

Tossed in the Fire – Missed Connections Series

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MAIN VERSES

[John 15:1](#) • [John 15:1-17](#) • [John 15:6](#) • [John 15:12](#) • [Isaiah 5:1-7](#) • [Jeremiah 2:21-22](#) • [Ezekiel 15:1-8](#) • [Ezekiel 17:1-10](#) • [Ezekiel 15:4](#) • [Ezekiel 15:10](#) • [Ezekiel 17:9](#)

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home. Shabbat shalom, everyone. We are so happy to come together again, even though it's online, to experience the peace and God's holy Sabbath, and to once again dive into His Word.

We really appreciate the feedback that you guys send us every week. We've received some amazing feedback with the Missed Connection series, where we've been exploring the writings of the New Testament to see how the authors were trying to continue the story of the Old Testament and link it to Jesus. But as we've explored many times, when we're not as familiar with the Old Testament, sometimes we miss the connections that the biblical authors are attempting to make, right? Hence, the Missed Connection series. I thought it was clever.

We went over the bigger story and the bigger connection of the good shepherd in John and what Ezekiel says about that, and how that connection—what John was wanting us to notice—exalts Yeshua, right? We've also gone over the Valley of Dry Bones imagery that Ezekiel has in his oracle or vision, and how John attempts to use that imagery throughout his entire account of Yeshua, starting in [John 1.1](#) and showing the fulfillments of the Valley of Dry Bones prophecy in [John 20](#).

And if there's one thing I'd like you to take away from this series, it's that Yeshua is that big of a deal. He is the one that the prophets spoke about. And in the New Testament, the authors wanted you as the reader to understand that he is king, that all these prophecies lead to him. He is the fulfillment of the story of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament.

The Vine and Branches

And so as we continue the series this week, we're going to jump into an allegory that Yeshua speaks about—the vine and the branches. And I know that we're all familiar with this specific scripture, which we'll take a look at in just a moment. But it's that he is the vine and we are the branches, right? And we love that, put it on bumper stickers and t-shirts. It's a great little saying that's sometimes motivating spiritually or edifying—helping us understand that when we're connected with him, we have the life of the vine and hopefully we produce good fruit, right?

And that's a great context for the scriptures, but I hope today we can explore a deeper connection found in the prophets, specifically in Ezekiel.

So without further delay, let's go ahead and take a look at the scriptures at hand. And actually, before we get started, let me recommend a few Christian scholars that do an amazing job with this type of topic. The first one is Dr. Michael Heiser. He has a great podcast series where he explores some of these exact connections. He's also most well-known for his book, *The Unseen Realm*, which I highly recommend. The other is *Echoes of Scripture* by Richard Hayes. Fantastic book. The links are in the description below. Also, a great book that we may quote from is Dr. Gary Manning's *Echoes of the Prophet*. So anyway, great resources. Make sure you check them out.

Reading John 15

And so we're going to start in John chapter 15. And because I know this is a familiar passage for many, it may not be so familiar that you'll have all these elements in your head automatically. So we're going to jump in and reread it together. [John 15](#), verses 1 through 17. Go ahead and turn there and we'll get started.

Last week, someone asked in chat, by the way, what version of the Bible I prefer. Really loaded question, by the way, but I know it's sincere. Sometimes you get in trouble when you actually answer those types of questions. And guys, I really appreciated the question. If you have questions, I always look in the chat afterwards. You can email us through the *Founded in Truth* website if you ever have questions or list them in the chat below. Make sure you hit the like button while you're at it because this is our only platform right now.

But to answer that question, I'm impressed by the continued efforts of the NIV version of the Bible to correct and change based on archaeological findings and manuscript analysis. Taking the actual manuscripts that we found, dating them, and trying to get to the source of what the

earliest biblical authors had to say. I also love the CSB, the Christian Standard Bible, as well as the ESV, because that's the hipster version. So today I'm actually going to be reading from the ESV. So join me, John chapter 15, verse 1, and here we go.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that bears fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Love One Another

Verse 1. So just a quick note—because while we're here, we might as well dive into one of the most convicting things Yeshua ever says. And what does he say? He says, "This is my commandment." He's been talking about abiding in his commandments, abiding in his love. But this one he specifies: "that you love one another as I have loved you."

