

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of May 2, 2010

Branches Rooted in the Vine (John 15:1-8)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text is from the 15th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John:

Jesussaid, ¹"Iamthetruevine,andmyFatheristhevinedresser.²Everybranchinme thatdoesnotbearfruitHetakesaway,andeverybranchthatdoesbearfruitHeprunes, thatitmaybearmorefruit.³AlreadyyouarecleanbecauseofthewordthatIhave spokentoyou.⁴Abideinme,andIinyou.Asthebranchcannotbearfruitbyitself, unlessitabidesinthevine,neithercanyou,unlesssyouabideinme.⁵Iamthevine;you arethebranches.WhoeverabidesinmeandInhim,heisthatbearsmuchfruit,for apartfrommeyoucando nothing.⁶Ifanyonedoesnotabideinmeheisthrownaway likeabrandhandwithers;andthebranchesaregathered,thrownintothefire,and burned.⁷Ifyouabideinme,andmywordsabideinyou,askwhateveryouwish,andit willbedoneforyou.⁸BythismyFatherisglorified,thatyoubearmuchfruitandso provetobemydisciples."

Thisisthetext.

DearsistersandbrothersinChrist,theWordofGod depictstherelationshipofJesusandHisBaptized thepictureofJesusandHisBride,theChurch;we andweasHisBody;thereisthepictureofJesus today'stext,ofJesus,thevineandallwhoareuni

disfullofimagery.Thisimagery believingpeople.InScripturewefind findthepictureofJesusasthehead heShepherdofthesheep;and,in in tedtoHiminfaithasthebranches.

Nowwhathappenstoamarriagewherethehusbandand dwifearenotunited?What happenstoabodythat'sseparatedfromitshead?What hathappenstothesheepwithout ashepherd?Whathappenstobranchesthatdonotre

maininthevine?

WehavebeenjoinedtoChristbyfaith,asbranches arejoinedtoavine.Thevine, Jesus,isthesourceofourlifeandthefruitthat webear.Butthatlifeandfruitisnotfor usalone;it'salsoforourneighbour.

Friends,thisunionwehaveasbranchesunitedtot design.Jesussaid,"Iamthetruevine,andmyFat lifeandprunesussowecanbearmorefruit.

hevineisallGod'sdoingandHis heristhevinedresser.Hegivesus

Andyet,sinfulmanisalways tryingtoredefineGod istheunionofonemanandonewoman,butsinfulm whateverrelationshiphecreates.Godsays thatJes andthelife,butsinfulmanfindsnoproblemixin Godsays thatchildrenaretohonourtheirfathera parentswouldratherbetheirchild'sbestfriend.

d'sgooddesigns.Godsaysmarriage anwantstoapplymarriageto usaloneisthewayandthetruth ginalittlebitofNewAgespirituality. ndmother,but somehow,sinful

The way God orders our lives is good, but our attempt sinful wants is not good. God has united us to Christ yet we more live as if we are not united to Christ—the vine.

ptto tailor His design to fit our stin Holy Baptism for our good, and as if we are not branches living from

If we look at branches when they fall from the trees, they dried out and withered. Apart from the trunk of the tree, the same way a branch that is removed from the vine soon happens if we begin to drift from Jesus, we lost connection.

We can claim to be Christians and tout our church membership or confirmation certificate, but apart from the life-giving Christ Jesus (the vine), we cannot live or bear any fruit.

Now a good work in the eyes of God is different from the world. The difference is in the reason behind our charity: it is a good work to the world because it is truly good work before God requires faith. As it says in Hebrews 11, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And why is this? Because of love for God and trust in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It is done out of the desire for us.

Jesus uses some black and white language in our text: "Apart from me you can do nothing", which means that without Christ we can do nothing that pleases Him. In fact, He commands that we love. But we have to be careful not to make a tree from the fruit. The tree is the vine.

God doesn't need our busy work. If we think we can do more things, we need to re-evaluate. God's grace in Christ is what we need to motivate and not to lose connection with the head.

But when the branches are in union with the Vine, they bear fruit. The sap that flows from the vine nourishes the branches. We confess that our very sin, we have cut ourselves off from the blood of His Son, shed on the cross for the sin of the world, we have been reconciled to God.

As branches, we have been grafted back into the true vine of the crucified and resurrected One: our own nourishment for forgiveness, so that by faith we might live in union with Him.

Now the branches bear fruit for our neighbour. By the Spirit, the branches bear fruit. St. Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit; this fruit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). These are, above all, characteristics of our Saviour in His relationship with us. He is patient, kind, and good to us; and so on.

People ask, "If God is good then why is there suffering in the world; Why is Christ waiting so long to come back and save us?" The truth is, the world is bigger than we can imagine. He is waiting patiently for His rebellious creation to turn to the way of life. As 1 Peter says,

it doesn't take long before they get withered and die. This is what happens if we lose contact with the source of life.

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“God doesn’t want anyone to perish but everyone to
timothy 2:4 says, “He wants all men to be saved and
truth?” And in the meantime until Jesus returns He
food, our home, our clothes, our families and friend
nourishment through His Word and Sacraments.

And of course Christ showed the full expression of
becrucified on a horrible cross for our sins and will
eternally live with us.

By being so loving, patient, and kind to us, Christ
the Spirit. Through His Word, as we grow we become
peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, se

This fruit then gives life to our neighbour. Christ
in our lives for our benefit, but also for our neighbour
world so that our needy neighbour can pick our fruit

Christ the vine nourishes our spouses with the love
through His Word. Christ the vine strengthens our
that we bear. Christ the true vine benefits our self
control that we bear. Ultimately, Christ the vine
neighbour, for these fruits lead and enable us to
resurrection with him or her.

Indeed, Christ is the true vine; we are the branches
Every day He nourishes and strengthens us with the
upon the cross. And that is a beautiful relationship

I’m sure each of us has felt at one time that we are
given all we can give and we feel drained and out of
especially in these times that we remember that we
source of life. Christ says, “Come to me all who are
you are rest.”

As an old hymn says, “From Him we draw the juice of
With fruit from which true joys derive. Vine, keep
with your rich life in me. Amen. The peace of God
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

come to repentance” and as 1
to come to acknowledge of the
continue to care for our needs, our
ds, and offering us spiritual

His love when He allowed Himself to
be crucified for us to share His

the vine creates in us the same fruit of
more like Him, more loving, joyful,
self-controlled.

the vine produces not only these fruits
for our neighbour. We bear the fruit of the vine in this
world and benefit from our fruit.

and faithfulness that we bear
children with the peace and patience
of a man with the goodness and self-
control that we bear. Ultimately, Christ the vine
neighbour, for these fruits lead and enable us to
resurrection with him or her.

s. We can do nothing without Him.
forgiveness of sins He earned for
us.

It’s just running on empty, that we have
no gas with no more fruit to give. It’s
we are connected to the never-ending
we are weary and burdened and I will give

life, for He supplies His winery—
what was meant to be: Your branch,
that surpasses all understanding,