

King of Glory Lutheran Church

April 29, 2018

5th Sunday of Easter: John 15:1-8

Jesus abides in us. In that we have love for one another which is what bears fruit. This is the mark of the Christian community. (Catholic – Physical and spiritual works of mercy).

Grace and peace to you this day from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Amen.

Give me a nod of your head or raise a hand if the following statements are true for you.

I am a part of King of Glory. I am connected to the people or activities here. I remain and stay in this church.

Therefore we could say, “I abide in King of Glory.”

Now, let me ask this. When you go away from here, the actual building of 2919 N. Wilson Ave, does King of Glory still remain with you? Does it live in you? Can you recall people’s faces and their personalities? Can you picture worship and coming to the altar for Holy Communion? Yes?

Then we could say that King of Glory abides in you.

You abide in King of Glory and King of Glory abides in you.

We abide in King of Glory and King of Glory abides in us.

That word, ‘abide’ has multiple meanings: to remain. To stay. To dwell. To live. Last. Endure. Continue. We continue on together as a congregation even though throughout the week, we don’t all sleep here. We go our ways, and yet we live together as we remain, as we stay connected to one another.

Jesus chose this vine image like so many images in the Bible, it was a common image that people could immediately see and intuitively understand. He also chose it because it was a common image in the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, for God’s people. They were a vineyard that God tended, and were expected to bear proper fruit. When God’s people didn’t bear the fruit, God destroyed them.

(SLIDE) If you look at the picture, it can be difficult to tell where one branch ends and another begins. All the branches are connected as they grow together from the vine. Look at this picture and listen to these words.

Abide in me as I abide in you. Dwell in me, as I dwell in you. Live in me as I live in you. Remain in me, as I remain in you.

Jesus is about ready to depart his disciples through his death. This is goodbye. And he is reminding them, they – teacher and disciples – friend and friends – are connected – always. Interrelated. They will continue to dwell together, because Jesus stays with them. Not in physical body, of course, but through the Holy Spirit. Through the Passover meal – Holy Communion.

Without Jesus assurance that He already abides in us, this text just sounds like a threat. Pruned! Wither! Die.

(SLIDE) Yet – Jesus promises that He abides in us. Jesus dwells in us. Jesus stays with us. Jesus lives in us. Say that out loud. – Jesus lives in us. Jesus lives in me.

When we take that as foundational, then this passage is promise. It names truth. Apart from me you cannot grow – or do anything. Look again at the vine and branches. The branches simply cannot exist without the vine. Jesus' words don't become threat – but statements of truth about what happens to us when we are separated from Him. When we try to go on our own. When we forget to tap into that amazing power of the life giving Vine!

We are connected to Jesus. He promised the disciples they would remain connected to Him.

In that vine branch relationship, the output – the product is the fruit! Look at those incredible grapes! Lovely. Healthy. Robust color.

Shortly before Jesus begins this speech, He kneels to wash the disciples feet. He gives them a new commandment. Do you remember what that new commandment is?

“Love one another. As I have loved you.”

When we love, we produce the fruit of being connected to the vine. That leads us directly back to the second lesson for today from 1 John.

‘Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into

the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.'

The only way we love is through God! We cannot love without God giving us this ability. God is love and when we love, we know God, we live in God and God lives in us.

Jesus said it clearly. Love one another – as I have loved you. Abide in me – as I abide in you. Connected earth and heaven, humans one with another. Interrelated. Mutuality. Indwelling. We give up our individual status to be connected to the Vine and hence to everyone else.

So how do we love? What does this love look like as it is mutual in nature?

I'm going to borrow two lists from our Catholic brothers and sisters. Here are the fruits of love produced by living in Jesus.

Corporal Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy (Physical Works) are these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs.

feed the hungry / drink to the thirsty
shelter the homeless
clothe the naked
visit the sick and imprisoned
bury the dead
give alms to the poor

Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are acts of compassion, by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs.

instruct the ignorant
advise the doubtful

admonish the sinner
comfort the sorrowful
forgive wrongs patiently
bear wrongs patiently

Pray for the living and the dead

You do these things. We as a community do these things. We can only do them because we abide in Jesus. What a gift. What an honor. Take a moment and I invite you to turn and talk with your neighbor about the loving fruit your life is bearing by being connected and living in Jesus and this community, King of Glory.

“Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand. Anyone may gather it and no limit is set. Everyone can reach this love through meditation, spirit of prayer, and sacrifice, by an intense interior life” (Mother Teresa, *Love: A Fruit Always in Season* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987]).

Amen.