And many times those of us who love the Torah go back to [Leviticus 19](#): "love your neighbor as yourself." That's not the commandment that Yeshua said, though. Yeshua didn't tell you to love your neighbor as yourself. Yeshua said, "This is the commandment that you follow if you're a part of me, and this is the commandment that will show forth bearing fruit: that you love one another as I have loved you."

And so let's take a minute right now and meditate on that. Who in your life do you love like Yeshua loves you? And since we're on that topic, who in your life can you think of that you don't love like Yeshua loves you? Do you have someone pictured in your mind—someone where you're not quite grasping the fulfillment of this commandment?

That's a convicting command. It's a convicting verse. Because we always want to love the people we choose to love, justifying whatever kind of love is necessary. But especially the people Yeshua told us to love most—our enemies, those who hate us or whom we hate.

So let's go ahead and do that. Who hates you most in the world right now? Who do you hate most in the world right now? And if you don't like using hate, who do you dislike? Who do you believe is unlovable in your life right now? Because this commandment is for you today—that you love one another as I loved you.

Sometimes Christians are so blinded by our own definitions of what we want to make Yeshua's commandments that we ignore the very premise of everything that he taught us to be. And this verse sums it up: Greater love has no one than this, that they would lay down their life. It's the calling of a Christian. So meditate on that verse. I wanted to emphasize this while we're on it. This whole section of Scripture is extremely powerful, and it's familiar to many of you.

The Old Testament Foundation

But as Dr. Heiser points out, less familiar to most Christians is the reality of what Yeshua is talking about here—and it's being drawn from the Old Testament. Spoiler alert.

So we need to understand the context of what Yeshua is saying here. Because if we don't understand the context of what John is writing, we're going to over-interpret these verses to mean whatever we want about the branches and the vineyard. And so there are a few points of reference that we need to know about.

Now, in Christian scholarship, scholars are well aware of how this section in [John 15](#) relates to the Old Testament. Richard Hayes dives into all of them in his book. But what's interesting is there are several options or candidates, I should say, for where Yeshua gets this parable about the vine and the branches from.

And the top three candidates that most scholars land on are [Isaiah 5](#), 1-7, [Jeremiah 22](#), 21-22, and [Ezekiel 15](#), 1-8, along with [Ezekiel 17](#), 1-10.

And guys, I figure let's go ahead and read through each of these texts of the prophets, and let's examine why and why not each might be who John had in mind. So today is going to be like a Bible study—like always, I guess—but it's going to be fun, right?

And another spoiler alert: just like the past few weeks, we've concluded that John has this fascination with Ezekiel, and he tends to connect Yeshua into Ezekiel frequently. So I'll give you one guess where we're going to land today as far as which text has most in common with [John 15](#).

Looking at Why Isaiah and Jeremiah

It's Ezekiel. But let's go ahead and look at why others would say Jeremiah and Isaiah, because it's always healthy to take a survey of the scriptures. Let's go ahead and start with [Isaiah 5](#), 1 through 7. The relationship here isn't really tight, but we're going to see some points of connection. So [Isaiah 5](#): this is the vineyard of the Lord destroyed, the poem that Isaiah pens

condemning Israel, right? This is typically where, if you ever think about the vine and the branches, you go to say, "Well, that's where this is sourced from." I used to, for sure, because the language is all there. And also, if you've ever watched our message called The Bible Code or some message we did two years ago, a year or two ago, What the Bible Is Not, you'll know that this is like my favorite section of the Bible to geek out about because Isaiah—in this section of Scripture, Isaiah begins to freestyle rap, R-A-P, like hip-hop, a little bit. And so we're going to explore that because I just find that neat. I think the Bible is so cool in all of its divinely inspired humanity. So let's read it together, Isaiah chapter 5, starting in verse 1.

And he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded only wild grapes. Verse 7: is the house of Israel. And the men of Judah are the pleasant planting. And he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed, and righteousness, but behold, an outcry.

So as far as if we're looking for a connection to [John 15](#) and what Yeshua said, God is referring to Israel as his vineyard here in the text. And it speaks about him planting them and cultivating them. But the issue is this vineyard, his people, they're not yielding what they're supposed to. The fruit is not good. And this is how God is going to respond.

