

THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

John 15:1-5 says, *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

We are familiar with this passage, but sometimes we forget the context in which these words were spoken. Jesus and His disciples are in the upper room. When Jesus says that He is the true vine, He and His disciples had just finished having the Passover meal, which we call the Last Supper.

This is the meal that Jesus eats with His disciples, right before He goes out to the garden of Gethsemane and is arrested. And the reason that this is important to know is that this is one of the last things that Jesus ever says to His disciples before He is crucified.

Jesus is telling His disciples this to encourage them. The next couple of days are going to be incredibly hard for the disciples as they watch as Jesus is crucified and buried. They're going to need some encouragement. But if Jesus is attempting to encourage His disciples, it seems like He's going about it in a strange way.

When we are encouraging our friends, we say things like, "It's going to be ok," or "I'm here for you," or "don't worry about it, he's stupid anyway." We definitely aren't like, "you know what, Ken, cheer up. I'm a vine and you're a branch, and it's all going to be ok." But that's what Jesus does.

So let's look at this passage and see if we can figure out why this would be an

encouraging thought to the disciples, and why it can be an encouragement to us today.

Jesus says that He is the vine, and that means, that Jesus supplies us with everything we need for life and growth: because that's what vines do. The Father is the vinedresser. He takes care of the vine by pruning it and by removing the parts that have stopped bearing fruit. So if Jesus is the vine, and God the Father is the vinedresser, well, then who are we? We're the branches. And what do branches do? Branches produce fruit.

Jesus is the vine, the one who supplies everything we need for life and growth, God is the vinedresser, the one who prunes us and works in our lives to help us produce more fruit, and we are the branches, the ones who produce fruit.

Our connection to Jesus allows us to go from being a dead stick lying on the ground, to a thriving and flourishing branch covered in fruit. And what kind of fruit do y'all think Jesus wants to see in our lives? What kind of fruit should be growing on our branches?

In Galatians 5:22-23 and in Matthew 3:8, we're told just what kind of fruit we should expect to see in our lives if we are connected to Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 says, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

Matthew 3:8 says, *"Bear fruit in keeping with repentance."*

Those are the types of fruit that Jesus expects to see growing in our lives. He expects to see us growing in love, and joy, and peace, and patience, and kindness, and gentleness, and self-control and repentance. If you're connected to Jesus, you should expect to see those types of

fruit in your life. And not just a little bit, but a lot. We're called to be fruitful. We're called to flourish and to thrive. And all that is required of us is to remain in Christ.

And we see in the Old Testament, just why this is so important. Listen to these words from Isaiah 5:1-7. It says, *"Let me sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briars and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!"*

You see, John 15:1-5 is so encouraging, because this is not the first time that they been compared to a vineyard. In multiple places in the Old Testament, God calls Israel His vineyard. God had called Israel to produce fruit before. Israel was supposed to be God's vine that produced fruit that the nations would see and that would give glory to God. But they failed.

When God came looking for fruit, he found none. He says, *"that instead of finding good fruit, the vines produced wild fruit, or you could call it bad fruit"*. And He gives an example at the end of Verse 7. It says, *"For*

