

29 April 2018 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

Readings: Acts 8:26–40; Ps. 22:25–31; 1 John 4:7–21; John 15:1–8.

Theme: *Di-Vine* – **John 15:5**, “I am the vine; you are the branches.” *divine* – of, from, or like God or a god (Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary).



I. DI-VINE.

John 15:5, “I am the vine”

1 John 4:9-10, 14, “God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into this wicked world to bring to us eternal life through his death. 10 In this act we see what real love is: it is not our love for God but his love for us when he sent his Son to satisfy God’s anger against our sins... And furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now tell all the world that God sent his Son to be their Saviour.”



II. DI-BRANCHES.

cleanskin – A bottle of wine whose label does not identify the producer, typically sold at a low price (APOD).

John 15:3-4, “**Already you are clean** because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you.” ABIDING is the key.

John 13:10, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And **you are clean**, but not every one of you.”

Cf. Woodchips. 1 John 4:17, “**as he is so also are we in this world**”

Ephesians 2:4-6, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” We live from heaven to earth.



III. DELICIOUS.

A. Our starting point.

Matthew 7:17, “Every healthy tree bears **good fruit**, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.” “*From vict’ry unto vict’ry His army shall He lead.*”

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

B. Our promotion: pruning.

John 15:2, “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes,…”

C. Our overflow.

John 15:2, 5, 8, “...that it may bear **more fruit**... Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears **much fruit**... By this my Father is glorified, that you bear **much fruit** and so prove to be my disciples.”

John 15:11, “My purpose for telling you these things is so that the joy that I experience will fill your hearts with **overflowing gladness**.”

John 15:7, “ask **whatever you wish**, and it will be done for you.”



CONCLUSION: Michael Foss, *From Members to Disciples*, Acts 8.

“Prior to the events in Acts 8, to be a Christian was to come to Jerusalem – not go from Jerusalem into the world!... The critical shift here is not in the content of the word. Instead it occurs in the *carriers* of the word. From the apostles to the people, the word of God was liberated from a few leaders to the whole church. ‘You are the missionaries of the 21st century’ ... We must de-credential our ministries. As long as only the ordained or officially licensed can truly witness to the gospel, we will be stuck in Jerusalem... All of God’s people will be missionaries when the credentialed understand that our training is intended to be a gift to bless, train, and turn loose all of God’s people in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 8:4, “Those who were scattered went about preaching the word.”

Acts 8:26, “Now **an angel** of the Lord said to Philip” Do angels still speak to us today? cf. Peter in prison. Seemed “normal” back then.

Acts 8:29, “**the Spirit** said to Philip, ‘Go over and join this chariot.’”

Does the Spirit still speak to us today? What might He say? cf. v. 37, “What prevents me from being baptized?” What might prevent us? Our theology? Our fear? Our insecurity? Our traditions?

Acts 8:39, “And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away.” Now that’s not normal! Yet it’s Biblical!

Foss, “Philip is an example in Acts 8. He provides for us the outcome that we are called to anticipate as we move to an empowered people

of God. Acts 8:5-8, “Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.” Philip is not the only one doing these things... We can assume that Philip is simply a noted example of what all the people were doing. The outcome of the ministry of the Twelve in Jerusalem was the spiritual growth of Philip who, having faithfully served by waiting on the Hellenistic widows, now is called to be an evangelist. Philip is just one among many who grew deep and then were called out into mission. As an example, Philip reveals the integrity of witness that the Christian church is called to exhibit. This integrity comes when the word we preach is demonstrated in the work we do. The word we proclaim is of the Messiah, Jesus. The work we do is our serving in Jesus’ name.” May God help us to do the same.

