

COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

April 28, 2024

A Vine Grower Looks Out for His Fruit

Based on: Acts 9:26-31; 1 Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15:1-8

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It's spring – people start working to get their gardens and lawns looking neat. Trees and shrubs look trim, flowers bloom and vegetables sprout. It's a lot of work. It also takes seeds, good soil, fertilizer, water, weeding and tools to dig, prune and grow healthy plants and trees.

Today's readings again highlight God's unending love and care and his continuing desire for a closer, fruitful relationship with us.

Jesus always used everyday images to explain his teaching. In the Gospel, Jesus uses the familiar images of grapes, grapevines and vineyards.

Growing grapes and making wine were important work to the Jews. The grapevines were planted on terraced land above their farm fields. They were planted in rows about eight feet apart in order to give them plenty of growing room and to allow workers to move through the rows.

Each spring, the workers pruned the grapevines by cutting off the less productive branches. These branches were gathered, piled and burned. Any weeds around the good branches were pulled and the ground was loosened and watered. The good branches were propped up with forked sticks to allow the grapes to grow and ripen until harvest time.

Jesus says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower," and "I am the vine, you are the branches." We become part of the vine through baptism. Jesus says for us to live and grow we must stay connected to him. Without Jesus, we can do nothing.

He gives us his love and grace to renew our hearts and to be good in all we say and do to produce good fruit. God the Father prunes anything in us that keeps us from growing stronger in faith and love.

The church, the sacraments, the Scriptures and prayer help us stay connected to Jesus. By being faithful disciples and showing love, care, kindness, generosity and forgiveness to others, God cares for our needs and we continue to grow and produce good fruit.

When people see us being prayerful, loving, caring, kind, generous and forgiving, they see our "fruit" and know we are Jesus' disciples. Then Jesus says his Father is honored.

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