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 <u>B-day</u> : Logan Griffith
2 <u>Sunday School</u> : 10am <u>Worship</u> : 11am <u>Nursery</u> : Jackie Tripp	3	4	5 <u>Dinner</u> : 5:30pm <u>Adult Bible Study, Covenant Kids & Catechism Club</u> : 6:15pm <u>Choir Practice</u> : 7pm <u>B-day</u> : Kip Hanson McClure <u>B-day</u> : Price Foster McClure	6	7 <u>B-day</u> : Phil Huizinga	8
9 <u>Sunday School</u> : 10am <u>Worship</u> : 11am <u>Nursery</u> : Katy Basinger <u>Diaconate Meeting</u> : 8am <u>Communion</u>	10 <u>B-day</u> : Kelly McNutt	11 <u>WM AM Circle</u> : 9:30am <u>WM Lunch Bunch</u> : 11:15am <u>WM PM Circle</u> : 7pm	12 <u>Dinner</u> : 5:30pm <u>Adult Bible Study, Covenant Kids & Catechism Club</u> : 6:15pm <u>Choir Practice</u> : 7pm	13	14 <u>VALENTINES DAY</u>	15
16 <u>Sunday School</u> : 10am <u>Worship</u> : 11am <u>Nursery</u> : Nadine Coddington <u>Fellowship Luncheon</u> <u>Session Meeting</u> : 4:30pm <u>B-day</u> : Hallie Jane Basinger	17 <u>HOLIDAY</u> : President's Day <u>B-day</u> : Joyce Huizinga	18	19 <u>Dinner</u> : 5:30pm <u>Adult Bible Study, Covenant Kids & Catechism Club</u> : 6:15pm <u>Choir Practice</u> : 7pm	20	21	22
23 <u>Sunday School</u> : 10am <u>Worship</u> : 11am <u>Nursery</u> : Chonda Griffith <u>HOP</u> : 2pm	24	25	26 <u>Dinner</u> : 5:30pm <u>Adult Bible Study, Covenant Kids & Catechism Club</u> : 6:15pm <u>Choir Practice</u> : 7pm	27	28 <u>B-day</u> : Mike Cork	29

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

Deacons of the Month: Glenn Basinger and Trey Griffith

Nursery Workers: Please arrive in the nursery by 10:30 am.

Food Ministry Leader of the Month: Andrea Ward.

Wednesday Night Gatherings: This weekly event resumes on January 8th.

- Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 pm. PLEASE NOTE: sign up for dinner each week by Monday to ensure there will be enough food for all. Dinners are \$6.50 each or \$15.00 per family.
- Adult Bible Study, Covenant Kids and Catechism Club, 6:15 pm.
- Choir Practice, 7:00 pm.

February 9:

- Diaconate Meeting, 8:00 am.
- Communion.

February 11, Women's Ministry Events:

- Morning Circle Study, 9:30 am.
- Lunch Bunch, 11:15 am at Cane Cutters.
- Evening Circle Study, 7:00 pm.
- Both Morning and Evening Circle study groups will begin studying "True Community" by Jerry Bridges.

February 16:

- Fellowship Luncheon/Potluck, to be held immediately following the worship service. Luncheon Team: Eloise Harris, Karen Lashley, Patty and Scott Kirkpatrick.
- Session Meeting, 4:30 pm.

February 23:

- HOP Meeting, 2:00 pm. Hooked on Prayer is prayer ministry that gives shawls, throws, or blankets to the critically, chronically, or terminally ill. If you have the heart to pray for the individuals on the HOP list, please join this prayer group. Contact Joy Mackin, Joyce Huizinga or Eloise Harris for more information.

<u>2019</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>2019 YTD</u>
Gen. Fund Contributions	\$ 12,172.00	\$ 99,056.44
Gen. Fund Expenses	<u>\$ 10,564.63</u>	<u>\$ 116,055.92</u>
Net Gain (Loss)	\$ 1,607.37	\$ (16,999.48)
<u>2018</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>2018 YTD</u>
Gen. Fund Contributions	\$ 9,682.00	\$ 104,544.52
Gen. Fund Expenses	<u>\$ 9,012.34</u>	<u>\$ 100,976.10</u>
Net Gain (Loss)	\$ 669.66	\$ 3,568.42

CONGRATULATIONS!

Olivia Rose Huizinga was born on January 3, 2020 to Josh and Kelsey Huizinga. Proud grandparents are Phil and Joyce Huizinga.

Marcie Elizabeth Coddington was born on January 9, 2020 to Joel and Courtney Coddington. Proud grandparents are David and Nadine Coddington.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:
IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO
SERVE FOR THE NURSERY
OR FELLOWSHIP
LUNCHEON,
PLEASE MAKE
ARRANGEMENTS TO
ENSURE THERE IS
ADEQUATE COVERAGE.**

(Pastor's Message — continued from Page 1)

the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry! The fruit God expected from Israel was justice and righteousness, but instead He found bloodshed and people crying out because of the lack of righteousness. God's vine had failed to produce good fruit."

