



**ST. MARK**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

## **Daily Devotional**

**Friday, November 4, 2022**

Pastor Eric Jay

**Prayer:** God our Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your gentle yet firm and righteous Hand that cares for us and leads us as we follow Your Son Jesus in faith each day. By Your Spirit, help us to love and thankfully receive Your Fatherly direction in our lives. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

### **Scripture: John 15:1-5**

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.*

### **Devotional – "Vinely Dressed"**

One of the most critical parts of successfully gardening is knowing how to properly dress and prune a plant or tree. As you probably know, pruning is where you use a set of sharp shears to carefully and strategically cut away branches and stems, both dead ones and living overgrowth, in order to facilitate the plants healthy and continued growth and fruitfulness. When you think about it, pruning seems a bit counterintuitive. How does cutting off parts of a plant or tree, especially healthy living parts, help the plant grow and remain healthy and fruitful? Well, as I have learned, proper pruning releases a plant hormone called auxin that is vital for a plant to live long and remain fruitful. When there is too much overgrowth or when a plant is weighed down with too much dead or dying material, the production of auxin is compromised along with the longevity and productivity of the plant.

No wonder Jesus likens our relationship with Him as one of pruning. As we go through life we are often weighed down by the dead or dying material that has fallen victim to the decay of sin and our sinful nature. Not only that, but we are also often found to be weighed down and our energy and spiritual vitality compromised by the overgrowth in our lives; by all the unnecessary things and distractions that pull us away and stand in the way of our relationship with Christ. On our own, much like a plant, we are powerless to prune ourselves. If left unattended, our sin and overgrowth threaten to zap the life out of us and prevent us from being as fruitful as God created us to be.

If we desire to see the blessings and fruitfulness in our life that God has promised us in His Word, then God must do the pruning. We must sit still long enough, and we must not resist God's tender and loving hand when He comes with His set of shears and desires to cut out all of the dead and dying parts of us and trim all of the overgrowth. It may seem counterintuitive to us at the time...we may not understand why God is taking away or is allowing things to be taken away or trimmed out of our lives...but God has promised that when we abide in Him and allow Him as the Master Creator and Gardener to have his way with us, we will bear much fruit indeed, because apart from Him who is the True Vine we can do nothing.

Thanks for joining me in these devotionals and remember that God has forgiven yesterday, is with you today and has already taken care of tomorrow. Amen.