



REVEILLE'S GPS WEEKLY SCRIPTURE GUIDE

Explore scriptures and daily devotionals that reflect on this Sunday's sermon message.
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April 22-28, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sermon Title: "Grape Growing 101: Part 1 – Pruning and Abiding"
by Rev. Dr. Pete Moon

**Use the space below to reflect on the questions in this week's devotionals,
make class and sermon notes, and write down prayers and concerns.**

Questions for Small Groups and Individuals (After Sermon):

1. Name a person you know (or have heard of) who seems to be an example of this fruit of which Jesus speaks.
2. The second point of the sermon is that God "prunes us" to make us more fruitful. Tell a story of pruning in your yard or garden. How did that go? Did it enhance the fruit or flowers?
3. If comfortable, tell a story of a time when you felt God was "pruning" you. Did you find yourself more fruitful?
4. The final point of the sermon is about how we "abide" or "remain" in the vine. This most typically happens when we are in a community with the people who call Jesus Lord. Describe some ways that you have found that spiritual nourishment in this place or another.
5. Jesus speaks pretty harshly about the no-fruit branches. How do you hear those words? Are they harsh or are they refining words of One who loves us enough to do whatever it takes to enable us to reach our spiritual fullness and potential? Be honest!

Monday, April 22: Read Isaiah 5:1-7

Today we begin preparing for a two-week sermon series focused on the theme of producing fruit in our lives, entitled "Grape Growing 101". Before reading Jesus's famous teaching regarding this subject in John, we begin with today's poetic and prophetic introduction to this theme that can serve as our "exhibit A" in providing evidence that God loves fruit; God *expects* fruit. In this prophetic passage, Israel is described as having been provided everything needed to offer fruit to the nations but proved unable. "Grape Growing" is not an option for us; it is an expectation God has for us. Let us take a moment to allow today's scripture to both convict us (how high would we rate ourselves in our life's "fruit yield"?) and empower us to more intentionally yield fruit in our lives.

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Take a few minutes to discuss your definition of God's "fruit" with others. What does it look like?*

Tuesday, April 23: Read John 15:1-6

So where do we begin in producing abundant fruit? Jesus gives us the exact answer in today's scripture – by *pruning* and *abiding*. This incredibly practical advice is as simple as it is difficult. First, we must prune away everything in our lives that is not producing fruit or preventing us from producing fruit. Sounds impossible? It is. That is, it's impossible to do on our own. That's why we must also abide in Christ, who strengthens us, feeds us, and guides us. Every one of us has pruning to do in our lives, usually in the form of false idols stealing our time, attention, and resources. Every one of us has fallen short of fully abiding in Christ.

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Pick one thing to prune and one new habit that will help you abide in Christ more fully each day. Why did you pick these two things? How will they make a difference?*

Wednesday, April 24: Read Acts 8:26-40

It's tempting to believe that producing fruit for God must involve wide-sweeping actions that produce immediate, obvious results. In our rush to create an impact on the world, we can miss the most important opportunities to plant seeds that will ultimately yield the most. Today's story of Philip's conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch can be very convicting if we dare ask ourselves, "Would I have slowed down and given this single person this much of my time?" We are not sure who this man from Ethiopia was; some traditions say he became the founder of the Coptic Christian Church. We will never know for sure, just as we will never know the full extent of the seeds we plant when we work to bear fruit for God.

- **Discipleship and Relationship Opportunity:** *Discuss with others times when you planted a seed, only to find out much later that it bore great fruit. Discuss one way your group or family could plant seeds today, with no expectation of immediate results.*

Thursday, April 25: Read 1 John 4:7-21

Today's scripture doubles down on the teaching that we cannot bear fruit without abiding in God, then reminds us of a seemingly obvious but tragically overlooked and forgotten point: that we cannot truly bear fruit unless it is rooted in love. We are not doing God's work when we are not doing it in love. We are not bearing fruit when we are doing it out of resentment, selfishness, or pride. If we do not know love, we do not know God. Abiding in Christ means abiding in the love "perfected in us" through God's grace

- **Study Opportunity:** *Research how many of Jesus's teachings dealt with the theme of love.*

Friday, April 26: Read Psalm 22:25-31

Abiding in Christ involves being rooted in worship and praise of our Creator, in union with all creation. Today's psalm gives us a common language to express this, calling on us to remember the poor, the foreigners, and the future generations who depend on us to care for one another and the earth. We are all called to bear God's fruit, together as one, for the praise and glory of God's name and the bringing of God's kingdom on earth. What will this ultimately look like? What will it begin to look like in each of us today?

- **Study and Discipleship Opportunity:** *Find a Bible verse that will serve as a daily reminder to prune and abide in God, for the glory of God and the healing of God's creation.*

Saturday, April 27: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: John 15:5

"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."

Sunday, April 28: Let us prepare our hearts and minds by praying our Prayer of Common

Confession: *Gracious Lord, we confess our lack of trust in you. You desire to prune us, but we don't trust your hand on the shears. You have promised that as we abide in you, we will bear fruit, but we seek our nourishment from other sources. You have called and created us to bear much fruit, but we are fine with being fruitless. In your mercy forgive us. Draw our hearts and souls to your loving hand. Multiply our work so that we bear the fruit of your kingdom for our lives, our families, and our community. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.*