And that's why Jesus being the true vine is such great news. His disciples are commanded to bear good fruit in their lives; which is something that they cannot do, but the good news is that they don't have to do it on their own. Jesus is about to leave that room, He's about to be arrested, He's about to be crucified for their sins and for ours, and three days later He is going to rise from the grave.

Jesus tells His disciples to bear fruit, but the great news is that He is about to do everything necessary, to ensure that as long as they remain in Him, they will bear good fruit.

And the same thing is true for us. As long as we remain in Christ, we're going to be fruitful. There is no secret to having a flourishing, thriving spiritual life. I know that a lot of people make a lot of money selling books on the secret to a better, more thriving life. Well the truth is that the only thing you need to do to have a fruitful life, is to stay as close to Jesus as you can.

Do you know why you grow in love, and joy, and peace, and patience, and kindness, and gentleness, and self-control when you abide in Christ? Because Jesus has all those things to give you. Just like a branch gets its nutrients from the vine. You and I get everything we need for our lives from Christ. So let us continue, to seek out Christ, in our prayers, in our time reading His Word, and in His Body the Church, so that we may continue bearing much fruit for His glory.

Grace and Peace,
Jeff

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

2020 FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON TEAMS		
<p>January</p> <p>1. Bill & Melissa Weltin 2. Andrea & Allison Ward 3. Ozzy & Ann Resto</p>	<p>February</p> <p>1. Eloise Harris 2. Karen Lashley 3. Scott & Patty Kirkpatrick</p>	<p>March</p> <p>1. Eloise Harris 2. Jimmy & Joy Mackin 3. (open)</p>
<p>April</p> <p>1. David & Nadine Coddington 2. (open) 3. (open)</p>	<p>May</p> <p>1. Ozzy & Ann Resto 2. (open) 3. (open)</p>	<p>June</p> <p>1. Dennis & Karen Davidson 2. (open) 3. (open)</p>
<p>July</p> <p>1. Phil & Joyce Huizinga 2. Trey & Chonda Griffith 3. (open)</p>	<p>August</p> <p>1. Karen Lashley 2. (open) 3. (open)</p>	<p>September</p> <p>1. Billy & Ruth Symon 2. Mike & Bernice Cork 3. Scott & Patty Kirkpatrick</p>
<p>October</p> <p>1. David & Nadine Coddington 2. (open) 3. (open)</p>	<p>November</p> <p>1. (open) 2. (open) 3. (open)</p>	<p>December</p> <p>1. Jimmy & Joy Mackin 2. Phil & Joyce Huizinga 3. Trey & Chonda Griffith</p>

HELP WANTED:

If you are willing to serve on any hospitality team, your help will be greatly appreciated.

Sign-up sheets for both the monthly **Fellowship Luncheon Teams** and the **Food Ministry Chair** are located on the Women's Ministry bulletin board.

Also, a checklist of kitchen duties has been posted in the kitchen and on the Women's Ministry bulletin board. This checklist is meant to help assist the teams with set-up and clean-up of church events in our Fellowship Hall and a way to keep our kitchen clean and organized.

**WE ARE
BLESSED
TO BE A
BLESSING
TO OTHERS.**

2020 FOOD MINISTRY CHAIR	
January	Eloise Harris
February	Andrea Ward
March	Karen Lashley
April	Joy Mackin
May	Ann Resto
June	Nadine Coddington
July	Joyce Huizinga
August	Melissa Weltin
September	Patty Kirkpatrick
October	Ruth Symon
November	(open)
December	Joyce Huizinga

The Women's Ministry recognizes that there are times when providing the gift of a meal can uplift a person or family. These are opportunities that will help relieve someone the burden of cooking especially when the family is afflicted by sickness, hospitalization, or a death in the family. A family meal is also provided when there is a funeral conducted at the church.

The volunteer Food Ministry Chair will be notified from the church office or other church members when there is a need.

These are some helpful things the Food Ministry Chair should follow when a need arises:

- Contact the recipient to determine if there are any food allergies and/or dietary needs that need to be considered, how many people will be served, and the date and time the meal will be delivered.
- Determine the number of meals to provide and coordinate assistance from others when needed.
- In the event of a funeral, the Food Ministry Chair will communicate with the family to determine the number of people that will be served, will set the dinner menu and will arrange for volunteers to provide food as well as workers for the set-up and clean-up of the family dinner.
- Clearly communicate with all volunteers any food restrictions, the number of people to be served, and the family's preferred delivery time of the meal.

