

NEXT STEP: STUDY & 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:] ¹"I am the true vine, & my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch & withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, & burned. ⁷If you abide in me, & my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, & it will be done for you. ⁸My 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. & 2. Check how the image of the vine is used elsewhere. In *Psalm 80:8-11 [12-16]*, who is the vine? In *Isaiah 5:1-7*, how is the image of the vineyard used? Who is the vineyard, why is God angry, & what will God do about it? Does *Jeremiah 2:21* agree more with *Psalm 80* or *Isaiah 5*? Read *Mark 12:1-12*, where Jesus uses the same imagery. Does he agree more with *Psalm 80* or *Isaiah 5*? What point does Jesus make? * See also *Ezekiel 15:1-8, 17:5-10, 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1*
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EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Consider *Leviticus 19:18* & *Galatians 5:22-23* (also *Ephesians 2:10, 5:9, 19-20; Colossians 3:12-17; James 3:17-18; 2 Peter 1:5-8*). How has God pruned you in order to bear more fruit (v2)?
4. Consider *John 13:10; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:22; & Small Catechism*: Holy Baptism, Office of the Keys (Confession). How does this pruning come into or begin in the life of a believer? How does it continue to happen? *SC available bookofconcord.org*

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

5. Consider your congregation's location throughout its history. How "rooted" in the neighborhood would the neighbors consider it? What fruit have they seen it bearing? How does this indicate the congregation's abiding in Jesus Christ? What fruit might the neighbors overlook?
6. English-speaking protestants have prayed the *Prayer of Humble Access* since 1552. "We do not presume to come to your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold & great mercies. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so the eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, & to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell [abide] in him & he in us." (Green *LBW* p48; abridged in *cranberry ELW* p72)
How does it help you explain Christianity & Holy Communion to others? How does it help you "keep the main thing the main thing"?

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Fifth Sunday of Easter

04.28.24

Series: Abide

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

God makes his abode with us

New Life

A branch has no life of its own

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: 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. (v4)

-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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