

John 15:5 When connected to Christ, all things are possible. Easter 6 /Mother's Day May 9, 2010  
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Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior...

God's Word about Jesus, our source of life and power, is written in John 15:5

This is Your word heavenly Father. Help us to live in Your truth. Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear Friends, in Christ,

How important is it to stay connected to Jesus? Jesus used a very clear illustration when He called Himself the vine and us the branches. We must stay connected to Him because He alone gives us eternal life! Only through Him does God answer our prayers. And, in these days there is plenty to pray about. The financial markets seem to drop with the slightest problem. People can't trust jobs to always be there with so many closings. How much confidence can people have in a nation, when a judge outlaws the National Day of Prayer, while others are seeking to erode Christian family values? Biblical truths regarding marriage of one man and woman for life are under attack. I wouldn't be surprised that soon there will be a law-suit to stop celebrating Mother's Day! Our country is already devaluing mother-hood as if being a parent is of no importance. They promote abortion over having a child and making sacrifices to care for it. But, God's Word describes children as a blessing of the Lord and it pictures women as having the most important role, bringing new life into the world and helping prepare that new soul for an eternity with God.

There is no doubt that today we need to be connected to Christ and His truth more than ever before! The sinful world wants us to think that we can be self-sufficient and decide our own course of life. But, on this celebration of Mother's Day, we are reminded that apart from Christ we have nothing that lasts, and we have no future. With married couples who don't have Christ, I could see why some have said, "the world is so bad we don't want to bring children into it." Yet, God has given us a completely different outlook and confidence. For we know that

### **When connected to Christ, all things are possible.**

We are Christians. So, **why is so difficult for us to do God's will?** In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was pictured as a vineyard that God had planted. He, like a farmer, was constantly caring for the plants. Isaiah wrote: "*He looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.*" (Isaiah 5:2) The people of Israel did not respond to the blessings that God had given them. Instead of the fruit of thankfulness, joy, and trust in the Lord they looked to other gods or gave themselves the credit.

God has set high standards for Christian families. Husbands are to love their wives unconditionally as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Wives are to obey and respect their husbands as Church honors Christ unconditionally. Parents are to bring up their children in knowing and loving the Lord. Children are to love and obey their parents just as they love and obey the Lord. We all are to love God and all people. How short we have fallen of God's commands! Is there an advantage to being connected to Christ or not? Of course there is! Many times we feel the guilt of our sins more than unbelievers because God's Word has made it clear to us the type of life we are to live. And when we live contrary to it, we know that we're sinners unworthy of God's love or forgiveness.

Why can't we take Jesus' warning more seriously, "*Apart from Me you can do nothing.*"? (v.5) A few days ago some of the students from the school were up at Camp Phillip, a Christian camp north of here. One of the challenges was stay balanced on a cable wire. There were two wires and on each wire a person facing the other. At first the wires were close together and the people could help each other balance. But, the further the two people moved down the set of wires, the further apart they moved until they fell. By faith we are walking along those lines. But our sinful nature is on a course moving us away from Christ. It is like the prophet Jonah, when God told him to go northeast to Ninevah, he got on a ship heading to the southwest. Our sinful nature tells us that we know better than God. It tells us that God won't be that angry if we sin. That is why we need God's Word. It states, "*You have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil; you have eaten the fruit of deception, because you have depended on your own*

*strength....” (Hosea 10:13) We never rely enough on Christ nor do we have enough confidence in God’s promises.*

We need to keep hearing Jesus’ warning daily – *“apart from Me, you can do nothing.”* Without Him we can’t do anything pleasing or acceptable to God. Psalm 127 states, *“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.” (Psalm 127:1)* No matter how hard we work, without Christ we will accomplish nothing!

Yet, **Jesus remains our constant source of blessing!** He said, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.” (v.5)* Why is God allowing our country to turn away from Him? Why does He allow so many things to challenge mothers and fathers, children, and all others? It is so that when we read or hear His promise to be our source of help in life, that we say, “thank you God for providing for us! Now we better understand that we can trust in You!” St. Paul wrote, *“I know what it is to be in need.... I can do everything through [Christ] who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:13)*

How do we get strength from Christ? Is there a faith filling station, where we can take our lives when empty? It is here in worship! We come empty as sinners and receive Christ’s forgiveness. When we hear that God, from pure love for us, sent His Son to die in our place, our faith grows and produces good in us. We think of our baptism and how it connects us to Christ’s death to wash away our sins and to give us a new life with God. We come to the Lord’s Supper as sinners and we leave forgiven in our crucified Savior.

We have no power of our own. But, God’s Word will *“not return empty, but accomplish what He pleases.” (Isaiah 55:11)* The first thing His Word tells us is that Christ lived in our place. Jesus did what the people of the Old Testament and the people of today failed to do. He offered His life as the perfect sacrifice to take away every sin. That news of Christ gives us strength to believe and live in Him as our Savior in order to follow God’s will. Paul wrote, *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)* Christ will produce that kind of confidence in us.

We need more time with Him and less time on everything else. Jesus said, *“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and the other things we need will be added to us! (Matthew 6:33)* We need Christ to motivate us! We need Christ to guide us through this troubling world. More than that, He can help us reflect His saving truths to others. The Bible states, *“Blessed is the one.... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD.... He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season....” (Psalm 1:1-3)*

What will our fruit be? When many in the world put down motherhood, we will uphold it as one of the greatest gifts of God for women. When the world devalues the life of the unborn, we will support the cause of saving unborn lives. When our country stops praying, we will make a greater effort to pray to God for our nation, for families, and for all needs. As Christians we will follow what God has established in His Word whether it’s popular or not. Yet, we aren’t just trying to improve our nation’s morals for parenting. Good morals won’t keep anyone out of hell. Only Christ can save a world of sinners. It is Christ who replaces our imperfect lives with His perfect life. These are the blessings we receive in Christ that we can make known to the world. So, we’ll let the unbelievers be fearful of life. With Christ we are not afraid. With His blessing, another generation of Christian children will be brought into this world. Mother’s Day will continue to be celebrated by Christians. For with Christ all things are possible! Amen.