April 28, 2024 **ABIDING IN LOVE**

The gospel passage for this Sunday St. John 15: 1-8, explains to us that Jesus is the Source of life. In verse 1, Jesus says “I am the true vine” Jesus was a master teacher. Jesus always used examples, the things which were common to those people who listened, so that they could understand His teaching.

As we are meditating on this gospel lesson for this Sunday morning, we see each of us must answer two questions: First, are we connected to the vine, or is the life of Christ flowing within us? Secondly, if we are connected to the vine and we are joined to Christ, then how much fruit are we producing through our lives; is there no fruit, some fruit, or an abundance of fruit?

I believe that Jesus and His disciples were making their way, they have been walking beside something familiar to everyone in Jerusalem, one of them is a grapevine. Jesus told His disciples, “I am the true vine.”

Everyone living in Jerusalem, and even those fishermen among the disciples who walked with Jesus knew that life flowed from the vine into the branches. So, Jesus uses these common examples around Jerusalem to bring further understanding to what He had said earlier. Jesus is the source of life, a resource made available by the Holy Spirit when He comes to dwell within the believer.

Now before we move further, we need to stop and deal with our first question, “Are you connected to the vine?” If you are not connected to Jesus through the forgiveness of your sin, if you have not let Jesus rescue you from drowning in a turbulent sea of sin, then you are as good as dead. The life you are living is empty and meaningless because you are not connected to the source of life.

In Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. (NIV) The choice is yours. You can either stay the way you are, or you can choose to be grafted into the life-giving vine. All the other vines are lifeless; the branches have no real fruit because there is no life in the vine. But when you are connected to Jesus, suddenly everything will be made new and alive.

The life source produces Fruit (Verses 2-8):  Jesus is the life source and His life within the believer is for one purpose–to produce fruit. The question we need to think about for ourselves is, “How much fruit is being produced, is there no fruit, some fruit, or an abundance of fruit?” Remember, Jesus is talking with His disciples. Jesus is the true vine and His disciples and those who believe in Him are the branches. So, when we think about the quantity of fruit in an individual’s life we are talking about believers– that is those connected to the vine. As I said earlier, anyone who is not connected to Jesus cannot bear fruit.

Therefore, the question as to how much fruit is being produced in your life does not deal with your salvation; if you have been saved then you are connected to the vine. Now let’s quickly think about the fruit. Some of you may be wondering exactly what this fruit we are supposed to be producing is. Some have taught that the fruit Jesus is talking about is Obedience. This fits with the context, those who love Christ will obey His commands. Others have taught that the fruit is to reproduce other believers. One of the signs of life is that it reproduces itself. Fruit carried within it is the seed which could reproduce.

Others have taught that the fruit is the Fruit of the Spirit as we read in Galatians 5: 22-23, Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is the fruitful evidence that you are connected to the vine.

If you like to learn more, please join us in our worship on Sundays at 11:00 AM.

Peace!

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ponnuraj

Minister

West Center Congregational Church

101 Pondfield Road West

Bronxville, NY 10708