



"I am the *vine*. You are the *branches*. If anyone remains *joined to me*, and I to him, he will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me."

Adult Bible Study

Part I: Connected in Creation



Scriptural basis: John 15:1-17

Confessional basis: The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible teaches that God is the Creator. This fact is plainly stated in the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, which identifies God the Father as Maker of heaven and earth. God's work in creation was both intentional and purposeful. It was not an accident; it was not brought about by chance through a chain of events.

Everything that exists is the result of God's loving, creative power, not only the things pronounced "very good" on the sixth day (Genesis 1:31), but everything that exists, including each person on earth. This study will focus on God's continuing creative actions and our connection to Him through His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit, by the means of grace: the Word (Bible) and Sacrament.

JESUS CHRIST AS CREATOR

Although the Father is identified as the Maker in the Apostles' Creed, this is not His only work, nor was creation accomplished without all persons of the Trinity.

Read John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:13-16.

- Paying attention to the context of these passages, who is identified in these verses?
- What action is attributed to this person?

Now read Psalm 102:25-27 and compare these verses to Hebrews 1:10-12.

- Which of God's works are identified in these passages?
- Again, looking at the context, who does the writer of Hebrews identify as participating in creation?

It can be said that the Father created heaven and earth through His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit (for Scripture on the Holy Spirit, see Genesis 1:2, and Psalm 33:6). There was no strict division of labor; rather, it was a collaborative effort of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

JESUS CHRIST, THE VINE

Read our theme passage, John 15:1-6.

- How does this passage compare to the creation story? Do you see any correlation between the two?

Because we are creatures, created by God, we are completely dependent on our Creator.

This means we are contingent beings.

- How is God the Father, our Creator, pictured in this passage?
- How is God the Son, our Creator, pictured in this passage?
- How does this passage confirm our dependence on God?

Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

- Why does Paul use the word created?
- Compare the John 15 passage with this passage; how are they connected? (Pay particular attention to verses 4-5.)

God created all things through Jesus Christ, but each believer is created in Jesus Christ and must remain in Him in order to fulfill God's purpose for us. This is true for people of all abilities. Paul tells us we should walk in our good works, and Jesus calls our works fruit. All believers of all abilities produce fruit as a result of this Christ Connection. The works and fruit we produce is not our own; God prepares them for us. Jesus calls the Father the vinedresser, who tends and prunes the vine, enabling each branch to bear much fruit to His glory. Yet in order to produce we must remain on the vine, Jesus Christ.

- The Christ Connection, Jesus as the Vine and we as the branches, are seen in creation.
Does this change your view of who you are?
- How does knowing creation is a gift from Jesus make you feel about your abilities or disabilities?
- How does knowing creation is a gift from Jesus make you feel about people with disabilities?
- How should knowing creation is a gift from Jesus influence our relationships in the parish or congregation?