



Outside Prayers

# “Trunks & Branches”

Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>

- 10 minutes. Go on a walk, sit outside, or look out a window.

Pay attention to the trunks and branches of trees. Can you tell exactly where a trunk ends, and branch begins or vice versa? Is it the strength of the trunk holding the branch up, or the strength of the branch? What would the trunk be without its branches? What would the branches be without the trunk?

*Jesus says, “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. (John 15:5-13)”*

Because Jesus’ words get co-opted; it must be clarified that Jesus’ statement about “laying down your life for your friends” is clearly not a justification for violence. This is based on all of Jesus’ prior commands. “Laying down one’s life” is about non-violent, self-sacrificial, other oriented love.

More importantly, what are the branches and trunks telling you about your connection to God, and God’s connection to you? What does it mean to remain in Jesus today?

*“If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will remain with you forever. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me.”*

—Jesus (John 15:15-19)