Now, just like last week, we touched on using the Greek Septuagint, right? The Greek Old Testament that was prominently used when the New Testament authors quoted the Old Testament. And when we look at Isaiah chapter 5 in the Septuagint, there are two words that have a connection to [John 15](#). Just two words that are similar, that are used. So there's not a big connection as far as the actual text goes. Even on the surface, the genre of what Ezekiel is speaking about does sound similar to [John 15](#), but those connections are, of course, in [Isaiah 5:2](#) with the reference to the bad fruit. It's familiar. And also a reference to pruning. And so there's two terms that show up and at least present some type of connection there, but not a whole lot. And many times people will gravitate to Isaiah chapter 5 as a way to source what John is getting at because we would hope that if John was trying to lead people back to Isaiah chapter 5, he would use more phrases and connections to the situation. And that's kind of the train of thought that I have here. That's why I'm surveying these. This is why a number of Christian scholars reject [Isaiah 5](#) as the main connection point for Yeshua's parable of the vine and the branches.

Isaiah's Hidden Rhyme

Before I go on, though, I want to highlight the nerdy Bible moment I was telling you about. So in Isaiah chapter 5, if you're still there, Isaiah is pouring out this message of God's coming

wrath to Israel because they've messed everything up. And they're not fulfilling their role as his image bearers, right? They're already looking more like the world. And instead of cultivating peace, they're using their power to spread violence into the world in the name of security and rejecting the mandate of God's kingdom. And at this point, that's what he's writing, we come to verse 7. So go ahead and stick your finger on verse 7. And what's it say? It says that he looks for justice, but behold, bloodshed, for righteousness, but behold, an outcry. And here, hidden in the Hebrew, is this little gem. Isaiah is writing this poem here, but he comes to this one verse and he begins to randomly start rhyming words together in the heat of his passion of condemning Israel and Judah, right? He begins to rap. And here is the same verse with the Hebrew words. So we're going to read the Hebrew words that rhyme here.

"In his pleasant planting, and he looked for mishpat, right? Justice, but behold, mishpak. He looked for Zedekiah, but behold, Zedekiah. Are you not impressed? I thought it was kind of neat. I mean, he looked for mishpat, but behold, mishpak, and Zedekiah, and behold, Zekiah. Like Ezekiel was sitting here, okay? He was pinning this letter. He was pinning this chapter. And in this moment, when he got to writing verse seven, he thinks to himself, I can make these words rhyme. Bloodshed and justice, I can make these rhyme. And so in writing this letter, he adds in these words that rhyme. And I find that so entertaining because put yourself in his shoes if God inspired you to write a letter of condemnation to Judah. Okay? So you sit down and you obey the word of the Lord and you begin writing. If it were me writing this letter inspired by God and I made a clever rhyme in it, I would have been so proud of myself. This is just me, right? And I may be projecting Isaiah, but I would have run into the other room where my wife would have been on the couch and I would have been like, hey babe, I'm writing this letter on behalf of God, but check out what I did. Check this out, you ready? And I would have been like, okay, here I go, you ready? Or his pleasant planting. And he looked, here we go. I mean, come on, will the real Isaiah please stand up? I love this little gem because in my mind, it shows a little bit of the humanity of Isaiah. And it's a moment where I get excited with Isaiah about a rhyme here and appreciate something he did that in our English Bibles we never get to see. So that's my soapbox. I love the nerdy stuff in the Bible that God has given to us because it gets me excited. And it just furthers the passion of the prophets and what they meant for their message to get across. He's using poetry that he knows is going to get everybody's attention. Everyone's going to smirk and be like, wow, that was a rhyme. But what does it mean? It means everything you were meant to do, God sees the opposite in your life. And that could preach today, but it certainly preached to Judah at the time of Isaiah.

Jeremiah as Another Source

So the next candidate for trying to find a source for Yeshua's parable of the vine and the branches is Jeremiah. And so let's go ahead and read this possible connection in Jeremiah to what Yeshua said in John. [Jeremiah 2](#), starting in verse 21.

Yet I planted you a choice vine. All right, so we're talking about vineyards again. Holy of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord God.

Okay, so if we go back up and get the context, this is Jeremiah. So this is going to be directed towards Jerusalem or Judah. The northern kingdom is already gone by Jeremiah's time. So it has sort of the same flavoring here as far as what it's aimed at—it's exile language. And the point of the connection is in the first line of [John 15](#), where he says, I am the true vine and my father is the gardener. He prunes every branch that bears fruit. And if we go to [Jeremiah 2](#), 21, we read where it says, I planted you a fruit-bearing vine. And it sounds very similar in the Greek Septuagint and in John. And so that's kind of where some scholars make the connection between the two there with that one phrase.

