Sermon: **“I am the vine and you are the branches”** (John 15.5)

Autumn – a time for sorting out garden, including pruning. Might prune to cut back a rampant plant, or diseased branches, or to gain a good shape, or remove branches that restrict sunlight. Mary Magdalene on first Easter Day thought Jesus was a gardener – well he is! Jesus at autumn? TEXT.

As with most of Jesus sayings he is trying to tell us something big – *we are to be connected*.

[1] Connected to Jesus

How? Reading about him, appreciating him (who he is, and what he did), and sharing with him.

[2] Connected to each other

Can do [1] on your own, but not [2]. This was harder in lockdown, but it means spending time, appreciating, wanting the best for each other.

[3] Connected to God’s world

[1] and [2] can be done away from the rest of creation, but we are part of creation, which God made good. So we need to spend time in creation, appreciating its wonder, learning how to respect it, working with it not against it.

TEXT. Not just connected, also fruitfulness. Only one reason to grow a vine – grapes!
Being fruitful for God means allowing God’s Spirit into our depths. A stent in our spiritual arteries!

Being fruitful for each other means acts of love, tolerance, respect, not imposing, nor bullying.

Being fruitful for God’s world means seeking to use its resources wisely, being stewards.

Any branch that is not fruitful is pruned away (v2). This sounds scary & rightfully so! But remember being fruitful is not about having right doctrine, lively worship, or greater congregation size, but about love in action.

TEXT – Jesus showed God’s love in action by healing, teaching, dying.
How do you show God’s love in action?