

CANTATE SUNDAY THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

04/29/18 Mt. Calvary, West View

ACTS 8:26-40, I JOHN 4:1-11, JOHN 15: 1-8

Hymns: Alleluia Jesus is Risen LSB #474,

Abide With Me, Fast Falls the Eventide LSB#878, Christ The Lord Is Risen Today LSB #469

Theme: The Abiding Word

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior

Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of St. John, the 15th Chapter:

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

He Is Risen! HIRIH;TIMCT!†

Cantate Sunday simply means that on this day, ðwe sing unto the Lord a new song,ö for He hath done Marvelous things. There are so many things that we do marvel at, if we simply take the time to notice God's handiwork. The first was in the opening of the eyes this day and being able to face yet another day. Every day is a gift from the Lord and we should rejoice and be glad for another day. Another is the wonderful opportunity to praise our God this day. So many people are missing out on the great opportunity to hear hymns, songs and spiritual songs and to participate in those great hymns. They are also missing out on hearing the forgiveness that comes from the Resurrected Christ, the whole reason for this celebration! And above all, they are missing out on the simple command to rest from their labor and hear the forgiveness that comes from the simple Word of God.

Ah, the Word of God. It is the very thing this world so desperately needs. Let me take you back

in history to the very ancient time of 1947. Can you recall what the significance of that year might have been? I will tell you. It marked the 100th anniversary of our beloved Synod. On that year, there was commissioned a publication, a book, entitled, simply, *The Abiding Word*. An excerpt from the preface, if I may: "Our Missouri Synod, in 1947, looks back on a century of its existence. The fourth generation is taking up the work in our part of the Lord's Kingdom on earth; and they are inheriting, undiminished and undiluted, the chief treasure which our Fathers came to these shores to save: The Word of Our God. . . Time has brought many changes. The world has changed. Our fathers spent many weeks at sea crossing the Atlantic; today we fly from coast to coast in a few hours. Life has changed; the hardships encountered by the pioneers of our Synod are unknown to their children. The language has changed. . . but the confession of the men of 1847 is still the confession of 1947." It is 2018. Is this still the same today, 71 more years removed? I say from a Church perspective absolutely. Indeed, we still have the same Abiding Word as drove the men from Germany to the New World so that we could do the command to teach and preach without interference the mighty Word of God that reminds us yet again that He Is Risen! HIRIH; TIMCT!

Yes, this is the abiding Word that makes us become what the Lord has promised us this day, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."* Perhaps, I need to make this point very clear. Apart from Christ, we can do nothing, not a single good thing at all. It is imperative that this be understood. In our sinful flesh, we think that we can do many things and certainly in our free will we believe that we can do many things. We even believe that we can simply pick up God's Word and completely understand it after only one pass. After all, we are smart. God gave us a brain and the ability to comprehend. My little niece, we have just found out, after 7 years of doing her government sanctioned elementary education, has a vision problem in which one eye is not as focused as her other eye so slightly that she has trouble reading so it

only affects her reading! Yet, she has never gotten low grades for it is her comprehension that has overcome the vision deficiency and hidden this malady from all. God is a wonderful God. He helps us in so many ways, yet, if we are truly honest with ourselves, we really are like the Ethiopian eunuch, and have no idea Who God is referring to in the prophecies, unless the spirit reveals it to us.

Indeed, it truly does make us pause to understand that we do not have the power to comprehend the Scriptures, unless the Holy Ghost reveals to us the understanding. The first understanding is that we begin the comprehension in faith, given by God to recognize the Word what we hear it, and believe it when it is heard. Having the Word in, with, and through us, means we have Christ, and believing said Word means we are part of Christ, grafted into the true vine. He gives us life and breath just as a grafted branch receives waters of life and nutrients to grow further still. This is the second understanding from the Holy Ghost. There is still another understanding, that we truly need to understand, or our ministry means nothing. ***“If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”*** This is a serious reality. If we decide NOT to remain grafted to the true Vine, we will wither. We will die. There is no if, ands, or buts.

It truly is so very important to remain in the solid Word of God, ***“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*** What if we find another that has fallen from the One True Vine, and is no longer nourished by the life-giving food and drink of God’s Word through the Word and Sacrament ministry? Ask, and it will be done for you. Simply hold your loved ones and your friends in prayerful consideration; ask the Great Physician of body and soul to help bring the wayward back to the pure Word of God and understand that He hold the keys to everlasting life and peace.

Indeed, our world is not any different 170 years removed from the start of our beloved synod, as John addressed in his epistle, ***“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they***

*are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*ö Sadly, this is most certainly true, that there are false prophets this day trying to remove God from our midst and take away our future believers. Yet, we can know when the voice we hear is God, for, *öevery spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore, they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.*ö It truly is easy to hear the Spirit of truth, when you remain in the truth. Jesus is the Truth, the Way and the Life. We do not come to the Father without Him, and we offer Him in truth to every man, woman, and child that needs to hear the sweet Gospel of Salvation. The Waters of Baptism are here for those need to be washed as the Ethiopian, and the food is offered to all that need comfort of forgiveness of all sins. Indeed, the offer is made not out of compulsion, but out of love, for, *öGod sent His Only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*ö We are saved by Christ alone, grafted into the True Vine by Baptism and faith. The Word of God truly does abide in you to make you believe and comprehend all He wants you to know that will bring you true peace in your days here on this earth and in the wonderful promise to come. As we wait patiently, let us help others know the True Vine as well.

He is Risen! HIRIH; TIMCT... *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

Let us show love in all we do. Alleluia! In His Most Holy Name, we Pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

AMEN+
Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment

ⁱ Congregation response: He Is Risen Indeed, Halleluiah!; This Is Most Certainly True!