

God is love

Notes on the Bible readings

- A self-contained story of gospel fruit, the passage from Acts describes Philip being sent into the wilderness to speak to a eunuch from the courts of Ethiopia (modern-day Sudan). In spite of the fact that the Gentile eunuch would not have been accepted by the Jews, or allowed in the Temple since he was castrated, the man was desperate to know more of God. Despite the religious and cultural divide, Philip puts his discomfort aside and engages with him – great fruit grows from their conversation as the man is baptized. The Ethiopian was the first convert from such a distant land.

- John's letter makes it clear that love is a precursor to knowing God. God is love, and therefore our knowledge of him comes through loving each other, boldly and without fear (v.18).

- John 15 uses the poetic imagery of Jesus as the 'true vine' (v.1) and explores growth, and pruning and its benefits. Jesus makes it clear to his closest followers that the pain that comes with pruning is worth it for the fruit that it will bear. This applies both to us and to the spread of the gospel. Jesus promises that if we abide, or live in deep connection, with him, he will abide in us, nourish us and produce fruit in our lives. The challenge we find ourselves faced with is whether we are ready to be pruned by God's loving hand.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What did you last prune – and when?
- ▶ What might God want to prune in your life?
- ▶ How might our community become more fruitful?



A prayer of approach

*Loving God, just like the first disciples,
we abide in your love – for you have sent your Spirit to us.
Just like the early apostles, we have seen your glory in the person
of your Son.
So, we confess Jesus Christ as Lord, for we have known him in our
lives and believe what he has shown us of your love. Amen.*

A personal prayer

*Lord Jesus, you are the vine and I am one of the branches;
remove every branch from me that bears no fruit
and prevents healthy growth.
You are the vine and I am one of the branches;
help me to abide in you – in your words and in your love. Amen.*

A prayer for the week

*Abide in God as God abides in you,
then you will bear much fruit;
for apart from God we can do nothing. Amen.*

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Live your faith

Reflect prayerfully on your personal life. How might it change your relationship with God, and/or with other people, if you were to stop doing one thing?