Why Jeremiah Falls Short

The issue is, however, in John, God is specifically called the gardener. But in Jeremiah, God clearly functions as the gardener without the title. God plants the vine, and part of the oracle is that Israel has rejected God despite God's care for Israel. But in [Jeremiah 2.21](#), fruit bearing is a metaphor, of course, for Israel's earlier faithfulness and usefulness to God in contrast to Israel's later apostasy. So in [John 15](#), however, who's the vine? It's Jesus himself. It's Yeshua. So that's the problem with connecting Jeremiah to John. As the reader, John is not trying to tell us about Yeshua's apostasy because he didn't. Also, the metaphorical element of fruit-bearing is thus transferred from the vine to the branches in John, but not in Jeremiah. So it doesn't line up. You have fruit-bearing, which means good deeds and doing God's will, but the targets are completely different between the two to have a firm connection.

When we look at both Isaiah and Jeremiah, in both Old Testament passages, the vine is Israel, while in [John 15](#), the vine is Yeshua. And of course, you could make the case, if you're a fan of Jeremiah or Isaiah, that Yeshua is filling the role of Israel and fulfilling Israel's role. But as I think you'll see, we have a much stronger connection in Ezekiel. So we're about to read some Ezekiel, and everybody loves the Bible, right? Yes, we do. So we're going to read some of it. The two sections of Ezekiel that we're going to find are Ezekiel chapter 15, go ahead and turn there, verses 1 through 8, and then a few pages over, [Ezekiel 17](#), 1 through 10. And I think instantly

you will begin to get a feel for why we believe Ezekiel is where John was aiming or where Yeshua was aiming, or at least that was the trajectory for the readers when he was speaking this parable of the vineyard. So [Ezekiel 15](#), verse 1.

When the fire has consumed both ends of it, And the middle of it is charred.

The Wood That Bears No Fruit

Is it useful for anything? Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything? Therefore, thus says the Lord God, like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Okay, so we see here, and I want you to notice this, the wood. The wood that is thrown into the fire. In [Ezekiel 15](#), that's the fate of the wood because it is useless. And then Ezekiel turns to the people of Jerusalem or Judah, and he's saying that they are useless wood. They're good for nothing. They haven't produced anything, right? They have no function. They have acted faithlessly. They don't believe because if they actually believed, they would have been following the Lord this whole time instead of all of these other gods and all of these other nations, right? They do not have faith in Yahweh. Therefore, they're cast into the fire.

The Vine and the Eagles

And so let's go ahead and jump over to the other section of Ezekiel. Turn the page, [Ezekiel 17](#), starting at verse 1. He broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade and set it in the city of merchants. Then he took the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil. He placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig, and it sprouted and became a low-spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out boughs.

Of course, the point of this section is that the branches, they had one eagle and that planted them, took care of them, but they wanted a different eagle. And they're reaching towards a different eagle. And it's such a neat prophecy, right? And so here in verse 9 is really where he explains it. He says, "...say thus says the Lord God, will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit so that it withers, so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither?"

Now, the second one is a little bit more lengthy than the first one, but both of those passages have this vine and branch imagery. And so I want to show you a chart that Dr. Manny put in his book, *Echoes of a Prophet*. And here the chart shows the vocabulary used across Isaiah,

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Greek Septuagint. And again, we're looking at the Greek words here because we don't care about the Hebrew translation of the Old Testament because the New Testament was not written in Hebrew. We have zero manuscripts. It was written in Greek, and the New Testament authors quoted from the Greek Old Testament. So we want to look at the Greek words, not the Hebrew.

Verbal Parallels: Connecting Ezekiel to John

And the amount of verbal parallels makes it clear that Ezekiel's vine parables are the dominant background for John's vine parables. And it's just neat to see the visual here. Isaiah, Jeremiah, like they have two words here. Look at that. And that's completely dwarfed by the vocabulary from the Septuagint in these two Ezekiel passages that you find in John.

Overall, Ezekiel's vine parables have eight words and two phrases explicitly in common with [John 15](#). And this is significantly more than the wording shared between [John 15](#) and the other Old Testament passages. Even when only one of Ezekiel's vine parables is compared to [John 15](#), the parallels are greater than any other Old Testament passage, right? [Ezekiel 17](#) has three words, one synonym and one phrase in common with [John 15](#). Ezekiel and John also share some rare words in common. So in Ezekiel and John, there are only two phrases in either testament to use the word for pruning. These are the only times this word. Ezekiel is the only book in the Greek Septuagint that regularly uses the Greek words for branch. [John 15](#) is the only passage in the New Testament to use that word at all. It's the only place it can have a connection. So think about that. It's kind of neat. The word for branch is *klema*, and the Septuagint of Ezekiel is the only place you're going to find it. And in the New Testament, the only place you're going to find it is [John 15](#). So I'm hammering that because it's important.

