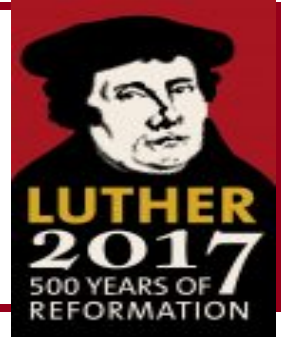


Abiding in the Vine

Psalm 1 Romans 11:13-24 John 15:1-8

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Today Jesus teaches us about life in the Kingdom of God using **two key words**; two words that define our relationship with Him through faith. Both words are captured in this one verse:

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you **remain** in me and I in you, you will bear much **fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing. JOHN 15:5*

We are to *remain* in Christ in order to bear much **fruit**. **That’s the Christian life in a nutshell**. Jesus summarizes life in the Kingdom of God with these two words:

Remain & Fruit.

We are to *remain* in Christ! The word **remain** means to abide, to dwell, to continue in and to stand fast. **Stay where you are at!** It has the idea that you are not to leave or separate yourself from Christ; but rather you are to be connected and hold on to Him and His Word.

Jesus says that we are to **remain** in Him. He uses an image from the vineyard to teach this to us. **Jesus said, “I am the Vine, you are the branches.”** *Just as a vine gives life giving “sap” that nourishes and strengthens its branches and keeps them alive, so too Jesus gives you His life giving Word and Sacraments that nourish and strengthen you and they keep you spiritually alive.*

In this vineyard metaphor and word picture, **salvation** is seen as God **grafting** you into His Vine. God found you dead in sin and He **grafted** you into the life giving Vine of the Lord Jesus Christ. You were like a wild and rebellious olive branch that God the Father found and He **grafted** into His Son Jesus, who is the true, life-giving Vine.

You have life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus suffered and died with your sins and condemnation; He was buried -- carrying your guilt and your shame to the grave.

On the Third Day, Jesus rose from the dead and gives life to the world! Through faith in Christ, you now have a real **life-giving connection** with God Himself. You

were **grafted** into the true vine of Jesus Christ, and He continually **nourishes and strengthens** you with His grace, mercy, and the assurance of salvation! The Christian life is about **remaining** on the Vine and always drawing on the life of Christ, and His nourishment and strength each day.

Jesus even teaches you exactly how to remain; He very clearly teaches you how to **abide**, to **dwell**, to **continue** in and to **stand fast** in faith and stay connected to the Vine.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. JOHN 15:7

The Power to “remain” is in the Word of God!

By hearing, believing, & obeying Jesus’ words, you remain in Him.

**YOUR FAITH IS 100% DEPENDENT
ON THE WORD OF GOD!**

Like a branch depends on the “sap of the vine” to live and bear fruit, so too your spiritual life depends on “Jesus’ Word” to live and bear fruit.

- † You need to hear the **Gospel** *over and over again* to deepen your **conviction** in the Savior
- † You remember that in your Baptism you were united to Christ, and you **belong** to Him
- † You need to hear **Absolution** *over and over again* to be **assured** that your sins are completely forgiven
- † You need to study **God’s Word** *continually* so that you are **empowered** to live in the Kingdom of God!

That is why here at Trinity we are always encouraging you to get involved in a Bible study. Serious and meaningful contact with the Word of God is essential to your Christian faith and life. **Like a branch depends on the sap of the vine to live and bear fruit, so too your spiritual life depends on Jesus’ Word to live and bear fruit.**

We are to remain in Christ in order to bear much fruit. That’s the Christian life in a nutshell.

One special way that Jesus’ Word comes to you in is in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus’ powerful Word and His promises place His crucified and risen Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion. *His body and blood in the bread and the wine is for us Christians to eat and drink for the*

forgiveness of our sins. SMALL CATECHISM When you take Holy Communion, and you believe that your sins are forgiven in this Sacrament, then you are hearing, believing, and obeying His Word – you are **REMAINING in Him and He in you!** One way to remain in Jesus the True Vine is to faithfully believe and receive Holy Communion.

Remaining in Jesus is so important that Jesus uses some very strong words to warn us of not hearing, believing, and obeying His Word:

If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. JOHN 15:6

This is a graphic way to say that if you do not remain in Him, you will have squandered your faith and die in your sins. Without the Word of God, your faith withers and dies! If you sever contact with Christ and His Word, then you have forsaken the faith and are cut off, like a dead branch that is thrown into the fire.

Be sure to take this warning to heart! Don't blow it off! Take heed and pay attention! Jesus teaches us that we must remain in Him our entire lives; that His Word needs to be heard, believed, and obeyed at all times; and that **you can certainly lose your faith if you are reckless, neglectful, and careless with His Word and Sacraments.** *If you do not remain in Him, you are*



like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. This is a strong warning from the Son of God! Be sure to take this warning to heart!

Not only are we to **remain** in Jesus throughout our lives, but we are also to **bear fruit**. “**Bearing fruit**” is the second word that captures your life in Christ. Notice how Jesus emphasizes it:

He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit ... 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, *showing yourselves to be my disciples.* JOHN 15:2,5,8

Because you are connected to Jesus and His Word as you “*remain in Him*”, it will be seen in your life. You will bear the **fruit** of faith! Jesus is not just talking about once in a while something good is seen in your life; ***but all the time***. He emphasizes that you will **bear much fruit**.

- † The **Fruit of Faith** are **good works** – words and actions in obedience to the Ten Commandments.
- † The **Fruit of Faith** is **righteousness, holiness** and **Godly love** in thoughts, words, and deeds
- † The **Fruit of Faith** is living your life in **peace with God** and in **peace with other people**
- † The **Fruit of Faith** is considering yourself “dead to sin but **alive to God** in Christ Jesus”
- † The **Fruit of Faith** are things like **Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness,** and **Self-Control.**
- † The **Fruit of Faith** is **faithful weekly worship**, a hunger and thirst for the **Sacrament of Holy Communion**, and a desire to hear and learn more and more of **God’s Holy Word.**
- † The **Fruit of Faith** is the lifelong drive to be **Biblically literate, doctrinally sound, mission minded** and **passionately engaged** in the Kingdom of God.

Maybe some of you are thinking that this is too much for you. Maybe you misunderstood what being a Christian is all about.

- † Maybe you thought the Kingdom of God was just putting your time in on Sunday morning.
- † Or maybe you are a lifelong Lutheran and you thought you did your “God thing” during confirmation class when you were 14, and now its all over.
- † Or maybe you think you can sit in a pew and do the bare minimum to get by and the Lord would be happy with that.
- † Or maybe some of you even thought you “retired” from the work of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus stops all of those thoughts dead in their tracks. You are to continually remain in Him and continually bear much fruit --- Maybe today you need to do some soul searching, take this passage to heart, and repent! Remember the strong warning: *He cuts off every branch that does not bear fruit* (15:2)! God’s clear will for you is that you **continually remain in Christ and continually bear much fruit!**

Today Jesus summarizes life in the Kingdom of God with these two words: **remain & fruit.** *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

The Kingdom of God is **remaining in Christ and bearing much fruit.** When you do this, you glorify the Father in Heaven, and you show yourself to be Jesus’ disciple. **AMEN!**

WHY NOT MEMORIZE THIS VERSE?
 Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” JOHN 15:5