

with God through Jesus Christ. Jesus, as the incarnational presence of God in the world, offered teachings, miracles and a relationship to others that demonstrated God's grace and love. Ask yourself the same questions from the previous paragraph about Jesus. Do you find him charismatic? Attractive? Like-minded? We connect with God and Jesus Christ through the study of scripture, prayer, meditation and worship. Consider the question posed today, meditate upon them and write your thoughts here.

### **Thursday, September 12**

As you read John 15:1-8 once again search for clues on how one connects with Christ. Also look for what happens when that connection is severed. There is much more implied by Jesus' words than a relationship; Jesus is saying that he wants us to abide in him and he in us. Jesus wants to be in us! The Apostle Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:19-20)

The process of begin "crucified with Christ" is ridding ourselves of the things that separate us from God and Jesus Christ. This involves the Biblical concept of pruning. God (the vine grower) prunes us so that we may be connected to Jesus (the vine) and therefore be fruitful. Pray for the courage and willingness to be "pruned" for God's purposes.

### **Friday, September 13**

Read Galatians 5:16-26. The message ended with the concept of being connected to God for the purpose of bearing fruit. Paul offered the Galatians (and us) what fruit we should bear for the world. What fruit do you believe you are bearing for the world and in your relationships as a follower of Jesus Christ? Write your thoughts here and ask God for insights into bearing and sharing these spiritual fruit.

## **Message Notes – September 8, 2024**

# ***Our Mission: Connecting With God \****

- I. Words are important as they communicate our \_\_\_\_\_, inspire our \_\_\_\_\_ and move us toward \_\_\_\_\_. Words can bind us together for a common purpose.
  - A. That is why \_\_\_\_\_ are important if crafted well and followed up in ways that are significant.
  - B. If we truly believe that we have something to offer the communities in which we live and serve; if we truly believe that we have something to offer the world – then we must be clear about our \_\_\_\_\_ as a congregation.
  - C. Each phrase of our Mission Statement reflects an area of ministry in our ministry \_\_\_\_\_.
    1. \_\_\_\_\_ Ministries are designed for us to Connect with God.
    2. Our \_\_\_\_\_ Ministries lead us to Connect with Others.
    3. Our \_\_\_\_\_ Ministries move us toward Changing our World with Christ's love.
- II. Our scripture from John's gospel begins with Jesus saying that he is the "true \_\_\_\_\_," the source of growth and fruit-bearing, in a vineyard that is tended by the "Father." Jesus said, "My Father is the \_\_\_\_\_."
  - A. Jesus obviously knew a little about \_\_\_\_\_. He knew that the best way to tell what kind of grapes and wine you would get is to know from which \_\_\_\_\_ the grapes were harvested.

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\*John 15:1-8 and I John 3:18-24

- B. The source of what is produced in our lives spiritually isn't a place but a \_\_\_\_\_ — \_\_\_\_\_ himself.
- C. While the vine is the source for good fruit, there's a vital link between the vine and its fruit. The "\_\_\_\_\_" are thus the focus of Jesus' teaching with his disciples.
- D. "I am the vine," says Jesus to his followers, "\_\_\_\_\_ are the branches" (v. 5).

- III. The question we must deal with as we consider this first portion of Mission Statement is "How do we best stay \_\_\_\_\_ to the "true vine"?" How do we \_\_\_\_\_ with God?
- A. This is where I must lift up the concept of spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ that deepens our relationship with Christ; this is what the Biblical principle of "\_\_\_\_\_" comes in.
  - B. Reading, meditating and praying through the Scriptures is one way in which disciples are "\_\_\_\_\_."
  - C. For generations the mantra of the church has been "church growth." We would do well to notice that Jesus doesn't call the branches to \_\_\_\_\_, he calls it to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - D. The key is to connect with God. Jesus says that we must "\_\_\_\_\_ " in him. He says, "I am the vine, you are the branches."

## ***Daily Meditations and Study Guide***

The following is a daily meditation and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, September 9**

Read John 15:1-8. Spend today thinking about the importance of words. Words are important as they communicate our thoughts, inspire our lives and move us toward action. Words can bind us

together for a common purpose. Think about what words are important to you and how they enrich your relationships with others. Review the scripture you just read. What words capture your attention? What have particular meaning for you? Write your thoughts here and pray that God will open you to the deepest meaning of words.

### **Tuesday, September 10**

Read John 15:1-8 and I John 3:18-24. Our Mission Statement, adopted last fall is "***Central Church: Connecting with God. Connecting with Others. Changing our world with Christ's love.***" These are words that have come to mean something to people in our church however, if they do not communicate our thoughts or inspire our lives and call us to action, these words have no power. That is why the leadership of our church is moving beyond these mere words, recognizing that they provide structure for our ministry and a pathway for discipleship.

Take a moment and read our Mission Statement again. Meditate on the words and their meaning for you. How do you interpret these words? Do these words inspire or call you to action? Write your thoughts here and pray that these words will bind our congregation together toward a clear and great purpose.

### **Wednesday, September 11**

Read John 15:1-8. Have you ever met someone new or reconnected with an old friend and thought to yourself, "We really made a connection!"? What does it mean to make a connection with someone? Does it mean that you found that person charismatic or attractive? Does it mean that you were of like mind or similar political persuasion? These may be difficult questions to answer with clarity.

Here's an even more difficult question. How do we make a connection with God? Christians believe we make a connection