

Musing #53 — A Preamble to Romans 6-7-8

Before we breakdown the extensive insights that Paul presented in the key Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of his letter to the Roman church, I want to insert what we might refer to as a prelude to establish the underlying purpose in God's plan to a literal complete change in who we are as His chosen elect. From the payment for our sins by offering His son as the sacrificial lamb, to the reality of using Jesus' resurrection Life as new identities for His born again children, to giving us His Holy Spirit to complete our identity as redeemed, holy, and righteous members of His eternal family, we are made new!

It is through that process that His people—as the body of Christ—the church, are now being taught, educated, and molded to our Father's ways, as we grow through the process of maturity as He moves us from children to sonship in our preparation for the ultimate eternal kingdom that is being prepared for us.

John 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Through trials and testing we are given the opportunities to provide the materials that are being used to build and prepare our mansion in God's Kingdom. He is doing the preparation for us, but He looks to us individually to provide Him with the materials that will go into that mansion.

1 Corinthians 3:12-14 (Amp) But if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will be clearly shown [for what it is]; for the day [of judgment] will disclose it, because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality *and* character *and* worth of each person's work. If any person's work which he has built [on this foundation, that is, any outcome of his effort] remains [and survives this test], he will receive a reward.

Only the materials of gold, silver, and precious stones will survive the judgement and be worthy of creating the mansions the Lord is preparing for us.

I encourage you to read through this Musing of how God moves us, individually, through His process toward maturity. The examples I am using are out of our Bible. Ask the Lord to "*open the eyes of your understanding*" to better see your daily opportunities to expand your maturity, send out the best materials, and help you to see more clearly, the Father's ways!

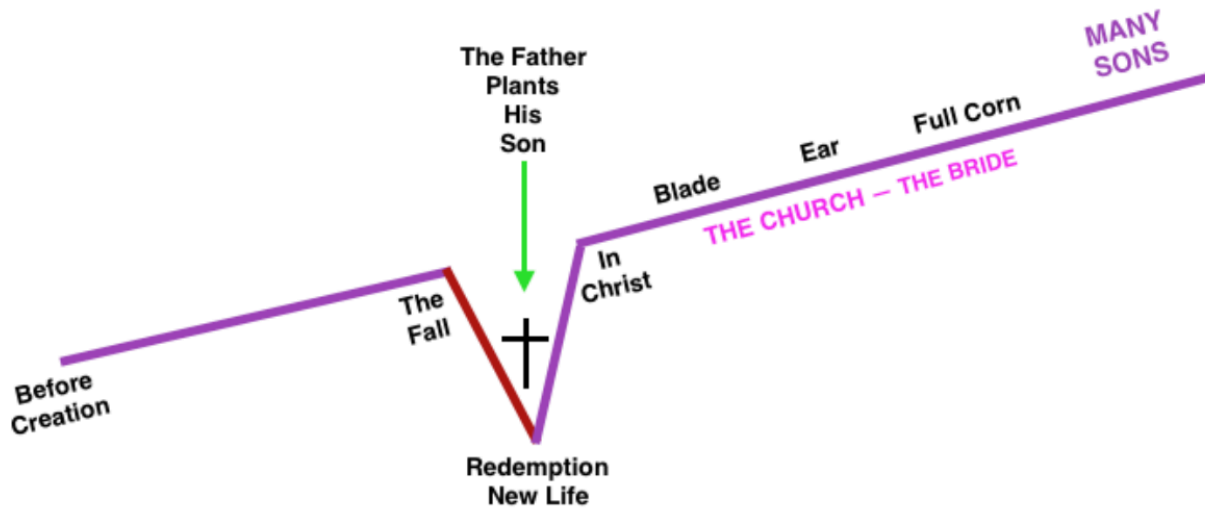
Mark 4:28-29 Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like a man scattering seed on the ground and then going to bed each night and getting up every morning, while the seed sprouts and grows up, though he has no idea how it happens. The earth produces a crop without any help from anyone: first a blade, then the ear of corn, then the full-grown grain in the ear. And as soon as the crop is ready, he sends his reapers in without delay, for the harvest-time has come."

John 12:24 Jesus told them, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you truly that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain of wheat; but if it does, it brings a good harvest."

From Children to Sons—The Bride

Out of death... springs resurrection life.

We must always keep in mind—the whole, the larger purpose.



The **Blade** represents the early church... also a new believer.

The **Ear** represents our Christian growth.

The **Full-Grown Corn** represents maturity in the faith.

The growth process can be difficult.

- there will be dry seasons & trials
- there will be scorching winds to overcome
- there will be damage & hardships

We will be called upon, through the indwelling Holy Spirit,
to experience what we claim to believe, by faith.

On the above graphic picture it is usual that in Middle Eastern and Oriental growing seasons...

- there is the early rain...
a rain in the spring to soften the soil for planting.
- and there is the latter rain...
a rain in the fall to bring the harvest to fruition.

As we understand the maturing process, the blade, the ear, and the full corn,
we begin to understand what Jesus was teaching
through the Mark passage above.