HAVE YOU TALKED TO GOD TODAY?

Please Pray for our Faith Promise Missionaries

Robert & Lisa Stewart	Mission to the World — Japan
Andy & Bev Warren	Mission to the World — Ethiopia
Doug McNutt	Trinity Center for World Missions — Central Africa Evangelist
Aaron & Leticia Zapata	Mission to North America — Mexico
Chaplain Ministry	Mission to North America
Jimmy & Nadia Dukes	Reformed Evangelistic Fellowship — Peru
Beth Acton	Wycliffe Bible Translators — Papua New Guinea
Joy Ayabe	Wycliffe Bible Translators — Papua New Guinea
Clete Hux	Apologetics Resource Center — Birmingham, AL
Jonah & Jennifer	Frontiers — Nineveh
General Support	Sav-A-Life Pregnancy Resource Center — Demopolis, AL
General Support	Palmer Home for Children — Hernando, MS
Sewing Project	Isaiah 55 — Reynosa, Mexico

Hooked On Prayer (HOP):

Allinder, Ike	Finley, Betty	McIntier, Jodie
Allinder, Kate	Gardner, Christy	Miller, Tommie
Bazuin, Caiden	Gardner, David	Mills, Angel
Beeler, Peggy	Harstad, Paula	Morgan, Laura
Belcher, Samuel	Hart, Sarah Elizabeth	Mutisya, Cecilia
Boggs, Ben	Harvey, John	Parr, Higley
Brantley, Maggie	Hayes, Betsy	Pickerill, Paula
Brooker, Chrissy	Hocker, Jeannie	Plummer, Kaegan
Brooker, Jan	Hogg, Ian	Reynolds, Christy
Bryant, Jessica	Hoggle, Judy	Sakon, Ethan
Bynum, Linda	Holman, Joann	Sall, Terry
Bules, Jaimee	Hooks, Chesnee	Sharp, Chris
Busby, Rhae	Husbands, Jennie	Sims, Anna Katherine
Coker, Jean	Hux, Karen	Sims, Sarah
Collins, Brandon	Ivy, Kendall	Spree, Thed
Cook, Patricia	Jennifer (Missionary)	Stephens, Kay
Craig, Noah	Jowers, Cap	Stephens, Ronnie
Cross, Margaret	Jowers, Patty	Taylor, Marie
Crispin, Michelle	Jowers, Walter	TenHaaf, WM
Curry, Walter	Keasler, Jo Anne	Thornton, Alaina
Daughtery, Jody	Lane, Barbara	VanderMolen, Popko
Davidson, Karen	Leascher, Chad	Witherspoon, Mary Stewart
Duncan, Conner	Lessman, Linus	Womble, Caleb
Dunning, Norbourne	Lewis, Kathy	Wright, Hettie
Dyer, Doug	Ligon, Brandon	
Eshee, Judy	Lockett, Joanne	
Farst, Sharon	McCraw, Beverly	

OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS

Cancer:

Jody Daugherty
 Luke (Jonah's son)
 Kaleigh Craig
 Scott Kirkpatrick
 Heather Wilson
 Maggie Brantley
 Kendall Ivy

Illness:

Ian Hogg
 Laura Morgan
 Neal Bules
 David Headley
 Allen Hammond

Special Needs:

Liz Bond
 Sarah Elizabeth Hart
 Frank Ramey
 Viola Cook
 William R. Horton
 Baby Oliver Sullivan
 Francis Mahaffey
 The Hutton Family

Military Personnel:

Chaplain William Broderick
 Sam Brasfield
 Steven Mackin
 Victor Resto
 Josh Allums
 Joseph Wilson
 Josh Tyson
 Blake Ivy
 Grey Tripp

Expectant Mothers:

Amanda Bryant
 Katie Gill

If you know anyone who needs to be added or taken off any of these lists, please provide Ann Resto with the information to keep the prayer lists current.

