

In today's gospel Jesus speaks of the Father as a vintner who prunes branches that are bearing fruit so that they will produce even more. There is a strong emphasis on "bearing fruit"; the expression occurs many times in this Gospel passage. It speaks not only of the fecundity in our relationship with God but also of missionary outreach, and of interdependence with the other branches on the vine.

The image of God as a vine grower and Israel as the vineyard is a familiar one in the Scriptures. In this Gospel Jesus is addressing to his disciples at the Last Supper scene and he tells them that they are already pruned so that they will bear more fruit. Branches that do not bear fruit are taken away.

From pruning, the stress in the gospel shifts to the importance of the branch remaining united to the vine in order to bear fruit. A branch cannot bear fruit on its own; cut off from the vine, it withers and dies, and then is good only for kindling. Abiding in Jesus is crucial for us. True disciples abide in Jesus' word and Jesus' words remain in disciples. When Jesus tells his disciples he is going to prepare a dwelling place for them, it becomes clear that the "abiding place" is not a geographical locale but is Jesus himself where also the Father makes his home, along with the Holy Spirit. How can we remain then with Jesus?

Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us. And how can we keep his commandments? The way we can do it is that we should believe in the name of Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. In that way, we stay in contact with the living Lord. Another way we stay in contact with the living Lord is through the prayer life. We all need a personal prayer life. We all can have a personal prayer life through which we communicate with the Lord. We express our desires and concerns and the Lord listens to us.

We also stay in contact with the living Lord through the expression of our faith in works of charity toward others. Jesus told us that whatever we have done to the little ones of his we did it to him. Through these means, we remain with Jesus and he remains with us.

If we still connected to the vine, we will bear much fruits.