

The Holy Spirit Preserves the Church



Miss Allen looked around the classroom and asked, “Who will volunteer to come up and write on the board?”

Several hands went up fast. But she noticed that Joe’s was first, so she nodded to him. “Come up, Joe, and write our new word for the day, which is *preserved*.”

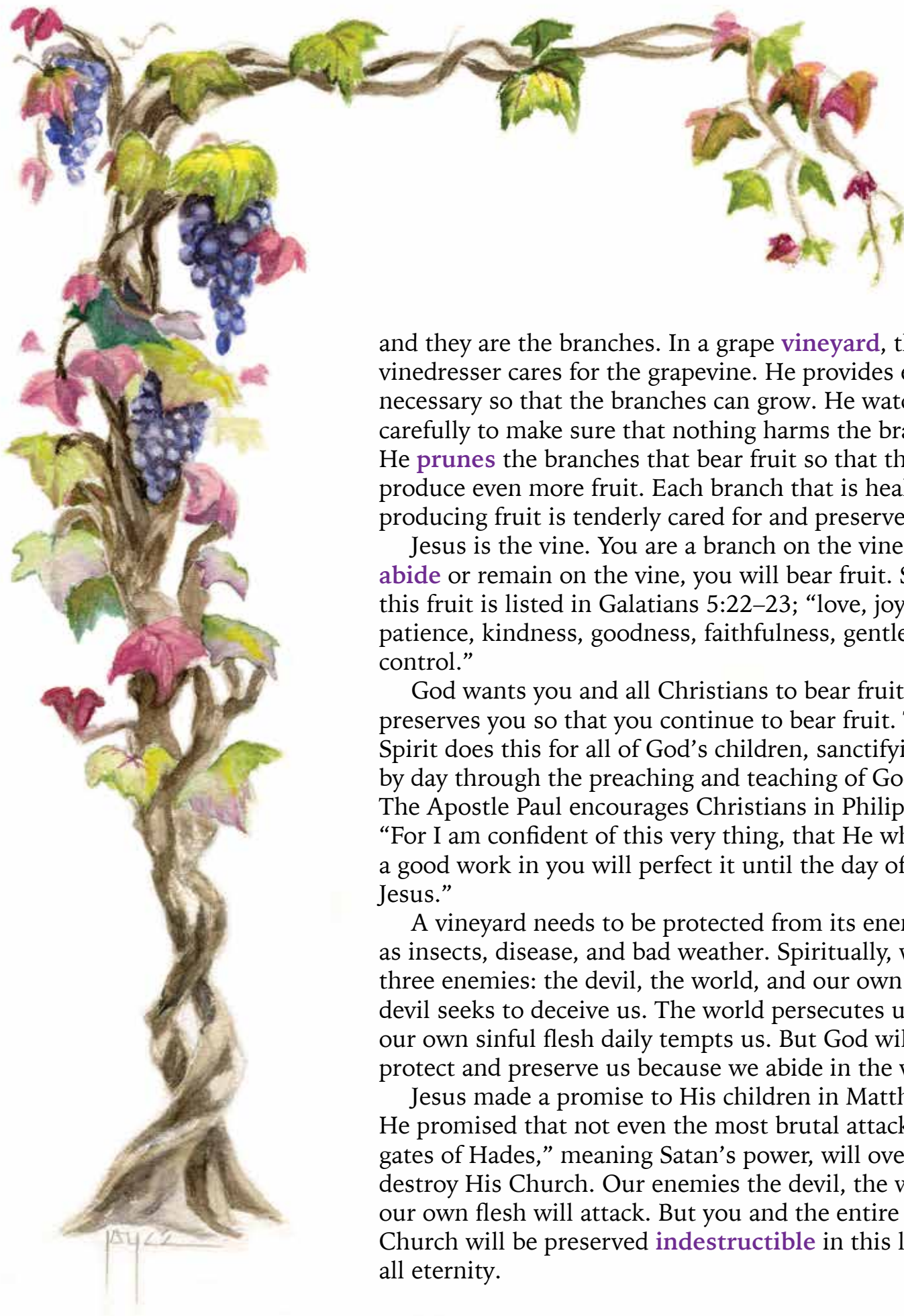
As Joe came forward, Miss Allen slowly **pronounced** the word preserved. Joe wrote “p-r-e-s-e-r-v-e-d” on the board in big letters. “Now,” she asked, “can anyone tell us what it means? Kathy?”

“I think it means that something is made safe so it doesn’t get destroyed,” Kathy offered.

“Exactly,” Miss Allen responded. “The dictionary says it means ‘to keep alive or in existence; to keep safe from harm.’”

Miss Allen went on to explain, “We have been learning these past weeks about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our congregation. In baptism we became God’s child, receiving the gift of faith. This faith is **nurtured** by hearing God’s Word, confessing our sins, and receiving forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Right now in our classroom, the Spirit is doing His work of sanctifying and preserving you as you learn more and more what the Bible teaches. This happens daily for God’s children as the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God all around the world.”

Jesus gives us a word picture in John 15 that helps us understand this idea of how we are preserved. He tells His disciples that He is the true vine, His Father is the **vinedresser**,



and they are the branches. In a grape **vineyard**, the vinedresser cares for the grapevine. He provides everything necessary so that the branches can grow. He watches carefully to make sure that nothing harms the branches. He **prunes** the branches that bear fruit so that they will produce even more fruit. Each branch that is healthy and producing fruit is tenderly cared for and preserved.

Jesus is the vine. You are a branch on the vine. As you **abide** or remain on the vine, you will bear fruit. Some of this fruit is listed in Galatians 5:22–23; “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

God wants you and all Christians to bear fruit, and He preserves you so that you continue to bear fruit. The Holy Spirit does this for all of God’s children, sanctifying us day by day through the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. The Apostle Paul encourages Christians in Philippians 1:6, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

A vineyard needs to be protected from its enemies such as insects, disease, and bad weather. Spiritually, we have three enemies: the devil, the world, and our own flesh. The devil seeks to deceive us. The world persecutes us. And our own sinful flesh daily tempts us. But God will always protect and preserve us because we abide in the vine.

Jesus made a promise to His children in Matthew 16:18. He promised that not even the most brutal attack from “the gates of Hades,” meaning Satan’s power, will overpower or destroy His Church. Our enemies the devil, the world, and our own flesh will attack. But you and the entire Christian Church will be preserved **indestructible** in this life and for all eternity.

ACTIVITY 1

The Fruit of the Spirit Is . . .

Look up each of these words in a dictionary and write the meaning in the blanks below.



1. LOVE _____

2. JOY _____

3. PEACE _____

4. PATIENCE _____

5. KINDNESS _____

6. GOODNESS _____

7. FAITHFULNESS _____

8. GENTLENESS _____

9. SELF-CONTROL _____

ACTIVITY 2

Word Search

Circle these words in the puzzle from today's lesson.



PRESERVED

TRUE VINE

VINEYARD

VINEDRESSER

PRUNES

ABIDE

BEAR FRUIT

INDESTRUCTIBLE

FAITH

NURTURED



Memory Verse

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

—John 15:5

Enrichment Verse:
1 Thessalonians 5:23

Catechism

The Third Article of Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Spirit; . . .

What does this mean?

. . . and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; . . .

