

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting
October 20th
Daily Devotional #20
We Are in the Season of Cleansing

Today is the last day in our “Season of Cleansing” and we have a special article written by Armando Hernandez to remind us that cleansing is a continuing process as we engage with God in being Transformed for Kingdom Living.

Blessings,
Danny

Another form of cleansing...
John 15 New International Version (NIV)

The Vine and the Branches

¹⁵ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other”.

Every time I have come to our meeting facility, the bushes on the South side of the building kept on calling my name. I had noticed for a while that they

needed some pruning, so this past Saturday, designated as a workday was the perfect opportunity for me to do just that.

After I started the process, it became a tedious job, a lot more than I had bargained for. I discovered that it was not just the trimming of the outside of the plant that needed work. To my surprise, underneath those healthy-looking bushes, I discovered dead branches that needed to be cut off and removed.

In addition, I found that each of the bushes consistently had one or two thin vines (“false vines”) that were tangled all over the branches. The vines, along with another plant that was growing underneath very close to the trunk, seemed to be dependent on the bush itself for its survival, like parasites. They needed to get cut-off as well.

Since I know very little about caring for plants, during the trimming process I questioned myself which branches to trim and how much to prune but then my mind took me to the words of Jesus:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful.”

In this “I AM” statement, Jesus is calling himself the “True” vine, implying that there are “false” vines. The obvious lesson to his disciples was a reminder that each of them should be attached to the trunk of the true vine for survival; nevertheless, even if one is attached to the trunk, it runs the risk of being cut off and thrown away, if not fruitful.

Jesus is talking about a cleansing process through which God cuts off any fruitless branches, but prunes the ones that are productive in order for them to produce even more fruit.

Cleansing should not be restricted to a season during which we give up **temporarily** the most obvious sins, bad habits, and things that we know we struggle with. It is instead about being willing to look underneath the surface, inside “our closet,” and behind our external appearance. It is about uncovering anything that does not please God, foreign attitudes, thoughts, values and habits that stunt our spiritual growth and eliminate them permanently.

What we do on the outside, while important should never be the most outstanding aspect of what we want to accomplish. Our ultimate goal should

be to be cleansed of anything that does not serve God's purpose, and that does not glorify Him.

As we prepare for another season, let's cleanse our conscience of any negativity, practice submission to God and let Him speak to us!