

CELL NOTES 4/5/09

THEME

I am the vine

Reading John 15 : 1 – 8

ICE BREAKER

What best describes you now? Towering oak, weeping willow, tumbleweed, crab apple tree, something else? Explain.

SERMON OUTLINE

- 1) This may be a familiar passage, but God can have new things for us.
- 2) There are at least five areas of practical relevance for us :-
 - i) We have direct connection with God – he is not remote.
 - ii) He is at work to prune us, and make us more fruitful.
Tom commented “Faith prunes my washing up skills.” We may find it difficult to accept the pruning (e.g. criticism, demand for change etc.) . Brother Yun commented on his time in prison (severe pruning) that God was refining him and preparing him for the future.
 - iii) We have a responsibility to bear fruit. Fruitless branches are thrown on the fire. – a hard statement.
 - iv) There is a great hope here – we can do anything if we remain in Christ. Inspiration from e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or a local person who shows great love and self-sacrifice. Story of the “Tom’s shoes” project.
 - v) Branches are in the plural – we need the strength of being in a Christian community.

QUESTIONS OF APPLICATION

- 1) Read John 15 : 1 – 17. What do you find here to be encouraged by, be challenged by? How does this apply to the details of your life?
- 2) How has pruning worked in your life? – how have you observed it in others? Are there ways in which you are being pruned at the moment?
- 3) How firmly are you remaining in Christ at the moment? What helps or hinders this?
- 4) Look at v16. What is fruit that will last? If you could choose the fruit that your life would produce, what would it be?