

We Are God's Flowers

Children's Chapel, St. Mark's Palo Alto | May 2, 2021
Supplemental materials for https://youtu.be/YOqBM2kzG_s

Lectionary Reading:

John 15:1-8 Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just 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. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

Theological Background

Jesus calls us to "abide" in him - to live in God's presence, with a connection to the life-giving and nourishing Divinity that also "abides" in us.

When talking to the Disciples, Jesus compares himself to a vine, and he compares his followers to the fruits, or flowers, that grow on that vine. It's a connection that his audience, very familiar with agriculture, would have understood clearly. A branch, flower, or fruit that becomes disconnected from the larger plant will wither and die!

The flowers or fruits don't need to find water and nutrients on their own - they can trust the larger plant to carry nourishment to them. Our job is to trust in God and remain open to receiving the spiritual nutrients that God's deep roots provide for us.

Go Deeper!

Go on a walk with your child and observe the trees and plants growing in your neighborhood. Can they see the connections between all the parts of the plant? What part of the plant is most like God? Most like church? Most like an individual person? How are they all connected?

Define “abiding” with your child. What are some synonyms they can think of for this funny word? (*Live, stay, rest, dwell, etc.*) Where do they “abide?” What does it feel like to abide somewhere?

Try making a blanket fort together or wrapping your child in cozy blankets to get an experience of “abiding” in warm, comfortable surroundings. How does being surrounded by God’s love feel the same as being surrounded by blankets or the walls of your house? How does it feel different?

Practice “abiding in God” with your child by saying this short prayer:

{Breathe in} *God, I want to abide in you* {Breathe out} *as you abide in me.*

Do you or your child connect to worship experiences through music? Here are some songs about abiding in Christ:

- Andrew Marcus - Abide In Me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BjwdBmb37E>
- Chris August - Abide In Me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmdNRD33jEM>
- WorshipNOW - Remain In Me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07nI8uLwmNo>