



Sunday, June 28, 2026

Sermon: "The Vine and the Branches"

Text: John 15:5

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus says: "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." (John 15:5)

Think about a branch for a moment.

If you break a branch off a tree and leave it on the ground, what happens?

At first it still looks alive.

The leaves might even stay green for a little while.

But slowly it dries out. Eventually it dies. Why?

Because a branch only lives when it is **connected to the tree**.

Jesus says the same thing about us.

He says **He is the vine**, and **we are the branches**.

That means our life — real life — does not come from ourselves.

It comes from **being connected to Him**.

But here is the problem.

We like to imagine that we are independent.

We like to think:

"I can figure out life myself."

"I can fix my problems myself."

"I can make myself into a good person."

But Jesus says something very blunt.
“Apart from me you can do nothing.”
Not “you can do a little.”
Not “you can do some things.”
Nothing. As good as dead.

In fact, you and I make it worse by living as though God does not matter and as though you matter most. You have trusted in your own life more than the life He gives.

Apart from Christ, we are like branches cut off from the vine.

We try to find life in other places.
Success.
Popularity.
Good vibes.

They cannot give life—and apart from Christ, we remain cut off and dead in sin.

Without the Vine, we don’t just wither and die.
We are gathered up and thrown into the fire to be burned.

This is what you and I deserve. This is where you and I were headed.

Yet, what does Jesus do?
He **attaches us to Himself**.
He attaches **you** to Himself.

The first place that happens is your **Baptism**.

In Baptism, Jesus has grafted you into Himself— The Vine!

Saint Paul says: “All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-5)

In Baptism you are **joined to Christ**.

Your life is no longer just your own.

It is **His life as your own**.

A life so powerful it raises even the dead to new life.

Yet, branches need constant life from the vine.

That is why the Divine Service exists.

Every part of the service is Christ **giving life to His branches**.
When we confess our sins and receive absolution,
Christ **cleanses you from sin – the disease within the branch**.

When we hear the Scriptures, Christ **speaks life into the branch** like sap flowing into branches.

In the Lord's Supper something even more remarkable happens.
Jesus says, "Take, eat; this is my body... given for you."

The vine gives *Himself* to the branches.
His body.
His blood.
His forgiveness.

So that His perfect life flows into you.

What happens when a branch stays connected to the vine?

Fruit begins to grow. Not because the branch tries harder but because the life of the vine is flowing through it.

That fruit looks like:
Love.
Patience.
Kindness.
Faithfulness.

You won't always see this fruit clearly in yourself.
Others may see it in you before you do. Christ is producing it.

Jesus does not say:
"Produce fruit so you can stay connected."

He says:

Be connected.

Abide in me.

Remain in me.

Not through a feeling of closeness but by resting in the ways He has promised to be with you through these means of His grace. Through Word and Sacrament in His Church.

That good fruit? It will come.

Because the life of the vine is stronger than the weakness of the branch.

That is what this divine service is about.

Not us doing something for God, but **Jesus giving life to His people.**

The Vine feeding the branches.

So that we may live and bear fruit because **Christ is our life.**

In Jesus's Name. Amen.

Written by Rev. Alex Timm, IMPACT chaplain