

Hurt or harm

ED ROTZ | MAY 4, 2018

Jesus likened the relationship of those who follow him to that of a relationship between a branch and a vine.

Branches do not live independently of the vine. An organic union exists whereby the vine nurtures, supports and facilitates the growth of the branch. Sometimes, the branches need pruning. "...*every branch that does bear fruit (the Gardener) prunes so that it will be even more fruitful*" (John 15).

"Ouch!" Wouldn't such action hurt the branch? Why in the world would a gardener take pruning shears into the vineyard and whack away at branches that seem to be healthy and fruit-producing? Doesn't the trimming of branches seem counterintuitive?

The pruner knows what the rest of us may not know. A pruning is necessary because the condition of the branch may fit one of the following conditions:

- It is producing so many buds and new sprouts that it can't sustain them all. Snip!
- It is unhealthy and no amount of water, fertilizer, hoeing and "TLC" (tender loving care) is going to get it better. Lop!
- It's dead and is taking up too much space. Whack!

Through the pruning process, the gardener's pruning priority is "What's best for the plant and the overall health and productivity of the vineyard?" While pruning in the hands of someone who knows what they are doing may seem hurtful, it's not harmful.

Dr. Henry Cloud draws a clear distinction between hurt and harm. "There is a big difference between hurt and harm. We all hurt sometimes in facing hard truths, but it makes us grow. It can be the source of huge growth. That is not harmful. Harm is when you damage someone. Facing reality is usually not a damaging experience, even though it can hurt." The difference is illustrated by the experience of having an infected tooth pulled. The dentist did not harm us, but our mouth sure hurts when the Novocain wears off. The hurt ensures dental health.

When the Holy Spirit orchestrates pruning in relationships, business and ministry it hurts, but it is not harmful. A timely, well-executed pruning almost always results in growth, innovation, new discoveries and more robust yield.

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Pruning is often a necessary ending that followers of Christ are reluctant to submit to, but it is often a critical part of what is involved in being a disciple of Jesus.

May 6, 2018

Live by Faith - Not by Sight

Sermon Notes:

God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything.

Ephesians. 4:15 (MSG).

Hebrews 13:8

Matthew 9:9

Philippians 2:12-13

Philippians 2:1-13

1. We have been saved from the _____ of sin by Christ

_____ (Philippians 2:6-8)

Ephesians 2:8-10

2. We will be saved from the _____ of sin in Christ

_____ (Philippians 2:9-11)

Revelation 21:3-4

3. We are being _____ from the _____ of sin through Christ, sanctified (Philippians 2:12-13)

Ephesians 5:25-28 & Ephesians 6:4

APPLICATION:

1. In your relationship with God - _____ like _____ (Philippians 2:1-2)

Proverbs 4:20-23

Romans 12:2

Colossians 3:16

2. In your attitude towards yourself - be _____ (Philippians 2:3)

1 Corinthians 14:20

3. In your relationship with _____ - look for ways to _____ (Philippians 2:4)

Romans 15:2-3

Reflection: What is one new thing you believe God spoke to you today as a result of worshipping at FOCUS?

The Word of God directs us as we consider what the *next step* is for our lives. What is your next step?

Challenge: This week I will pray for the following schools and teachers:

Communion at FOCUS

Every Sunday at FOCUS we celebrate the **Lord's Table, also known as Communion.** We have open communion which means all are invited to receive. We receive communion elements by intinction. Tearing off a small piece of the loaf of bread, dipping it in the communion glass of juice, and then consuming it immediately. Please note, upon your request, we also have gluten free elements for those with gluten and other major food allergies.

SuperRecycling Day provided by Toyota - Sat. May 12th

On Saturday May 12th from 9 AM to 3 PM Scott county and Georgetown Residents can bring items such as; pesticides, batteries, paint, TVs, computers, phones, ink cartridges, and documents to be safely destroyed. Follow the signs at Gate 7.

Fellowship at Thompson's Farm - Tues. May 8th 7 PM

Friends welcomed, food provided.

Wednesday Night Meal

We would like to invite you and your family to join us for supper this Wednesday. The meal will be served from 5:30-6:30 PM. All ages are invited and welcome!



FOCUS

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**LIVE BY FAITH
NOT BY SIGHT**



2 CORINTHIANS 5:7