

## The Fifth Sunday of Easter (2021)

Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;  
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day.  
 Let me see my Savior's face; let me all His beauties trace;  
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to  
 Thee.  
 Amen.

**John 15:1–8** [Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. 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. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

In the Name of Jesus.

The Law came through Moses; Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ. Grace and Truth. Grace and Truth means that the Spirit of Jesus calls us through the Gospel, through our Baptism, through Holy Absolution and through the Supper of Christ—He calls, gathers and enlightens God's offspring to receive a gift, to count on a gift, that no...man...can...count...on—Lord ‘a mercy on us! Because the Son of God is a gift that is NOT the Law, NOT OUR production, NOT dependent on OUR works, OUR sincerity, OUR running around, OUR scolding and finger-wagging; our glory.

By THIS My Father—therefore YOUR Father for certain!—by THIS OUR Father is revealed and praised and preached and fills all the earth: that you bear the fruit of the Gospel and thus prove to be MY disciples! Whether or not Moses can claim you too.

Hallelujah!

Your Brother, Jesus, did NOT...RETIRE from being all for you and me when He cried out 'It is finished' and laid down His Life. He picked up His Life again—ALSO—for you, for me, for the world! He's working now! So much so, that He and His Father took the deepest breath possible and heaved it all out upon the world: the Holy Spirit Who lives to live in us!

And by these words of vine and branches and pruning and burning the fruitless—He is lifting us up to a place from which we must look DOWN to see Heaven!

Where YOU are not satisfied with YOUR performance—that has NOTHING to do with Jesus, His Spirit, His Father, your Life. That's just Moses business. Important; most serious; scary. But apart from Him—Jesus—Brother—foot washing Slave—the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world—we can do nothing.

So leave despair over YOUR performance to those headed for the fire. And despair over the performance of ANY...OTHER...CHILD...OF...GOD!

That's first. When-where we disappoint God and our fellows, Moses is upset with us; not Jesus.

Second: even the REAL stuff the Holy Spirit brings to fruition in every baptized child of God—patience, hope, kindness, joy, gentleness, forgiveness, intercessory prayer, obliviousness to sin....—

MY Old boaster inside—YOUR old boaster inside—every man's proud, frightened ego—

We ol' sinners wanna grab that fruit and press it into our hands and claim as our own—our superiority—our well-meaningness—OUR work... Look at how HUMBLE...I...IS...! Why ain't YOU?!!!!

Go home and eat a piece of fruit like that; like my grandson, Samuel Paul. Applesauce is best! Press firmly in your hand, and squirt, squirt, mess.

Our fellow children of God who are sinners still will INSIST—until their Father calls them Home—they will INSIST that God and His Love have achieved traction and progress with THEM—IN...A...WAY...THAT—oh, boy!—‘I just with everyone ELSE was as God-oriented as I’ve become!’

Without John 15, Vine and Branches and Farmer God in His coveralls and floppy hat and pruning tool—it is easy to despair of even the disciples of Jesus; even pray with the great theologian who admitted he'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints; for sinners at least can crack a smile.

Jesus MUST be Living; for even a man who knows LEAST about orientation with Holiness—your poor, miserable pastor—even I am glad today about the hymns we sing and the Creed in which we rejoice and the way in we school our Father in heaven as we pray: Make holy; bring; will; give; pardon; guide safely; deliver.

Disappointing Paul disappoints Moses, NOT God.

Slow-learner Paul—who once a month or so performs well—well, my Father knows how to move me on from self-admiration. So much so, that:

Even this wicked world knows what's what about God; from me; from you, dear children. For where you're great at sinning, He's great at taking that away. And where you're great at doing good, He's great at taking that away even faster in the Name of Jesus.