

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. ✠

This reading falls at the end of Chapter 15, Christ is preparing his disciples for his departure, the ascension that we celebrated Thursday is on His mind, He knows He is going to the Father and the disciples must be prepared for that. But He also is preparing you for your life. For the time ahead. This is the last Sunday of Easter, next Sunday is Pentecost where we celebrate and rejoice that Christ has sent us the helper, and then we begin the long green season of Trinity. Once again, we work through the life of Christ, and once again, the festivities begin to dwindle as we settle into everyday life. To this and to his disciples, he says, “I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you”.

What Christ has taught the disciples, what he has warned and instructed them about, is so that they might be remembered. Christianity, the faith, is bound up in the remembrance of Christ. But what exactly are we to remember? Is it merely that we will be tried and tested and persecuted by the world? Or is there something more?

Just before our reading for today is the great I am the vine passage, Christ is reminding his church that he is the vine from which life comes. That he is the one who conquered death. That he is the one alone who bears good fruit. He is reminding his apostles and he is reminding you today, that without Christ, without him, we can do nothing. He says: **“Abide in me, and I in you. 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. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. “**

This, along with the commandment to love one another, is what Christ implores his disciples to remember. It is what he instructs you to remember. You can do no good apart from Christ. Without him, your works are filthy rags. The world will tell you that you can do it on your own. They will point to men and women who have done such great acts of heroism that we are tempted to think they are good, that they did it on their own. But without Christ, even those who give the ultimate sacrifice, who give up their lives and we glorify, themselves can do no good thing. It is easy to make heroes into

role models, but let us remember what makes sacrifice worthwhile: Christ's love. Without it, it doesn't make a difference if men and women give their lives for ours, because eventually evil will rise up again, eventually all of us will pass away. Without Christ, we are simply delaying the inevitable judgment of our sin. Without Christ, we are waiting for damnation. Nothing more.

But with Christ, with Christ we have hope, we have hope that we do not await our condemnation, but we await Christ's glory. We have hope that just as Christ took our place, gave his life for ours, so too does he give us his righteousness. No longer do we need to fear judgment day, no longer do we need to fear death. We can boldly stand in the breach, face the void of death with a joyful heart, knowing that Christ has gone before us and he has not delayed death but destroyed it. His death does not delay the inevitable but enacts eternal change.

It is this that Christ tells you to remember. Not quietly in your head but proudly and boldly to the world. Remembrance is more than an intellectual exercise but a real tangible thing. You are no longer marked for hell and damnation, but the blood of God dripping forth from his side has been shed for you. You have been grafted into the vine that is life itself. You have been made one with Christ, and your sins your condemnation, have been paid. Remember this: and confess it! There is nothing left to fear. It doesn't matter if you are beaten, killed, made fun of, scorned, or ridiculed. To boldly confess Christ means you will. Christ warns his disciples of this, but tells them to confess anyway, to remember his words anyway. He commands them to remember, to tell others about him, to have the stories of his life upon our lips and our hearts, and to join together in remembrance of him around his Holy supper, which he bids us do in remembrance of him.

It is a daunting task to be sure. There are those who do not know the Father who will beat and mock and scorn you. But our Lord has already been beaten far more than we, he has been mocked far worse than us. He has borne the fullness of this world's hatred. We should not be surprised when we find ourselves enduring the same. The servant is not above his master. But this is a blessing, that we would remember once again the words of Christ. HE alone is the vine, He alone enables us to do good. Without him we are nothing, our own strength cannot pull us through, our own winsome

charm and humor cannot turn hearts to God. Christ alone does this. We are weak and helpless, but Christ is our strength and our life. He has warned us of the trials so that we may not fall away. He has given us his testimony so that we might know who is in control.

It is of no coincidence that Christ institutes the sacrament of the altar, telling the very same disciples to do this in remembrance of him. Remembrance once again is linked to an action. Remember Christ, remember the one who has given you life, who sustains you in tribulation, and take and eat. Remember the one who has shed his blood upon a cross so that you might be set apart from the world and from your sin and given eternal life, and take and drink. The command to remember is linked to the supper. It is linked to the hearing of the words of Christ. Let us gather and hear the words of Christ, tell of his glory, and remember him in his supper, given and shed for the forgiveness of sinners. Given and shed for you.

✠ In the name of Jesus. Amen. ✠