



29 March Revd Matt Graham

Lent2021

I'm more the mower than the gardener in our family. Even so, Jesus' garden picture is clear, the branches depend on the vine, not the other way around.

The vine metaphor is humbling. We love to stand on our own two feet and be reliant on no one. Jesus says for our spiritual life and sustenance, growth, and vibrancy, we cannot do it alone. The branches depend utterly on the life-giving and sustaining nourishment of the vine. This may be stretching the metaphor too far but imagine a branch that greedily devours and strips the vine of all its resources. To sap all the life from the vine, in the end would lead to certain death for the branch (and more fuel for the bonfire v.6).

As I said, I'm not a gardener, I suspect a branch can't do that to a vine. But isn't it a fair picture of our exploitation of the world's resources? Selfishly consuming what we rely on. Greedily gorging on what we should receive with humble gratitude and expecting it to keep giving, despite our ravaging and neglect is clearly wrong.

But perhaps our dawning regret at how we have mistreated God's world can help us grasp something about our reliance on Jesus the vine. Do we take, and presume and ignore? Or humbly, gratefully depend, day after day?

Probably the greatest success in our garden is an apple tree (that I have never touched!). The fruit comes year after year. Unlike my relationship with Jesus, the branches don't wander off for a bit, or ignore the trunk when things get busy. This lent, tell Jesus how much you need him and remain in him.

Revd Matt Graham, St Stephen, Prenton

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

Information Point

Despite the unwelcome recent cuts in the overseas aid budget the UK Government is still providing significant support to poorer nations.

<https://www.ukaiddirect.org/>

A prayer

Dear Lord

I love you. I need you. I rely on you. Apart from you, I can do nothing. Help me stick close and bear much fruit for you.

Amen