

Sermon Notes: May 2, 2021 **Focus:** Abiding John 15

[Lectionary Texts](#)

From nursing homes to baptisms, I have had a wide view of the human condition (like most clergy). As a witness, I spend time with those who have learned to abide in God and mourn with those who feel deeply cut off from their spirituality. Regardless of bitter or sweet, abiding in God's power and love is independent of life experience. This abiding is a practice. Abiding in Christ does not relieve us of pain, but when God's grace grafts us into the Vine, we can be fruitful, rain or drought.

The Gospel of John and the letters of John portray Jesus (the vine) deeply connected to us (branches). Through that connection the Spirit's "sap" flows through Jesus to us where we produce grapes of joy.

Video

Steve Thomason did an excellent video John 15's theme of abiding and vines. I highly recommend it. It is only 4 minutes long: <https://youtu.be/UeYp6L-LXSA>. The image on page 2 is snapshot of that video.

The word occurrence of abiding or meno (μενω)

In the Gospel of John, μενω shows up 40 times. There are little letters toward the back of the New Testament called John 1, 2 and 3. These epistles contain 29 occurrences of μενω. If you want to zoom out even further to the whole Bible, go here for abiding: http://girardianlectionary.net/res/abide_john.htm.

Location of John 15 Why does John use this image in Chapter 15 specifically? In part, it expands on the imagery of the last supper, where Jesus prepares the disciples to stay connected to him, the vine, even as he is facing his death. Christ offered himself through the wine at the last supper table. Later blood / wine pours out of his body at the crucifixion (John 19:34). Jesus is the source of our fruitfulness. We abide in Christ so that we can produce spiritual grapes and those grapes of fruitfulness are meant for the joy of the world (see the image below if that helps the metaphor's clarity).

Agriculture (like last week)

Most of us have to work really hard to understand the world of Jesus' deeply agricultural society. John wasn't trying to be particularly innovative. Vineyard imagery was extremely common in John's day, just like sheep were everywhere when Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd.

I leave you with Rabbinic saying and a scripture

"Whosoever dreams of a vine-branch shall see the Messiah"

Isaiah 5:1 *I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard.*

In Jesus we can make big juicy grapes to bring joy to others.

Todd



SPRIT

SPRIT

TRINITY

ISRAEL is the VINE

JESUS is the VINE

The FRUIT of the SPIRIT is LOVE

THE FATHER is the VINEKEEPER. That means it is his task to tend it.

The PURPOSE is to give wine TO THE WHOLE WORLD!

DISCIPLE

OVERFLOW

WHAT IF SPIRITUAL FORMATION is about making WINE. It is a process of cultivating the vine, season after season, to produce something WONDERFUL for people to enjoy.

EACH SEASON has its own flavor, depending on the environment and circumstances...

"ah, yes, 1994. That was a very good year."

SPRIT

THIS REFRAMES OVERFLOW... We are filled from ALL DIRECTIONS