

## NEXT STEP: STUDY &amp; SHARE

## READINGS

Acts 8:26-40  
 Psalm 22:25-31  
 All the ends of the earth shall remember &  
 turn to the Lord. (v27)  
 1 John 4:7-21  
 John 15:1-8

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you give us your Son as the vine  
 apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish  
 our life in his resurrection, that we may bear  
 the fruit of love & know the fullness of your  
 joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior &  
 Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the  
 Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

## SERMON TEXT- John 15:1-8

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, & my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me & I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch & withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, & burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, & my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, & it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit & become my disciples.”

## LISTENING TO . . .

**GOD-** *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. How do the *Acts* 8 reading & *John* 3:1-21 connect to the Gospel reading, & especially vv4-5?
2. How do the following verses flesh out “fruit”? See *Matthew* 3:8, 7:20; *John* 8:41; *Roman* 6:22; *Galatians* 5:22; *1 John* 4:20; see also *1 Corinthians* 13:4-7; *Colossians* 3:12; *Ephesians* 5:9, 15-20; *James* 3:17-18; *2 Peter* 1:5-8

**EACH OTHER-** *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Notice the grammar of *abide*: present tense, ongoing & open-ended, active voice (not past tense, passive, completed/limited). Covid19 disrupted much of faithful lives. How do you plan to *abide* in Jesus going forward? How does your plan include the basics of weekly worship with Holy Communion & Confession & Forgiveness, daily Bible reading, daily prayers, & talking to others about Jesus? See *Small Catechism: 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment, Lord’s Prayer, Holy Communion, Keys/Confession, daily prayers, Table of Duties; Romans* 10:13-17 SC available <bookofconcord.org>
4. Fruit is produced by Jesus’ faithful disciples/ Jesus’ faithful disciples produce fruit. They can’t be separated (cf. *James* 2:17-18). What is God pruning (or needing to prune) for your life to “bear more fruit”? *By the way, Concordia Publishing’s The Lutheran Study Bible (2009) has excellent notes about this James 2, & the Epistle of James more generally.*

**NEIGHBORS-** *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. The Bible promises (former or false) believers will fall away in the last days (*Matthew* 24:10-12; *Mark* 4:1-8, 13-20, 13:20-22; *2 Thessalonians* 2:3, 9-11; *1 Timothy* 4:1; *Hebrew* 3:12-19; *2 Peter* 2:20-22; *1 John* 2:19; cf. *1 Timothy* 1:19b-20 & *2 Timothy* 4:9-14; cf. *Revelation* 13. A recent Gallup poll showed less than half of Americans are now affiliated with a local congregation. How does this connect to the Gospel story? (Cf. Judas in *John* 13:10-11; *Matthew* 27:3-5; *Acts* 1:15-20)
6. Which (spiritual) fruit (see #2) is most needed in your family? In your neighborhood or town? In the various “communities” in which you find yourself? Our country? How is God growing them in your life, right now, for the sake of others?

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Abiding

*Our lives ARE fruitful when lived on the vine*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit & become my disciples. (v8)

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-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me & I in them bear much fruit. (*John 15:5*)

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- Fruit is produced by Jesus’ faithful disciples/ Jesus’ faithful disciples produce fruit. They can’t be separated (cf. *James 2:17-18*). What is God pruning (or needing to prune) for your life to “bear more fruit”? *By the way, Concordia Publishing’s The Lutheran Study Bible (2009) has excellent notes about this James 2, & the Epistle of James more generally.*

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- Which (spiritual) fruit (see #2) is most needed in your family? In your neighborhood or town? In the various “communities” in which you find yourself? Our country? How is God growing them in your life, right now, for the sake of others?

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