

I am the true vine

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Fifth Sunday of Easter) is John 15:1-8. It is introduced by another “I am” phrase. There are seven in the Gospel of John.

A vine is a plant having a flexible stem that is rooted in life-giving soil. In this text Jesus is the vine who is connected to his heavenly Father, the source of all spiritual life. Jesus and the Father are one.

Branches that are connected to the life-giving vine have as their sole purpose to produce spiritual fruit.

We are Christ’s branches. We have access to the Father through Jesus – His life, death and resurrection for us. God does much to help us bear fruit. He equips us with gifts unique to each of us. These can be used to be fruitful branches. God also empowers us to use our God-given abilities through his Word and Sacraments.

The vine dresser prunes the branch to make it more productive. The pruning in our lives may come through difficult situations and times. The Father can use these to strengthen our faith and make us more fruitful branches.

Remaining in Christ and having His words remain in us are not two individual things but the same thing. Christ is where His Word is. Being in Christ means that God will use us to bear fruit.

The good works of the Christian are caused by the fact that Jesus alone is the Vine, the Source. They are pleasing to the heavenly Father and clothe Him in the splendor due Him. People can see these good works in us and glorify the Father, not ourselves.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for attaching me to you by grace through faith. Thank you for your Word that continues to strengthen my faith that produces spiritual fruit. Help me us to use your gifts of Word and Sacrament to remain in you. Amen