

# Daily Reading & Meditation

## Abide in Me, and I in You

SUNDAY 2 MAY 2021

**GOSPEL READING: John 15:1-8**

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. 2 Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

**Meditation:** Why does Jesus speak of himself as the *true vine*? The image of the vine was a rich one for the Jews since the land of Israel was covered with numerous vineyards. It had religious connotations to it as well. Isaiah spoke of the house of Israel as "*the vineyard of the Lord*" (Isaiah 5:7). Jeremiah said that God had planted Israel "*as his choice vine*" (Jeremiah 2:21). While the vine became a symbol of Israel as a nation, it also was used in the Scriptures as a sign of degeneration - a deformed state of spiritual growth and moral decline. Isaiah's prophecy spoke of Israel as a vineyard which "*yielded wild grapes*" (see Isaiah 5:1-7). Jeremiah said that Israel had become a "*degenerate and wild vine*" (Jeremiah 2:21).

### ***One must be firmly rooted in the "Tree of Life"***

When Jesus calls himself the *true vine* he makes clear that no one can grow in spiritual fruitfulness and moral goodness unless they are rooted in God and in his life-giving word. Religious affiliation or association with spiritually minded people is not sufficient by itself - one must be firmly rooted in the "Tree of Life" (Revelation 22:1-2, Genesis 2:8-9) who is the eternal Father and his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus makes a claim which only God can make - he is the true source of life that sustains us and makes us fruitful in living the abundant life which God has for us. It is only through Jesus Christ that one can be fully grafted into the true "vineyard of the Lord".

### ***Bearing the fruit of righteousness, peace, and joy***

Jesus offers true life - the abundant life which comes from God and which results in great fruitfulness. How does the vine become fruitful? The vine dresser must carefully prune the vine before it can bear good fruit. Vines characteristically have two kinds of branches - those which bear fruit and those which don't. The non-bearing branches must be carefully pruned back in order for the vine to conserve its strength for bearing good fruit. Jesus used this image to describe the kind of life he produces in those who are united with him - the fruit of "*righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Romans 14:17). Jesus says there can be no fruit in our lives apart from him. The fruit he speaks of here is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23).

There is a simple truth here: We are either fruit-bearing or non-fruit-bearing. There is no in-between. But the bearing of healthy fruit requires drastic pruning. The Lord promises that we will bear much fruit if we abide in him and allow him to purify us. Do you trust in the Lord's healing and transforming power to give you the abundant life and fruit of his heavenly kingdom?

### **Psalm 22:25-31**

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live for ever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

28 For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

29 Yes, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and he who cannot keep himself alive.

30 Posterity shall serve him; men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation,

31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it.

**Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers:** *Cleansed by Jesus' word*, by Basil the Great, 329-379 A.D.

"So the world - life *enslaved* by carnal passions - can no more receive the grace of the Spirit than a weak eye can look at the light of a sunbeam. First the Lord cleansed his disciples' lives through his teaching, and then he gave them the ability to both see and contemplate the Spirit. He says, 'You are already made clean by the word I have spoken to you' (John 15:3). Therefore 'the world cannot receive him, because it neither sees him nor knows him... You know him, for he dwells with you' (John 14:17). Isaiah says, 'He who settled the earth and the things in it; and gives breath to the people on it, and Spirit to them that tread on it' (Isaiah 42:5). From this we can learn that those who trample earthly things and rise above them become worthy to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (excerpt from *ON THE HOLY SPIRIT 22.53*)

**OPENING PRAYER** Lord Jesus, may I be one with you in all that I say and do. Draw me close that I may glorify you and bear fruit for your kingdom. In flame my heart with your love and remove from it anything that would make me ineffective or unfruitful in loving and serving you as my All. **Amen.**

### **CLOSING PRAYER:- World and Covet19.**

Lord, Look upon the victims of Covet19 throughout the world with eyes of mercy, may your healing hands rest upon them , may your life giving powers flow into every cell of their bodies and into the depths of their souls, cleansing, purifying, restoring them to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. **Amen.**