

Sermon Series: Rooted
Sermon Title: "Come Closer"
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Date: October 24, 2021
Scripture: John 15:1-11

Key Verses: "I am the **true** vine... [a]bide 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." (1a, 4)

Passage Summary

In this very familiar passage, Jesus characterizes himself as a vine and his disciples as the branches. Jesus admonishes his followers that they can only bear fruit if they remain connected to him, just as a branch can only bear fruit by being connected to the vine. This passage follows Chapter 14 in which Jesus speaks of his impending death. Chapter 15 serves as a reminder that even though Jesus's earthly presence will soon be no more, Jesus's followers must continue to remain close to Him.

Sermon Summary

It can be difficult to remain centered in the midst of uncertain times. How to remain rooted even if life is upended can be a difficult task. You can be shaken by pain and peril which upends your life or you can be shaken by your own sense of power and privilege. In whatever circumstances, we must remain close to Jesus. Jesus is not only the vine; Jesus is the TRUE vine. While there are other vines which try to pull us in or which we hold onto, Jesus is the one vine you can always count on. In this passage, even though Jesus is about to leave his disciples He reminds them they will be closer to Him than ever before if they would abide in Him. Though they will be socially distanced, they can remain socially connected. Similarly, Jesus wants our relationship with him to grow deeper. Jesus wants us to abide in Him. From Him, we can access strength like no other. We have no life apart from the true vine. And, in order to come closer to Jesus, we must also come closer to each other. As we grow in community, actively engaging in the work of ministry, as our relationships with God's people deepen, so does our relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways has the pandemic drawn you closer to God?
2. Are there ways the pandemic has caused distance between you and God? If so, how?
3. What keeps you rooted in God during times of pain or peril?
4. What keeps you rooted in God during times of power and privilege?
5. How has our congregation and community grown closer during times of pain or peril?
6. How can our congregation help others grow closer to God and to each other?