

CHURCH OF TE HEPARA PAI

Sunday 03 May 2015

Te Rātapu Tuarima o te Aranga / 5th Sunday of Easter

JESUS THE VINE



JOHN 15:5 NIV I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

JESUS the VINE

SENTENCE OF THE DAY:

Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we should also love one another. (1 John 4:10-11)

COLLECT OF THE DAY – *Let us pray:*

God, you sent your Son into the world that we might live through him. May we remain joined to his risen life so that we may bear the fruit of love for one another and know the fullness of joy. **Amen.**

I AM THE VINE
YOU ARE THE BRANCHES

Lessons FROM THE Vine
HOW TO LIVE A FRUITFUL LIFE

John 15:5
Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches.
Those who remain in me, and I in them,
will produce much fruit.
For apart from me you can do nothing.—NLT

Fruit.
Only produced when in
Jesus Christ

I am the vine; you are the branches.
If one remains in me and I in him,
he will bear much fruit.—John 15:5



Life in the VINE

JESUS the VINE

There are many Christians, struggling to live the Christian life, who have never discovered where the strength to live that life is to be found. There are many sincere believers who are continually being disappointed and discouraged because they are finding their own resources so inadequate to meet the demands of real Christian living. There are Christians who long for a fuller, deeper life than that which they now experience. What they need to know is that ***all the resources of the Christian life are in Christ, and in him alone, and that he lives in them by the Holy Spirit.*** Perhaps there is no better and no simpler illustration of these truths than the parable of the vine and the branches in the gospel passage for today from John 15.

In this gospel passage, Jesus was preparing his closest friends for his approaching crucifixion, his coming back to life, and his subsequent leaving for heaven. He had just told them that he would be leaving them. Knowing how disturbed they would feel, he likened himself to a vine and them as branches of the vine as one of his encouragements. Jesus wanted his friends, not only those he was talking to, but those of all time, to know that he was not going to desert them, even though they would no longer have his physical presence. His Spirit would continue to feed and support them just as the roots and trunk of a grape vine feed and support its branches while they develop their fruit. Jesus wanted us to know that, even though we cannot see him, we are as closely connected or joined to him as the branches of a vine are connected or joined to its trunk. Our desire to know and love him and the energy to serve him will keep flowing into and through us as long as we ***“remain joined to”*** him (Jn. 15:5).

To ***“remain”*** joined to Jesus implies that at some point in time in our life we became joined to him by turning away from sin and putting trust in him ***by inviting him into our heart to obey him,*** when we sensed the prompting of the Holy Spirit to do so. After becoming joined to Jesus, we ***“remain”*** joined to him dwelling within us by a total surrender of our life to him, to obey him, on a moment by moment and day by day basis; and through prayer and the study of the Word of God. If we are going to remain joined to Christ, then we must draw our life from him. We must yield our will to him and allow him to live his life through us. We must come to the end of ourself and realise that apart from him we are nothing and that we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5).

When we remain joined to Christ in this way, we will be living the Christian life as it should be lived and will fulfil God's purposes for our life in this world. He will produce a lot of fruit through our life (Jn. 15:5). (Refer to pictures at bottom of front page). This will include us loving others in the same way that God loves us such that we desire to see them saved (1 Jn. 4:10-11). And being joined to Christ, he will lead us to those who are open to receiving the good news about Jesus so that we can share this good news with them and they become saved (Acts 8:35).

If you want to be a fruitful branch for the glory of the Lord, you must learn the secret of fruitfulness. You must learn to remain joined to Jesus the vine and draw your life from him. With him, you can be used in a mighty way.

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - amen.



The Reading from Acts: Acts 8:26-40



A reading from Acts chapter 8 beginning at verse 26.

Philip and the Man From Ethiopia

²⁶ An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. "Go south to the desert road," he said. "It's the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." ²⁷ So Philip started out. On his way he met an Ethiopian official. The man had an important position in charge of all the wealth of the Kandake. Kandake means queen of Ethiopia. This official had gone to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸ On his way home he was sitting in his chariot. He was reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Holy Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot. Stay near it."

³⁰ So Philip ran up to the chariot. He heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you're reading?" Philip asked.

³¹ "How can I?" he said. "I need someone to explain it to me." So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² Here is the part of Scripture the official was reading. It says, "He was led like a sheep to be killed. Just as lambs are silent while their wool is being cut off, he did not open his mouth. ³³ When he was treated badly, he was refused a fair trial. Who can say anything about his children? His life was cut off from the earth." (Isaiah 53:7, 8)

³⁴ The official said to Philip, "Tell me, please. Who is the prophet talking about? Himself, or someone else?" ³⁵ *Then Philip began with that same part of Scripture. He told him the good news about Jesus.*

³⁶⁻³⁷ As they travelled along the road, they came to some water. The official said, "Look! Here is water! What can stop me from being baptized?" ³⁸ He gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the official went down into the water. Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away. The official did not see him again. He went on his way full of joy. ⁴⁰ Philip was seen next at Azotus. From there he travelled all around. He preached the good news in all the towns. Finally he arrived in Caesarea.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.



The Epistle Reading: 1 John 4:7-21



A reading from 1 John chapter 4 beginning at verse 7.

We Love Because God Loved Us

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become a child of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ Here is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him. ¹⁰ *Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God.*

[CONTINUED OVER PAGE]

It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. ¹¹ *Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we should also love one another.* ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us. His love is made complete in us.

¹³ Here's how we know that we are joined to him and he to us. He has given us his Holy Spirit. ¹⁴ The Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. We have seen it and are witnesses to it. ¹⁵ God lives in anyone who agrees that Jesus is the Son of God. This kind of person remains joined to God. ¹⁶ So we know that God loves us. We depend on it.

God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love is joined to God. And God is joined to them. ¹⁷ Suppose love is fulfilled among us. Then we can be without fear on the day God judges the world. Love is fulfilled among us when in this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives away fear. That's because fear has to do with being punished. The one who fears does not have perfect love.

¹⁹ We love because he loved us first. ²⁰ Suppose someone claims to love God but hates a brother or sister. Then they are a liar. They don't love their brother or sister, whom they have seen. So they can't love God, whom they haven't seen.

²¹ Here is the command God has given us. Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Reading: John 15:1-8



The Holy Gospel according to John chapter 15 beginning at verse 1. Praise and Glory to God.

The Vine and the Branches

¹ "I am the true vine. My Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch joined to me that does not bear fruit. He trims every branch that does bear fruit. Then it will bear even more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me.

⁵ *"I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me.* ⁶ If you don't remain joined to me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and dries up. Branches like those are picked up. They are thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain joined to me and my words remain in you, ask for anything you wish. And it will be done for you. ⁸ When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings glory to my Father. It shows that you are my disciples.

This is the Gospel of Christ. Praise to Christ, the Word.

APANUI

HUI AMORANGI AGM 2015: FRIDAY, 08 MAY TO SUNDAY, 10 MAY, 2015. POWHIRI AT 5:00PM ON FRIDAY.