

Sunday 28th April 2024

Fifth Sunday of Easter



Today's Gospel reading is from St John's Gospel, chapter 10, verses 11-18:

Jesus said, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes, to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 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. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples'.

There are many different things we need in order to live - not only the physical things like air and water, food, clothing and shelter, but also sufficient exercise and the stimulation of others' companionship. You will be able to think of plenty more. Without all these things, we are in danger of physical, mental and spiritual health problems – in other words, of withering, and of being less than the people God truly wants us to be.

In today's gospel passage, Jesus is inviting us to reflect on our dependence on him, reminding us that, since everything ultimately comes from God, we must ensure that we remain connected. 'Abide' may be an old-fashioned word, but there isn't really another word which so beautifully describes how Jesus wants us to live as part of him and the life he offers us. It's as if he is the very lifeblood that flows through us and we must always stay connected!

How can we do this?

Reading the Bible, listening to God in our prayers, and coming to Church services, to be part of a Christian community and enjoying the friendship and love of other people who are close to God – all these help us to stay connected to God.

What sort of fruit do you think Jesus wants us to bear?

In St Paul's Letter to the Galatians, he tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. That's a lot of fruit! If you want to see what he says, have a look at Galatians chapter 5, verses 22-23.

If we allow the things that don't really matter - things that may cause us to grow away from God – to be cut away, or pruned, we will find that the important things – the fruit – can flourish.

How do we cut away the dead branches in our lives?

Saying sorry when we have been unkind, or haven't done what we know Jesus would want us to do, changing our behaviour when we need to, and making our Confession to a priest, are all ways of pruning our lives to live as Christians who are close to Jesus.

 A Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for reminding us how much we need you and depend on your blessings every day. We promise to thank you every day for giving us all that we need so that we can live and love you. Amen.

"I AM" THE VINE

Spot 8 differences between the two pictures.



I AM THE
TRUE
VINE
AND
MY
FATHER
IS
THE
GARDENER



John 15:1

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