

Beaminster Area Team

God our Father, renew our hope. By the Holy Spirit's power, strengthen us to pray readily serve joyfully and grow abundantly rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Week: 2nd May, 2021. Fifth Sunday of Easter

Old Testament: Genesis 22: 1-18

Psalm: Psalm 22: 25-31

New Testament: Acts 8: 26-40

Gospel: John 15: 1-8

Reflection on the Gospel reading by Revd. Fiona Beale

Whilst in Dorset I have walked past only one vineyard, but vineyards were familiar to Jesus' disciples. People passed vineyards as they walked from place to place. In today's reading Jesus is using a metaphor of a vineyard to help us better understand our spiritual journey, and how to be with him.

The vine was one of the quintessential plants of Israel. The vineyard in the Old Testament is often used to identify Israel herself. In the Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7, the vineyard is the "house of Israel" that yields only the bad fruit of injustice and oppression.

When you work with vines you get to discern fruitful branches from those that are dead and will drain the vine's energy. Jesus is the vine, and his father is the vine grower, but when God prunes, he gets rid of the dead growth by cutting the fruitless vines off the vine, and puts them into the fire. Also he is pruning the excess to make the vines more productive. So how are we growing spiritually? "What fruit are we producing?" "How much?" "Is it an acceptable quality?" It's not about the quantity of fruit we produce in our lives but rather the quality. That's what Jesus is after. That is the deeper question he is asking. It is the invitation for us all to join in.

Collect for Fifth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

A Useful Telephone Link from The Church of England. This is a free number where you can listen to prayers, reflections and hymns and join in worship with others.



Worship to enjoy at home

BBC Radio 4, 8.10am, Sunday Worship; Songs of Praise BBC1 1.15pm