

Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation

Trust God and Branch Out

Noel Kahl

November 5, 2004

The other night I asked my youth group the significance of July 30, 1956. In a honest voice, one of the Senior High youth answers, "Your birthday!" She was later embarrassed when she found out I said the year 1956. However, July 30, 1956; the day that congress adopted the motto for this nation to be 'In God We Trust.' This is a commonly heard phrased that is over used, it circulates on a gazillion pieces of money in the United States; dollars and coins. How many people do you think carry around money that says 'In God We Trust'? Probably close to everyone in this country has had some type of encounter with the phrase, but not all people may realize it. Does this motto have meaning in this world? Does this motto have meaning to you personally? Where is your trust?

The Scripture reading from John 15 I chose for today is a Parable that Jesus told to his disciples. Before I go further let me bring remembrance to what a parable is; a parable is a story or saying that uses common imagery to tell a message in an indirect way. So Jesus declares, "I am the true vine," and "you are the branches." A vine is a stem that upholds the whole plant and a branch has no life away from the vine. So to enter ourselves into this parable; Christ is the vine and we all are the branches. The branch can have nothing more than what the vine provides. We can not depend on

other branches alone; we must stay connected to other branches through the vine. We can not only depend on one another as Christians, but we must stay connected to Christ. You can not take two branches and keep them alive without a vine. The vine gives life to the branches just as Jesus gives life to you and to me. A branch will die if it does not stay connected to the vine. The vine bears fruit through the branches and Jesus bears fruit through us.

A branch must rely on the vine for strength and growth. When a branch is detached from a vine it only last for a few days and then dies. A branch needs to stay attached to the vine for continued growth. God is the giver of life and as Christians we need to see past ourselves and cling to God the everlasting and eternal source of knowledge that will give us wisdom and growth. Jesus bears fruit through his people. With Jesus we have everything and without him we have nothing. Jesus gives you life; do you pass that on to others? How do you make a difference in this world? What is the fruit that Jesus is bearing through you? The fruit God is looking for us to bear is the likeness of Jesus. In Galatians Paul writes that the fruit of the Spirit is; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

God prunes the branches that bear fruit. In Greek, Prune means cleans. A prune is definitely a fruit that cleans. More importantly God cleans those people who bear fruit. Pruning is removing aspects of our lives that do not produce fruit for God. God is the vine grower, the gardener. Pruning is to be done by God.

Jesus said "Abide in Me." To "abide" means "to remain in union, maintain a living communion, to maintain unbroken fellowship with another." You can chose to Abide in Christ each day. Jesus commands that we are to abide in him, no to bear fruit. When

you abide in Christ, bearing fruit will come naturally. Abiding in Christ, is trusting God and obeying his Word. Galatians 2:20 says, It is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me. I worked at a camp in Iowa after my freshman year and then at Rainbow Trail in Colorado after my sophomore year in college. I was bound to work in Colorado this past summer. However, I somehow ended up spending my summer in Anchorage, Alaska as a Youth Ministry Intern at a Church. When people found out about my summer plans, I would get responses like: Are you going to live in an igloo? Are there really people that live there? Why in the world would you go to Alaska, who goes there? To be honest, I initially did not really desire to go to Alaska for the summer; I was to be with my friends in Colorado working a second summer at camp. I ended up in Alaska and not knowing anyone upon my arrival. As I reflect, the reason I went to Alaska was because I chose to abide in Jesus Christ each day. Fear often comes in the way of having trust. In Isaiah 43 the Lord says, Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name and you are mine. Through prayer and time spent reading God's Word I developed trust and I knew that I was to go to Alaska. I left my familiar world and went to a new unfamiliar world. I was a branch, connected to the vine, Jesus Christ. I trusted God and obeyed his Word. It was through this experience that I learned so much about truly putting all of my trust in God. Trusting God is having the ability to rely on God for Guidance and following that guidance.

My aunt adopted a girl and so I have a new cousin and her name is Destiny. She absolutely loves my sister, but does not really care to attach to me because I have not been around her much. Destiny does not have trust in me. If I want to have trust with her I need to spend time with her. If you want to have trust with God, spend time with

God. Stay with God, In John 15:4 he says, "Remain in me and I will remain in you."

Doing this will create a deeper sense of trust.

I want to conclude with a quote from Henri J.M. Nouwen gives great thought about trust;

"To wait open-endedly is an enormously radical attitude toward life. So is to trust that something will happen to us that is far beyond our imaginings. So, too, is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life, trusting that God molds us according to God's love and not according to our fear. The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction. That, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control."

In whom do you trust? Draw near to God and God will draw nearer to you.

Spend time with God. Find trust in God and branch out.

MORNING WORSHIP
Friday, November 5, 2004

PRELUDE

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP/OPENING LITANY Psalm 100

L: Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;

C: Serve the Lord with Gladness and come before his presence with a song.

L: Know this: The Lord himself is God;

C: he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

L: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and go into his courts with praise;

C: give thanks to him and call upon his name.

L: For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting

C: and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

GATHERING SONG “Holy, Holy, Holy” LBW # 165

SCRIPTURE Galatians 5:22-26
John 15:1-5

MESSAGE “Trust God and Branch Out” Noel Kahl
Hometown: Parker, SD
Majors: Religion and Special Education

SONG “How Great Thou Art” #532 LBW

CLOSING PRAYER-

C: Abiding God, make us branches from your vine, Give us strength to bear the fruit of the Spirit in this world. Prune us when we need to be pruned so that we may be cleansed to bear the fruit of the Spirit. God, without you we are nothing, give us strength and wisdom as we go on our journeys. In your Holy and precious name we pray. Amen.

BLESSING
DISMISSAL

Thanks to Neil, Mary, Berta, and Rita for participating in worship today.

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Operation Christmas Child—Get your friends together and pack a shoe box for a child in need. The 1200 W. 28th St. theme house is sponsoring a drive now through November 16th. Brochures are available at the commons desk and at the chapel table. Come with your items and join our house for a gift-wrapping party Thursday November 18th. We'll have shoe boxes and wrapping paper available.

SEMINARY ADMISSIONS: Representatives of Luther Sem., Wartburg Sem, Trinity-Columbus, OH, Luther. Theo. Southern-Columbia, SC, Luth. Sch. of Theo-Chicago, Pacific School/Theo-Berkeley, Luth. Theo-Philadelphia, will be on campus Monday, Nov. 8. **Sign up for an appointment** for theological study, preparation for ordained ministry or programs in youth, family, education, music or counseling ministries.

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

SUNDAY - (7th) - Worship, 11 am - Rebecca Lund, Preacher;
Choros Liturgical Dancers

Bible Study on Exodus - Pr. Paul's Office, 10 am

MONDAY - (8th) - Worship, 10 am - Jillian Brown, Luther
Sem. - Seminary Reps. (Make appts. please)

TUESDAY - (9th) - Koinonia, 10 am - chapel

WEDNESDAY - (10th) - Holy Communion, 10 am - Amy
Snow, Chaplain - Sioux Valley Hospital

THURSDAY (11th) - Chair of Moral Values Student Panel (Ingrid
Arneson, Andrea Halverson, Brian Smith, Jaci Sutton) 10 am, 3-1
room

FRIDAY (12th) - Worship, 10 am - Ben Loven, Senior Speaker