

Living the Seasons at Home

May 2, 2021 – *Beloved, Be Loved, Be Love*

Bible Readings for this Week

Acts 8:26–40 Psalm 22:25–31 1 John 4:7–21 **John 15:1–8** the focus for this week

Read

John 15:1-8

or the story “A Growing Community” over the page from SeasonsFUSION.

Something to think about, talk about, or do

Like branches on a vine, Jesus’ love connects us to God. When we are connected to God and God’s community, we grow in God’s way. We grow tasty fruit such as kindness, forgiveness, service, and caring natures.

The vine Jesus talks about in the gospel does not grow like potted plants in a house. Instead, it grows outside in fields and is cared for by farmers. We, too, live as God’s people in the world, and we share our fruit with those around us.

When taking care of a plant, the branches must be pruned for the plant to survive. This connection, to the source of life and community, is vital to our Christian faith.

Together this week

Reflect on and discuss: What kind of “fruit” are you growing for God? How do you share this fruit with the world around you?

What aspects of your spiritual life are bearing lots of fruit ... and what areas might need some pruning..

Prayer

Loving God,
thank you for helping us to learn and grow.
Help us to always live your way.
Amen.

A Growing Community

Based on John 15:1-8

Jesus' followers and friends were still uncertain about their safety. Some had to return to their homes, but others stayed in Jerusalem. They gathered together often and talked about Jesus.

"Jesus was so gentle," said someone in the corner of the room. "When he told stories to the children, you could see the love in his eyes."

From the other side of the room, someone else spoke, "O yes, his touch was enough to heal and bring great joy. The person had been blind since birth could see people walking for the first time."

Then Peter spoke, "My mother-in-law was healed by Jesus, too – in the early days. Jesus' way of healing and teaching has brought us together. We are connected through Jesus."

"You are right," came from someone at the table. "Jesus told us that would happen when he talked about the vine and branches. Jesus said:

'I am the vine. God is the gardener. In the vineyard full of grapevines, the gardener carefully cuts the branches so they will grow lots of grapes. That has already happened to my branches because I have taught you God's word.

'When a branch is broken from the vine, that branch cannot produce grapes. Stay connected to me just as the branches are connected to the vine. Then you will produce good works because we are joined together.

'Yes, I am the vine, and you are the branches. Stay connected to my teachings and me, so they become a part of you. Pray for what you need. God is pleased when we produce good works.'"

As the people looked around the room, they knew that they were each connected to Jesus, and they were connected through him to one another – a growing community.