

For Such a Time as This

A Daily Devotional

Friday, April 26, 2024



From John 15:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. 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. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.

In the passage, Jesus addresses his disciples and assures them that whoever abides in him, he will abide in them. The promise is that whomever Jesus calls his own, he will come and make his home with them: he will not abandon them nor forget them.

Such good news is difficult for us to really accept. Martin Luther, the great Reformer, put it this way:

It’s very difficult for a man to believe that God is gracious to him. The human heart can’t grasp this. This also happened to me as a boy in my homeland when we sang in order to gather sausages. A townsman jokingly cried out, ‘What are you boys up to? May this or that evil overtake you!’ at the same time, he ran toward us with two sausages. With my companion, I took to my feet and ran away from the man who was offering his gift. This is precisely what happens to us in our relation to God. He gave us Christ with all his gifts, and yet we flee from him and regard him as our judge.

Shirley Guthrie, the late-great Presbyterian theologian of the last century, intensifies this assurance:

God is love. God is not sometimes loving and sometimes unloving, today loving some people and hating others, and tomorrow perhaps changing sides to love those who were previously hated and hate those who were previously loved. In *everything* God does, *always*, in dealing with *all* people, God is a *loving* God.

As Christians then, we must live and move and have our being with the full confidence that God’s love is real and expressed fully and completely in his Son, Jesus Christ AND that WE are recipients of that grace. We must operate from this place of trust; trust in God’s love for us and for this world and his willingness to abide with us.

Prayer for the Day: (From *The Book of Common Worship*)

Great and glorious God, give us breath to sing of your majesty and with all creation praise you as the true life of all; through Jesus Christ, Amen.

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