

April 28, 2024

Fifth Sunday after Easter

John 15:1-8

The next two Sundays of Easter are farewell- speeches by Jesus. He is trying to prepare the disciples and apostles for His final departure to the Father. These talks were designed to encourage the disciples and apostles in their ministry without physically having Jesus to rely upon. These speeches were also meant to comfort the disciples and apostles. Jesus is preparing them for what is to come out of His love for them. All of this is being done out of love.

These brief eight verses are about union and communication with Jesus. He uses the example of a vine to get His message across to them. In the past the vine was a symbol for Israel. Jesus might be

expanding upon the verse in Jerimiah 2:21 to support His vine example.

“Yet, I planted you as a chosen vine, from the purest stock. How then did you turn degenerate and become a wild vine.” When God planted the vine or created Israel, it was pure and of great stock. Over the years it became wild and turned from God. In contrast to Israel’s disobedience and unfaithfulness, Jesus calls Himself the true vine.

Jesus together with the disciples and apostles being the branches, will create and make a fruitful people of God. This new creation will become the church over time.

In verse four Jesus gives them great advice and instructions. This is very brief but powerful. They are told to abide in Me, and I in you. Abiding in Jesus is to live out union with Him. We do this through our faith lived out by being baptized. This is to be lived out with love, compassion, and mercy. Stay close to Jesus and live this closeness out in the church. For most of our lives it will be Eucharist once we are baptized and confirmed.

The vine metaphor can be unpacked in a few ways. The figure of the vine and branches expresses our union with Jesus. That union is expressed today by our life in the church community. That is how it is real for us today at Green Bay and Thalberg. Life flows from the vine to the branches. Our abiding and we will hear this lots next week, is not static but dynamic and revitalizing to the believer. The fruit that the believer bears is good works inspired by our faith and mission to the world. We are encouraged to go out into the world and bear good fruit. You will know them by the good fruits that they bear.

The Gospel this morning is meant to encourage us to keep connected with Jesus. Sometimes at different stages of life that can be very trying. If we have good supports at home and in church this can be less of a challenge. Our role is to be that loving support and encouragement. So that others can strengthen their connection with Jesus. Like Our Lord we do it out of love. As St. Paul said, we are to encourage one another.

That is why it is so important to have great Sunday school programs and youth groups.

Strong church communities support those in the church. This is rooted in having a strong Christian identity. Knowing who you are and where you came from. This actually attracts people into the community and gives a sense of comfort to those already there. It is keeping the vine healthy and the fruit will come. We do all of this out of love while we continue to abide in Jesus. Continue to love and encourage one another. Pastor d