

MOSAIC TESSERA MATERIALS | April 28, 2024

Fifth Sunday of Easter



Opening Prayer

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbors.

As his disciples in this age,
open our hearts to your power moving
around us and between us and within us,
until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy,
in communities transformed by justice and compassion,
and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

SCRIPTURE | John 15:1-8

1 Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 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. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 "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. 6 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. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Curt showed us last week at our gathering the generous heart of God as he sees, approaches and invites everyone to be part of the vineyard of his kingdom. This vineyard is his people in this age. They are a people marked wholeness, stability, self-emptying love, and generous eyes toward others all because they receive from the generous heart of God.

Our lives are a vineyard. What a beautiful metaphor! These linguistic devices are so important as they help us make sense of our lives. We're not machines. We don't need to recharge. We don't need to fill up. We don't need to shut it down or get off the track. Instead, we need to abide in the vine as branches in God's vineyard. Abiding in the vine, Jesus, allows us to be pruned to get ourselves untangled. Vineyard branches are notorious getting all tangled up. Abiding in the vine allows us to not only get untangled but to be pruned so we grow toward the light. And all of this means growing a few really good grapes instead of a bunch of second rate grapes. Fruit from our lives isn't about quantity. It's about quality. Jesus doesn't care about how much you produce. He cares about what you produce and your desire to remain in him.

What do you find inviting about the metaphor of your life with others as a vineyard? The vineyard is communal and not individualistic. What does this mean for us? How do you sometimes find yourself getting entangled? Are you sometimes more concerned with your life producing quantity over quality? How is Jesus calling you to respond to this invitation he is offering you?

Closing Prayer

God, you sent your Son into the world
that we might live through him.

May we abide in his risen life

so that we may bear the fruit of love

for one another, our neighbors, our enemies and know the fullness of joy. Amen.