

## Sermon Notes, April 29, 2018

**Focus:** Abiding, John 15

**Lectionary texts:** [http://lectionarypage.net/YearB\\_RCL/Easter/BEaster5\\_RCL.html](http://lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster5_RCL.html)

I have the rare privilege of seeing life through every generation all at once. From nursing homes to NICU's, priests and pastors have an unique view of the human condition. I have come to know that we have a God who nourishes us through every stage of our extremely short lives, especially when we learn to *abide*.

On this Youth Sunday, I want to return to the theme from two weeks ago when I preached on John 1 — Abide. Our youth are making their way into a life that we cannot control or ultimately direct. Parents and leaders make a terrible mistake when we ask them — in so many unspoken ways — to abide in **us** — *our way, our truth, our life*. The only one who authors growth for anyone is God. We can help each other, mentor each other, as long as we don't think we are driving the bus.

The Gospel of John and the letters of John see growth authored by Jesus in terms of grapes as well as how vines and vineyards are stand ins for the spiritual life. The whole thrust of John 15 is to Abide in Christ so that you can become fruitful for the sake of the whole world. Steve Thomason did an excellent video on the theme of Abiding in chapter 15. I highly recommend it — <https://youtu.be/UeYp6L-LXSA>. This image to the right is an snapshot of that video that deeply informs my sermon today. It will be a helpful tool to understand my sermon today.

**Geek note** about  $\mu\epsilon\nu\omega$  -meno- abiding. In the Gospel of John, abiding /  $\mu\epsilon\nu\omega$  shows up 40 times. John 1, 2 and 3 has 29 occurrences. **If you really want to geek out**, here is a bigger list of the occurrences [http://girardianlectionary.net/res/abide\\_john.htm](http://girardianlectionary.net/res/abide_john.htm). Abiding in John happens more than half of all times this particular word shows up in the whole Bible. Nobody else uses it quite like John.

**Another geek note** Why does John use this image in Chapter 15 specifically? Hint hint — *it is after the last supper*. The image reinforces how Christ offered himself through the wine.

**Last thing — agriculture** — most of us have to work really hard to understand the world of Jesus' deeply agricultural society. John wasn't trying to be particularly innovative. Vineyard imagery was extremely common in John's day. Also, John is informed by vineyard metaphors from the Old Testament and applies them to Jesus and the Father liberally.

There is a rabbinic saying "Whosoever dreams of a vine-branch shall see the Messiah". Here are few OT references — Isaiah 5:1 (about expecting the Messiah) *I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard*. Jeremiah 2:21 (How Israel was supposed to be a healthy vineyard for the Messiah) *"I had planted you like a choice vine of sound and reliable stock. How then did you turn against me into a corrupt, wild vine?"* There are a lot more, but John understands Jesus as Messiah, the fullness of God's expectation, even if the people, including Israel could not live up to the standards of a holy vineyard.



*That's a lot of stuff, so pick a path that interests you and dig in. Pastor Todd*