***John 15:4-6 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.***

Before Mother’s Day, we looked at a series of sermons that examined the way people viewed Jesus. Many believed in His abilities but missed His Divinity. Jesus asked and still asks – Who do You say I Am? He instructs us to be believing and not unbelieving. We have a choice – who do we say He Is? We say He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. We say He is the Resurrection, He is the Truth, He is our Lord and our God. It’s critical that we KNOW who Jesus is… it is equally important that we KNOW who we are in Jesus. Lord willing, the next few weeks, we will look at this. Who does Jesus says we are in Him? Who do we say He Is? Who does He say we are? Isn’t it exciting to know that Jesus knows exactly who we are in Him?

In Galatians 2:20, Paul says - *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* In John 15:4 Jesus instructs us *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.* Abide, meaning to dwell, stay present in Me. Recall that Jesus told Thomas, “Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” Be, exist in belief. Jesus tells His disciples to dwell in Him and He will dwell in us. Paul says – it is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me. We become inseparable from Christ. In time, we become indistinguishable. Where does Christ end and I begin? This is our first lesson - What Christ says about us depends on where we have chosen to abide. In verse 3, He says that we are already clean because of the word He has spoken. When we are cleaned by repentance and belief in the Son of God, when we know who He is, when we know He is the Word become flesh, sent to bring salvation and reconciliation, we abide in Him and He abides in us. No one bears the fruit of the Kingdom of God unless we are connected to the vine, to our source. To bear fruit, we must abide in the vine.

Verse 5 says *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*Now, we get a picture of the fruit bearing believer. I am the vine. In verse 1, Jesus says I am the true vine, the One true Source. In order to bear much fruit, we must abide **in** Him. The word **in** holds the idea of being wholly committed to. When we are tightly fastened to Christ, devouring His word, spending time in His Presence, serving Him by serving others, we bear much fruit. We are drawing from the source and out of our heart will flow rivers of living water, as John 7:38 says. With Jesus, much fruit! Why? Because we are positionally connected and abiding in Him, drawing from the Source. Without Him we can do nothing – the Greek means – not even one thing. Jesus knows us by our connection, through our belief. In Matthew 7, He says that there will be those that said, “Lord, Lord” doing many things in His name and He will say to them, “Depart from Me. I never knew you” because they did not do the will of the Father, which flows through the one True vine, into the branches attached to Him. He’s the only Way to the Source

Verse 6 -*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.* Jesus knows those that abide in Him, attached tightly, devouring His word, spending time in His Presence, and serving Him by serving others. He knows His branches. He knows His hands and feet. He knows His sheep. Likewise, He knows those that do not abide. The abiding He calls disciples. Those not abiding He calls workers of iniquity, as in Luke 13:28. They that choose not to abide, those who are told to depart because Christ never knew them, wither and are cast out, because they have no source of the Living Water. They are detached from the one True Vine.

Listen to what Jesus says in verse 8 - *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.* How do we bear much fruit? By abiding in Jesus and welcoming Jesus to abide in us. What is the result of us bearing much fruit? The Father is Glorified!! How exciting!! And Jesus then tells us who He says we are when we abide. You will be My disciples. When we believe and abide in Jesus, who does He say we are? His disciples.

This week, let’s take a hard look at how we’re abiding. Are we clinging closely or hanging on loosely? We can tell by our fruit. Are we bearing great baskets of Kingdom fruit that glorify God? Or are we offering empty baskets of withered excuses destined for the fire? Not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of God. Let’s cling and call Jesus Master, Savior, the Christ, the Son of the Living God and let’s listen in Joy as the voice of our Shepherd calls us His disciples. Who does He say we are? His disciples and we praise Him for it today.