

Ruining

“Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards”

Song of Solomon 2:15

Ruining—Today a friend of mine pointed out this verse to me. He said, “Don’t you see how it’s often the little things that get in and destroy something that’s going well?” The Hebrew word here is *habal*. It has a funny association. In its basic form it means a cord or rope that is used to bind something. Only figuratively does it mean “to spoil or ruin.” This meaning may come from the picture that binding is often associated with preventing some destructive creature from acting. Catch those little foxes so they won’t spoil the vine.

Little foxes easily tunnel into the vineyards of our lives. We think we are growing wonderful grapes. The fruit of our labors begins to show. The vines are healthy, green and lush. But foxes like to dig around the roots. Vineyards are fragile. They aren’t like massive groves of cedar or flowing fields of grain. Grapevines require exactly the right kind of soil, precisely the right amount of rainfall, just the right temperature, just so much sunshine. And little foxes cut the fragile connection between the earth and the vine. It is just the same with our lives. A small indiscretion, a tiny disobedience, a little seduction and the vine loses its vitality. It stops producing fruit. If we look out over the vineyard, we might not ever see these little foxes. They scurry around under the cover of the leaves, hidden from view. But they do immense damage.

Jesus spent a lot of time talking about vineyards, vines and fruit. He wanted us to see that unless we diligently maintain a vital connection to His life flowing through us, our face of leafy green health will soon be exposed as nothing more than damaged goods. We only need to look at the media coverage of the immorality of cultural icons to know that the secret to life is in the roots, not the leaves. God lays traps for all the little foxes. The question is whether or not we keep them in their cages.

Are you watching the roots? One little fox is one too many. The price of a fox is the loss of life.