Matt, why does all this matter? Why are we jumping in so deep to the scriptures with all this technical stuff? We're nerding out on all these Greek words and the vineyard parable. Why does it matter?

Context: Why It Matters

The context. Too many times we'll take verses out of the Bible and we'll just take them out of context to try to apply them to modern events or try to take them out of context to fuel some sensational agenda that we have or to sound more spiritual. Context is important because the Bible's message, actual message, is important to the people of God.

Where Isaiah and Ezekiel portray the vine as either rebellious Israel or apostate, which Yeshua is not, Ezekiel's context of the vineyard language has to do with the branches being actual individuals, and the vine is the royal Davidic dynasty of Israel. When we keep reading all the way into [Ezekiel 19](#), specifically the vine is Zedekiah. He's one of the house of David, and he's going to be completely unfaithful. But it's still an individual guy, lineage of David. And so you have more of a connection there, of course.

Why Yeshua Goes to These Passages

Why does Yeshua go directly to these passages? What is the driving theme of the entire book of John? Who does Yeshua have conflict with the entire book of John? He has conflict with the temple leadership, the religious leadership, and the political arena against Jesus and his kingdom ethic, right? That's the point.

If one is reading or hearing or thinking about [John 15](#) and one knew [Ezekiel 15](#) and 17 really well, you would be led to think of the failure of the Davidic kings at the end of Judah's monarchy and their complete demise because that's the context of [Ezekiel 15](#) and 17. I mean, impending, it's coming. It's right around the corner. Instead of repenting, instead of confessing, yes, we deserve this, God. They don't do that.

In fact, the whole thing with [Ezekiel 17](#) about the eagle and the two eagles and all of that stuff is about how Israel tries to get help from a different source other than Yahweh. They are trying to get resources from secular kings that they believe are somehow divinely inspired more than God. Right? Right?

And so if you know what the content is pretty well, and you can see it, and you were at the event where Yeshua was speaking, and he's saying this, and in Greek, and you're reading it in John in Greek, you're led to think of the failure of the Davidic kings at the end of Judah's monarchy and their complete just failure. The vine of David has fallen in Ezekiel. Poof, it's gone, it's done for, it's completely wiped.

The Fallen Vine and Useless Leadership

Of course, you also have the language of the branches, which are Israel's leaders at the time. And they're shown to be completely worthless as leaders of the people.

Again, the vine that goes wrong in Ezekiel and the worthless branches are those that associate with the apostate kings, with the apostate system. They do not turn to Yahweh, the one who

planted the vineyard in the first place. They don't do it. They won't do it. They're turning to Egypt or some other power and saying, we look to you to be our leader. We look to you to guide us. You help us. Instead of doing what God wanted them to do in the first place, they want to turn to these other political factions to represent them instead of representing the kingdom of God.

And this is what God wants the result to be. He wants repentance, at least a confession. Like, we're in this situation because of our lawlessness and our faithfulness and our lack of allegiance to you, God. But they don't do it.

So again, you're reading this, and here's the fallen vine of David. And the leadership that is in place, or at least connected there, they're worthless. They're useless. They're useless. And it's not just the king's fault, it's the leadership, the political leaders, the religious leaders, they're all completely useless in God's eyes.

John 15: Loyalty Over Perfection

And so when we go and we read the vineyard parable in [John 15](#), we need to understand a possible bigger picture or context that's happening. [John 15](#) says, which I was taught in youth, [John 15](#) is not simply a call. It's not a call for every believer to be just absolutely perfect and sinless and just a perfect person all their life. It's not a call for every believer to have this absolute perfect behavior all the time or even like perfect never failing obedience. That's not what it's about. That's not what's being described in [Ezekiel 15](#) and 17.

The disobedience of the leadership in Ezekiel was found because they had absolutely no allegiance to Yahweh or his kingdom. And because of that, because of that, their disloyalty to depend on God as their leader, they're going to be cast away into the fire.

