

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church  
“Staying Connected” 12 – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020

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*Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way*

As the lockdown rules begin to ease just a little, we continue to trust God for His help and protection – and for patience...

This week’s joke:

Q: Who is the shortest man in the bible?
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*Answer on back page*

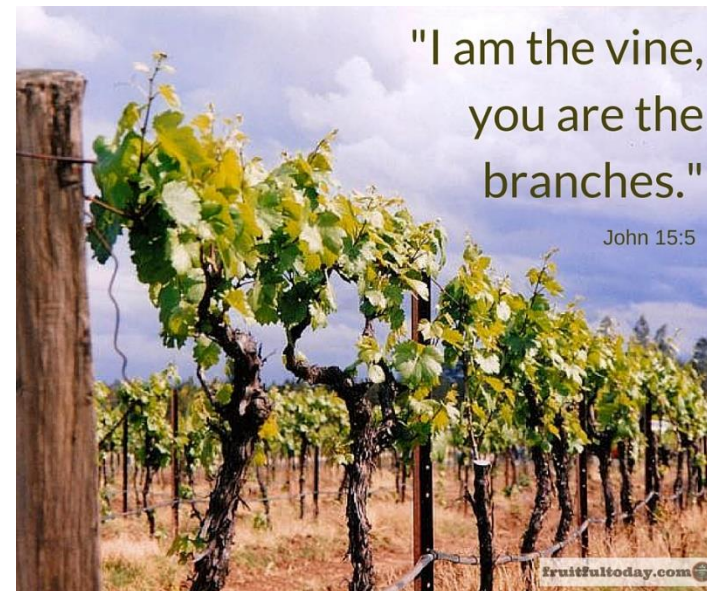
The seventh and last of our series on the “I am” sayings of Jesus. This week, “I am the true vine” (John 15:1) [John 15:1-17]

It resonates very much with our ‘Staying Connected’ theme.

The vine had become symbolic for the nation of Israel. But Jesus was saying that a living relationship with Him was what counted as the most important thing – as He fulfilled the requirements of the OT law. He was the true vine.

Furthermore, His hearers (the disciples) - and that includes us, by way of our union with Christ – are considered branches – part of this vine (!) – and as we remain in fellowship with Him, we are fruitful....

We all know that fruit is good for you. And God’s fruit – of love and kindness, is always good. We are bearers of that fruit...



This highlights the importance of staying connected... to Jesus, the true vine; and to each other – as we are the branches. And in staying connected, we bear fruit. We can’t live the Christian life independent from God – of course not - nor each other either. We are connected by fellowship in Him. And so we bear fruit...

In practical terms, and in ‘lock-down’ in particular we need to continue to find ways to stay connected. The following are just some suggestions be way a reminder – I hope it’s useful:

- Read the bible a little each day
- Pray – as you can, not as you can’t
- Think of something practical you can do to help or encourage someone else – maybe pick up the ‘phone...
- Similarly, sometimes there is a season for us to receive help
- Tune in to some of the services available
- Remember God’s love for you is constant and amazing, and doesn’t depend on anything we do!

Lord God, our heavenly Father,  
We bring our prayers for a world You care about...

In the midst of the recent racial tensions, we pray for calm and peace  
– and for dignity and respect; for justice and love to prevail.

This week we pray for... grocers, gardeners, gym instructors...  
handymen, hairdressers, heating engineers... guide them in their  
occupations, help them in the uncertainty; and bless their families.

We pray Lord, for those seeking to mitigate the effect of the  
Coronavirus pandemic – those providing medical care, those in  
government and the scientists providing advice... and for all of us:  
strength, wisdom and patience.

For those experiencing significant difficulties indirectly as a result  
of the pandemic – bring Your help and respite, we pray

Lord Jesus, You are the vine and we are the branches. Help us to  
remain in You and You in us, that we may bear fruit that will last  
(John15:16) – all this to the Father's glory

We join with our brothers and sisters across the world in our prayers  
“May Your kingdom come”

Amen

For next time:

Next week we begin a new series looking at extracts from the letter  
of Colossians and how that might speak to us today. You might  
like to look ahead at that letter: 4 short chapters packed with  
amazing truths and nourishment for us...

For those not online, especially:

Worship services on Radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 10:45am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace.

Mike

01564 793975

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in  
my love.” (John 15:9)

*Answer to joke:*

Bildad the Shuhite (Job 2:11)

[‘Shoe – height’ ?!]