

5th Sunday of Easter

Passage: Gospel: John 15:1-8, The Epistle: 1 John 4:7-21

Title: Abide in me as I abide in you, and you will know the Love of the Father.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Good morning! It is a joy for me to be here this morning to speak to you about the love of God for each one of you. In our scripture readings today, Jesus Christ is not only preparing his disciples for ministry but also telling them what to do. He is taking the time to explain the importance of remaining attached to him, just as a branch is connected to a vine, it will bear fruits in due season. For us, followers of Christ, we are being challenged through this passage to examine our relationship with Christ. As we heard the words this morning, how can we not dive deeper within our own soul to examine our own sense of bond with Christ? We are given an opportunity to ponder what it means to be grafted to the vine, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Do you bear much fruit? Or, what kind of fruit do you produce? Is it love? Kindness, Peace. What type of fruit has God called you to share with this world? One might even ask, "How Am I being the hands and feet of Christ in this world? Well, I have to say, these are legitimate questions we, followers of Christ, need to ask ourselves often.

In a world constantly flooded with negative news, where pain, deceit, and injustice are prevalent, you might even say there is no point anymore to any of this. The world can be unkind, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed by all the negativity. But remember, while the negative may think it can trample the good, it can never. Because there is still much good in this world. It is often initiated by love, care, and kindness. It is through our actions we can be Christ's example

for this world. The fruits that we bear will be the product of a godly life, a reflection of our character.

Brothers and sisters, Christ's ministry was not easy in this world. Throughout his life, Jesus has always used metaphors to reveal the true purpose of his mission. Last Sunday, we learned how he is the shepherd. A shepherd that lays his life for his sheep. He often uses images to reinforce the way to salvation. He often says how he is the doorway, the light, the truth, the bread of life. Every single one of these images captures the everlasting life that he has to offer. Today, we are given the opportunity to understand and see him as the vine. A vine in which, if we stay committed to it, we will bear the right fruit for those around us. Through all these images, one thing can be certain: our resurrected Jesus Christ is the way of Peace, Truth, and Salvation.

He worked hard so that every one of us could produce and embrace the fruits of his mission. A mission to understand that it is because of the love of God that we are being transformed. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. What a comforting passage to hear this morning, knowing God is within us through baptism, each one of us. We are getting the true taste of what God is all about. When fear tends to hold us back from proclaiming God's kingdom, it is important for us to remember to declare with confidence that we are serving a living God. The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the promise of God that all who believe will find the path of righteousness and peace. Christ's resurrection is the bedrock of our Christian faith.

So beloved, Fear not for being and to be seen as different when proclaiming the word of God. As Paul said to the Romans, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will-his good, pleasing, and perfect will" (Romans 12:2). Be the voice of change because,

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love cast out fear; for fears has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfect love.” Jesus Christ died for this world. He died and rose again so that he can take away the sin that is holding us back. There is no greater love than knowing that Christ laid down his life for us in order to be free and called children of God. As a family in the eternal kingdom, it is impossible not to care for others and love each other. If we fail to live in love for others and are concerned about the matters that only apply to us, we will not produce the fruits in the vine. We all need Christ as our sustainer to make it through this life. Without him, we will be cut off from the source of life, and we will not bear any fruit. To bear the fruit of peace, justice, and kindness is to embody the actions of our Lord in this world.

Beloved, Christ is resurrected, which means we are no longer dead to sins. By his own words, he had promised to be with us forever. And because of our baptism, we have not only become part of this eternal kingdom but also been sealed as Christ's own forever. An eternal family of kings and queens line up to celebrate the welcoming of others.

We all belong to this family, and today is a special day because we get to celebrate with the heavenly angels, baby Oliver, entering this family in which the church of God is the vine. Since He is the true vine, we are to rejoice in the moment.

Jesus spoke words of comfort to his disciples. He wants us to stay close to him and pray constantly. He gave us the reassurance that he will never leave us nor forsake us. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. In the gospel of John, it is written, “He is the Spirit who reveals the truth about God.” Because we know Him, he will be with us and in us. As he promised not to leave us orphans.

While no one has ever seen God, He is much closer than we think. Through actions of love, true love, we have a taste for what our beloved Father is all about. As the scriptures say, it is in us that His love is perfected; we cannot find a greater love than God's love. He is the reason we live for Him and love others around us. We do not deserve this love from Him, yet He chooses to love us anyway because that is what a Father does to his children. The love of God is made perfect through the fellowship with the Father and the Son.

I will conclude with these words: Love needs to be at the center of our lives. It needs to be what powers us and strengthens us in this world. Throughout the scriptures, Jesus constantly echoed this in his ministry. And at the very center of our faith is what our Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross for us. His resurrection is the core of our faith. Now, since God's love is perfected in us, we are all living testament to this, which is the essence of what we ought to do for this world. In the end, let us always remember that by abiding in Christ, we are his disciples; we will bear much fruit in this world. Fruits that will bless others and glorify the Father.

Amen.