

***Peace for the Journey ... May 7, 2010***

Scripture Reading: John 15:9-17

In the garden, we learn that healthy plants need to be both fed and pruned, and in the garden we learn that healthy plants are expected to bear fruit. We expect flowers to bloom, tomatoes to ripen, and vegetables to develop. We buy, sow, and cultivate seeds and seedlings from the garden center because we want our efforts to bear fruit -- literally. We may enjoy the process, but we also enjoy the outcome.

According to John's Gospel, God also expects His work in the world to bear fruit. The seeds God sows need to be nurtured for their growth in faithfulness. The Word of God is planted in human lives, and is fed and pruned (John 15:1-8) so that it will bear fruit in the world.

And according to John's Gospel, the primary fruit in God's garden is love. Not just physical love or emotional love, but God's love -- the love modeled by Jesus, the love shared by Jesus, the love lived by Jesus.

So take a close look at the garden of your life today. Is there any love growing there? If so, how much? Is it God's love? In the garden of your life, does God's love need to be fed by worship, prayer, or Bible study? Does God's love need to be nurtured in a Sunday School class or small group?

Also consider whether the garden of your life needs to be pruned. Is there any bitterness growing in your life which is choking out God's love? Is there anger? Hatred? Resentment?

Let these questions serve as an invitation to honest prayer. Remember that Jesus is the master of love. In his life, we truly learn how to bear the fruit of love. Ask him to teach you. And trust that he will.

Pray for pastors, musicians, worship leaders, sound technicians, Sunday School teachers, nursery workers, and everyone else who is preparing to serve God at Main Street and other churches on Sunday morning.