And James reminded us of the maturing process when he used the example of the farmer, the planting, the maturing, and how God's rains all combine to create the growth, the grain, or fruit, and the harvest of the finished product.

James 5:7 Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and the latter rain.

I believe God's release of the EARLY RAIN was when he released the Holy Spirit to the Church—at Pentecost.

I also believe there is coming a LATTER RAIN when God releases the Holy Spirit for the world-wide, great harvest before His return.

Equipped—The Renewal of our Minds

Now — let's take another step in the direction that God is moving us—as He grows and expands our faith renews our minds, and brings us to maturity.

Let's look at the process of **Adoption** and how God has equipped us.

We have been so blessed by God

who gave us our mind—the ability to know & learn of Him.

To embrace his **love, His sovereignty, and His power.**

Have you thanked God for your renewed mind?

When Alexander the Great was twelve years old, his father, King Philip of Macedonia, arranged for Aristotle to become his companion and tutor.

Later Alexander claimed Aristotle to be his “father.”

He meant, that while he had received his body from Philip, Aristotle was the father of his mind.

Alexander said he was more grateful to Aristotle for knowledge than to Philip for his life.

Through the indwelling Spirit of God

we are blessed to be guided by the mind of the Lord our God.

I Corinthians 2:16 (Amp) For who has known the mind and purposes of the Lord, so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ, to be guided by His thoughts and purposes.

We are called to trust the indwelling Spirit of Christ, whose purpose is to teach us to...

grow in our understanding of the Father's ways,

trust in the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit,

and mature spiritually through changing the ways we think.

Romans 12:2 (Phillips Select) ...don't be conformed to this world any longer with its superficial values and customs, but be transformed and progressively changed as you mature spiritually by the renewing of your mind focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes.

It begins in our mind to develop godly reasoning, making wise decisions, and expanding our understanding of the loving-kindness of our creator God whose purpose is to draw us closer to Himself in our eternal relationship. For all of that, He has given us access to Himself and given us a complete written account of His person and His ways.

He also wants us to learn the practical wisdom, through His creation, that will help to guide us through the trials and tribulations of life on our journey through our fallen planet. Jesus was careful to remind us that there is meaning to everything that comes into our life. He often used practical examples of those insights to the natural world.

The Master Pruner at Work

I saw this Gallo Wine Ad in 1975 in *National Geographic Magazine*. A study of the production of good wine is basically a commentary on John 15, and worthy of our study.

“...every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Anything that obstructs the flow of Life from the Vine to the branches—needs to go! We are to bear and share what the Vine wants to produce. Note my highlights!



Pruning—the cutting off of living parts of the grape vine—is one of the most important practices in the culture of grapes.

It is a complex and highly judgmental art that controls the quantity of grapes a vine will bear, and therefore the quality of these grapes.

Why We Prune

If the vine's growth potential is to be directed to the production of fine grapes, nearly all of last year's wood must be pruned away. If too much wood is left on the vine, it will produce too many grapes to properly ripen. These grapes will tend to be green and harsh, both undesirable characteristics for good winemaking.

On the other hand, if too much wood is cut away, the vine will produce what we call “second crop”—small green berries that will never ripen. These grapes are obviously undesirable because they would render the wine sharp, harsh and without character.

The amount of grapes allowed to grow on a vine is critical because each vine is able to produce only a limited amount of grapes with the proper combination of nutrients, minerals, proteins, sugar and acids in proper quantity and balance to each other. If the grapes are to develop the grand character required to make the finest tasting wines, it is essential that they be allowed to develop these components in the right amounts and proportions.

How We Prune

We have been researching and refining our pruning techniques for over 30 years.

Since each vine has a limited capacity to produce superior grapes, only so many buds are allowed per “spur”—that part of the new wood remaining after pruning—and only so many spurs are allowed per vine.

No two vines are identical. Each one must be pruned differently: How old is the vine? How is the

vine supported—on its own stump, on a stake, or on a wire? Does it get hot afternoon sun or only the cooler rays? Is it in vigorous health and should its crop be retained this year or sacrificed for the future good of the vine? Precisely where on the vine should spurs be permitted to grow? How many buds on this spur? How many on that spur? A master pruner must know all such things and care for each vine according to its own individual needs.

Our Unique Next Step

An experienced pruner must be able to cope with situations when nature won't cooperate. On rare occasions nature does not perform exactly as expected and overcropping—the production by the vine of more grapes than it can properly ripen—can occur despite the most careful pruning. In such a case, we resort to “thinning.”

Thinning is the removal of enough grape clusters from the vine—eliminating part of the crop—to insure the quality of the remainder. Sometimes this can mean removing as much as one-half of the crop from an overproducing vine.

Gallo is one of the few wineries to practice this costly technique of thinning in a continuing effort to produce the finest grapes possible.

Who Prunes

Extra careful pruning means the finest grapes. That is why in the Gallo Vineyards we do not consider a man thoroughly qualified until he has been pruning for at least three years under close supervision. Then we allow him to prune on his own, but always following the advice of a master pruner.

Our Goal—Our Responsibility

The finest grapes are essential to make the greatest wines.

This is our goal in life; and our responsibility to you. We care too much to do less.