

The Vine

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The other day I planted some melon in the garden. The plant was small. I took the word of the local greenhouse that it was melon, and looked forward to the time, not many days hence, when I could lay a big slice on my oversized plate, and heap a goodly scoop of rich ice cream along side of it. Such things are what dreams of ancients are made of. I watered, I weeded, I dreamed, I waited.

As the days passed, my dreams wilted along with the plant. I was befuddled, for enough water she had. Neither was she choked with weeds. A few perhaps, but nothing threatening. Why this limp thing? From whence this tawny color?

“Fertilizer she lacked,” I was told.

And so, in quantity it came. Measured, delicately, day by day, never it lacked this need. With restrained eagerness, I watched its leaves to see what hue they would turn. Slowly, greener they became. Soon it showed some life. My dreams returned, along with a watering mouth, as I anticipated nature’s bounty.

Wildly it spread across the garden, its vines daily searching new limits. Vibrant, living, growing fast; I waited. Soon the yellowish orange flowers would appear. Harbingers of fruit to come. I waited. . . , I watched. . . , I waited in vain, for ne’er a blossom did see.

A little more time is all she needs, I thought in ignorant bliss. But days, they passed; they came and went. The vine continued to grow. Its searching tentacles knew no bounds, while its leaves in splendor flourished, its health and vigor were evident to all and many were the compliments I received. The praises fell on an empty stomach however, its growling demanded an answer I couldn’t give.

“Where is the fruit?”

“WHERE IS THE FRUIT!?”

Its consistent and insistent bickering gave birth to the irritation I directed towards the plant. Irritation bred anger, and as the vine continued to grow, so did my wrath. Neither knew no limits. I could have killed it easily. One chop with the spade at its base was all it would take. One violent, life ending thrust! So I did it, but my anger was not appeased.

Later, as I watched the fire lick its way through the now brown brittle remains, I wondered what had happened. What had caused such an abnormality? Why was it that such a vibrant plant wouldn’t use all my watering, weeding, fertilizing, and caring to bring me its fruit? Why did it keep it for itself?

Such are we in the Master’s hand. He planted us for His purpose. Our fruit He wants to pluck, to handle, and taste. So, He waters, He weeds, He fertilizes, He cares, and cherishes us every day. But what do we do with all of these things? Do we channel them into ourselves? Do we make ourselves a beautiful, thriving, far reaching vine; fruitless in every detail?

One thrust will He give, and rightfully so; and later, as the judgment of fire consumes. His damning voice will echo the blast, “Poor stewards of all that I gave.”

So, what are you, youthful plant? And what are you, ye ancients? Is the master’s garden filled with useless vegetation, or is He pleased to see from afar, not only the flowering promises of fruit dotting the plants in His garden, but as He comes closer and lifts your broad leaves, smiling find the fruit He craves?

He gives . . . that He might have.

Isaiah 5:1-7 Luke 13:6-9

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