

Lessons for The Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 29, 2018

Psalm 150 ~ *The final Psalm, calling for praise to God from all the instruments in the sanctuary.*

Acts 8:26-40 ~ *Philip baptized the Ethiopian, and God created new life along a desert road.*

1 John 4:1-21 ~ *Because God first loved us in Christ, we love God and show it by our care for others.*

John 15:1-8 ~ *Connected to Jesus, we are constantly renewed in a spiritual life that bears good fruit for God.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Easter Joy is a Lively Faith.

When the Ethiopian learned that Isaiah had described the suffering of Jesus who had died and risen again, he believed and asked Philip to baptize him. There in the desert the Holy Spirit started a new life in the most unlikely way. In his letter, John wrote that the deeds of love in our lives spring from the source of our faith, Jesus our Savior. Jesus told us the same thing: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Most gracious God, all the little things that I fret over today, You alone can guide and control. Thank You for taking charge of my life in the big things - like sin, forgiveness, and new life. Keep me connected to Jesus, my Savior, so that I may live for You today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God's greatest gift to us is spiritual life through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. Knowing God's love in Christ, we live with love toward each other in the way we use the material gifts God has also given us.

OFFERING PRAYER: Receive these gifts, O Lord, we pray, to glorify Your name;
We give them back to You this day, the One from Whom they came.
Bless them for building up Your church and caring for our neighbor;
May they bring goodly fruit for You and lead folks to the Savior. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: God is the source of our life and our love, whether the Spirit is creating new life from the water of Baptism along a desert road or nourishing it through the love that children of God show to each other. When we sever our connection to God in Jesus, our spiritual life withers and dies. Only by God's constant renewal in his Word are we able to live to give God the glory as we share his love with others.