So the message that we need to be considering as well is also the disciples in [John 15](#). It's all really about your allegiance to King Jesus, your allegiance to the one that will not fail. No one's asking you to be perfect in this parable. Jesus is just asking you, Yeshua is just asking you, along with his disciples, to be loyal to him. Because if you're not loyal to him, if you don't abide in him, then you're not going to produce anything. And we read from Ezekiel, what happens to the useless branches, to the useless wood? That's that allegiance, disallegiance, or disloyalty.

Our Modern Divided Allegiance

That's something that many of us don't realize like we actually do. We totally do that. We totally betray the loyalty of our king without even realizing it. We totally view ourselves in a political arena where we need to reach for another eagle, another power. We need another leader to save us other than God, just like Israel did. I mean, we do it every four years, good gracious. Every four years, we tend to look like the rest of the world because we're more passionate about something that isn't going to matter five years from now than we are about the kingdom message of God that we claim to be loyal to supremely making a difference now.

And what makes it so bad is we use the Bible as war paint on our faces in order to do it. Your level of loyalty to God's kingdom ends where you're unrecognizable to the rest of the world, and that's called idolatry. The contrast is Israel's shepherds, the Davidic kings. They showed which deity or how many deities they believed in and aligned with, how many deities or whatever that they put their faith in, they threw their loyalty to them because they expected them to empower them. It wasn't to Yahweh. That's the point. Don't end up like them. Don't end up like them being worthless wood that's just good for being burned.

Keep aligning yourself and believing and staying loyal to the true vine. Doing so will mean you aren't worthless wood.

Aligning with the True Vine

Politics is an easy low-hanging fruit for how we get distracted in this world, but this engulfs every arena in our life. Do you look like the world that has betrayed their allegiance to the creator of the universe, or do you look like someone that has pledged allegiance to King Yeshua? That's the point, and the point is kind of simple. You don't have to be perfect wood to be useful wood, but God can't use someone who is not loyal to him. You will bear fruit since you are attached to the unfailing true vine.

Allegiance means that you have your eyes and your heart always focused on the will of the kingdom of Yeshua. His kingdom will always be at war with the kingdoms of this earth and whatever gods that they serve. In the scriptures, in Daniel and Revelation, the beast is defined as the kingdoms of this earth that use their power to dominate others. And Yeshua came to teach us how to act when we're part of his kingdom.

Loyalty Defined by Progress

And sometimes we do miss the mark. Amen? Sometimes we do have no self-control. Sometimes we don't love. Sometimes we refuse kindness to people that we have defined as

being unlovable. Again, if someone is popping in your mind right now that you need to go into prayer about, you can pause the live stream. Sometimes we're not gentle. Your loyalty is not defined by your perfection. It's defined by your progress. Are you progressing forward towards the image of your king, or are you walking away to another?

If so... you'll just be tossed into the fire because what else do you do with useless wood?

The Vine and the Branches

I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing, right? If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers and the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.

Meditate on that for a moment. If you were one of the disciples that heard Yeshua say that, which side would you think you were on? Whose banner do you hold? Who have you given your allegiance to in this world? If it's Yeshua, you will bear fruit.

Choose Your King

Repent for the kingdom of God is near. It's among us. It is here. The kingdom is here, which means the king is here and he reigns. Have you made the decision to be a part of it and allow that decision to fully gulf your soul and all of your being? I hope so. I hope so. Because that's the calling of a follower of Yeshua. That's a follower of the King.

Prayer

So join me in prayer. Alvino Marquini, our Father, our King. Father, we thank you for this opportunity to once again not only dive into the story of the Old Testament, the story of the prophets and of Israel and Judah. Father, we thank you for the blessing to be able to see their fulfillment in the scriptures of the New Testament through the words of our King Yeshua.

Father, I ask that your spirit that you have given to us would continue to give life, blossom out from us its fruit, that when the world sees us, they will see something different and not one that blends in with the chatter of the world. That way we'll wonder how we have such a capacity for love and kindness and gentleness towards those who hate us, to those who we're supposed to hate but don't.

And Father, for those of us who still struggle in those areas of love and kindness and gentleness towards others, would allow us to remind us of the love that Yeshua has poured into us, that we would have the courage to ask you to make us a vessel of that love to pour out to others. We thank you, Father, for Yeshua our King. We thank you for your kingdom. We thank you for your mercy and grace and forgiveness in all things. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

Closing

Shalom. I'm Matthew Vanderels, and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others.

To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at foundinatruth.com slash give or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. And we thank you for your continued support. And we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

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