in them, that one bears much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

The Vine has a warning for those who wander off, asserting their “constitutional rights” to “freedom”.

“If a man does not abide in me he is cast forth as a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.”

And the Vine has an awesome promise for the branch that draws its life from him.

“If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

John 15



Carry Good Fruit Signe Flink

I abide in the Vine by soaking up his words and walking in his light.

I abide in the Vine by listening for his voice and obeying it.

***“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.***

And no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”

John 10



Prayer- Kind, gracious Lord our strong vine our source of life, draw our wandering hearts back to you. Without you we dry up and wither away. Without you we can do nothing. Only you can give us the vibrant, fruitful life we need. Only you can sustain us amongst the distractions, fears and dissension that call us away from your very heart. Oh Lord, reach out, pull us tightly to you, keep us from anything that would snatch us away from you. May we listen to your calling voice, follow you and cherish the intimacy, the care and the life we find in you. MM

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