

Quest – 2nd May

Dear Quest member,

Today's Quest reading is again from St John's Gospel. But we have moved away from the Easter story to the earlier time when Jesus was teaching his disciples.

But to begin: Let us each take a pebble for the pebble prayers. It doesn't have to be a pebble, you could hold a favourite object.

As usual I will leave the last prayer blank so that you can add something of your own.

“Today's reading is about gardening... or at least about cultivating a vine. During lock-down many people have found joy in gardens: either working or just sitting and enjoying the arrival of Spring. Let us thank God for gardens.

“Let us also give thanks for the success of the vaccine programme and give thanks that we are at last able to go to shops, and get a haircut!

“Let us pray for the people of India where the health care system has been overwhelmed and they have run out of oxygen and for the people of Brazil and Peru.

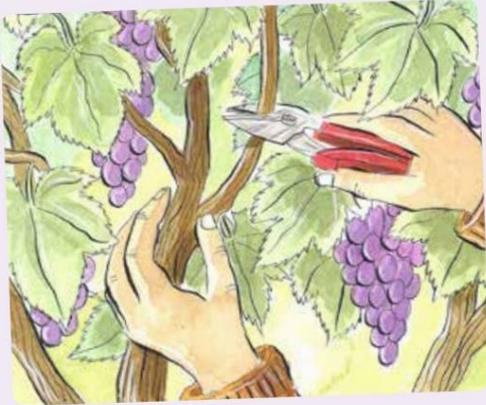
“.....

“Lord Jesus, hold us and all these people in your hands as we hold these pebbles in our hands. Keep them safe. Amen”

Jesus is talking about our relationship with God. He is saying that if we have a right relationship with God.... if we “abide” in him... then we will produce “wonderful fruit”.

Here is the story in the version from the Roots material, the Gospel of John, chapter 15 verses 1 to 8:

Let us imagine that God is a gardener, and in God's garden there is a plant: a vine. The vine is rooted in the soil, and the soil is rich and nutritious, full of God's goodness. The gardener pours all his love into it, so the vine has plenty of water and food, and everything else it needs to grow well.



There are many branches on the vine. Some have fruit, some do not. God cuts off all the branches that are dry and weak, and have no fruit. Then he looks at the branches that are fruitful and cuts those branches back, so that they will bear even more fruit.

Jesus is like a vine. We are the branches. If the branches stay firmly attached to the root of the plant, they can draw on the goodness in the soil and produce sweet, juicy grapes. If we abide in Jesus and stay as close to him as the branches of the vine, we will grow well. Jesus will give us all the nourishment we need and we will produce wonderful fruit, like love, kindness and helpfulness. Jesus says that if we abide in him, we can ask for whatever we want, and it will be done for us.

John 15:1-8

Several Christmases ago Elizabeth (my wife) bought me a gardening book called "The Pruners Handbook". Last Autumn the two apple trees in our garden had become too big and had not given us many apples so I decided that it was time to prune them and I looked in the book. It was more complicated than I thought. Apple trees have two kinds of buds: wood buds and fruit buds... but I couldn't tell the difference! I did my best and the trees seem to have a lot of blossom on them at the moment so perhaps we will have a bumper crop of apples.

What do you think Jesus means when he says that we should "abide" in God?

I think it means living our lives as God would want us to: being kind to others, treating people as we should like to be treated, worshiping God in Church and sharing our lives with him in prayer.

St John says that Jesus will make us like "fruits of the spirit" like love, kindness and helpfulness.

When St Paul wrote to the Galatians he also talked about the fruits of the spirit but he lists nine. Look them up in Galatians Chapter 5 verses 22 and 23.

Or see if you can fill in the missing letters:

L*v*

J*y

P*a*e

F*rb*aran*e

K**dness

G**dness

F**thf*ln*ss,

Ge*t*en*ss

S**f-c**trol.

May God bless us all. Amen.

Norman