
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe

"Connection in a Disconnecting World"

John 15: 1-17

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

"Christians feed on Scripture. Holy Scripture nurtures the holy community as food nurtures the human body. Christians don't simply learn or study or use Scripture; we assimilate it, take it into our lives in such a way that it gets metabolized into acts of love, cups of cold water, missions into all the world, healing and evangelism and justice in Jesus' name, hands raised in adoration of the Father, feet washed in company with the Son." - Eugene Peterson

"What a prodigal waste it appears to see scattered on the floor the bright green leaves and the bare stem bleeding in a hundred places from the sharp knife. But with a tried and trusted husbandman, there is not a random stroke in it all, nothing cut away which it would not have been a loss to keep and gain to lose." - Amy Carmichael

*"Spirit of the Living God, be the Gardener of my soul.
For so long I have been waiting, silent, and still –
Experiencing a winter of the soul. But now, in the strong
Name of Jesus Christ, I dare to ask:*

*Clear away the dead growth of the past,
Break up the hard clods of custom and routine,
Stir in the rich compost of vision and challenge,
Bury deep in my soul the implanted Word,
Cultivate and water and tend my heart,
Until new life buds and opens and flowers.*

Amen." - Carol Mullikin

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered? What is God showing you about Himself and yourself in this passage?

How do you manage and/or struggle with relationship to Jesus in his physical absence? Do you identify with the anxiety of the disciples as they try to wrap their heads around Jesus' departure and what that means for relationship to him?

When have you experienced a time or season of pruning? What got you through that? Have you realized any greater fruit from that experience?

What fruit do you want to see in your own life and in the life of our church? How can we better produce the distinctive fruit of the true vine?

What do you make of Jesus considering you a beloved friend rather than a slave?