

Home Church Package – Sunday, May 2 2021
By Rev. Julie Lebrun - Inlet United Church, Port Moody BC

Greetings to everyone reading this Take Home Worship. I hope you are keeping well and safe

Opening Prayer

(Praying with the Earth, page 18 – Philip Newell)

It is in the depths of life that we find you
at the heart of this moment
at the centre of our soul
deep in the earth and its eternal stirrings.
You are the Ground of all being
the Well-Spring of time
Womb of the earth
the Seed-Force of stars.
And so at the opening of this day
we wait
not for blessings from afar
but for You
the very soil of our soul
the early Freshness of morning
the first Breath of day. Amen..

Scripture: John 15: 1-8 (NRSV)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. 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.

Reflection

I've always liked this scripture. I like the idea of being a vine and connected to God. Connected to the "deep in the earth and its eternal stirrings, the Ground of all being, the Well-Spring of time." That we are connected to a life force/energy/love beyond our understanding...is well...beyond our understanding. I don't think we make this happen. And I think we can do things to be "good soil." To help make this Grace possible. Spiritual practice of prayer and scripture reading, worship, listening to and writing sermons all help me...and being part of a congregation with fellow pilgrims on a journey helps us all. So does walking in nature, having a good conversation, listening to music and making good food for family and friends (I really miss this!)

I spent some time in prayer with this scripture using the practice of Lectio Devina, which means divine reading, to see what else God through this scripture has to say to me at this time. I invite you to do the same with this scripture reading. I will share with you what I learned for myself at this time. It will change over time and be different for all of us.

After reading it the first time, ask yourself, "what word or phrase stands out for you?" For me, it was "pruning... we bear more fruit"

After the second time reading, ask yourself, "what words/ideas are speaking to you at this time?"

For me, it was again, "pruning, we bear more fruit." Mmm, how interesting I thought...by cutting back there is actually more growth and a better harvest. Somehow pruning or cutting back we end up with more.

After the third time reading, ask yourself, "what is this scripture prompting me to do or not do. How am I being called to behave/act?"

For me I'm understanding that I need to prune back and not try and do everything I want to do at the same time. I'm learning that by focusing on less things...and focusing better on one thing at a time, the results will be better.

I'm the kind of person that often has lots of different things going on at once. I do like variety! I know a few lines from a poem by John O'Donohue that reads:

"All that is eternal in me
Welcomes the wonder of the day,
The field of brightness it creates
Offering time for each thing
To arise and illuminate".

For a time, I read this poem a lot and I was repeating the last 2 lines in my head. At least I thought I was. But I had changed the words in my own mind and was saying "allowing time for all things" instead of "offering time for each thing" like the poem is written.

When I noticed this...it was an “ah ha moment.” It may seem like a subtle difference, but I know I live much more connected to the Holy Presence when I “offer time for each thing” rather than “allow time for all things.” I enjoy what I’m doing, can give it my full attention, and I suspect, bear a better fruit. Perhaps this is the pruning that the Gospel writer of John is talking about.

Closing Prayer

May your week be blessed
My your moments be focused
May you enjoy the gift of one thing at a time
May you share a gentle, loving presence
with yourself and those you talk with.

I will be away for a few weeks on holidays and look forward to being back with you late May.

Blessings,
Julie