



Words for the Way

An online Lent Course for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

Vine and Branches

Wednesday 10 May



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John 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 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."

In today's Gospel reading Jesus speaks of himself being the vine and those who believe in him as the branches. Vines need careful pruning, sometimes cutting back beyond what looks necessary or useful but the result is fruitfulness and a stronger tree. What might be the things in your life that you're being challenged to consider pruning back or the parts of your life that need more nurturing to strengthen your relations with the vine, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Only A Branch by Freda Hanbury

"Tis only a little Branch,
A thing so fragile and weak,
But that little Branch hath a message true
To give, could it only speak.

“I’m only a little Branch,
I live by a life not mine,
For the sap that flows through my tendrils small
Is the life-blood of the Vine.

“No power indeed have I
The fruit of myself to bear,
But since I’m part of the living Vine,
Its fruitfulness I share.

“Dost thou ask how I abide?
How this life I can maintain?—
I am bound to the Vine by life’s strong band,
And I only need remain.

“Where first my life was given,
In the spot where I am set,
Upborne and upheld as the days go by,
By the stem which bears me yet.

“I fear not the days to come,
I dwell not upon the past,
As moment by moment I draw a life,
Which for evermore shall last.

“I bask in the sun’s bright beams,
Which with sweetness fills my fruit,
Yet I own not the clusters hanging there,
For they all come from the root.”

A life which is not my own,
But another’s life in me:
This, this is the message the Branch would speak,
A message to thee and me.

Oh, struggle not to “abide,”
Nor labour to “bring forth fruit,”
But let Jesus unite thee to Himself,
As the Vine Branch to the root.

So simple, so deep, so strong
That union with Him shall be:
His life shall forever replace thine own,
And His love shall flow through thee.

For His Spirit’s fruit is love,
And love shall thy life become,
And for evermore on His heart of love
Thy spirit shall have her home.

