



## ***5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY of EASTER YEAR B – April 29, 2018***

If I held up a picture of Uncle Sam and asked what country he symbolized, everyone here would say the United States.

If I held up a picture of a hammer and sickle and asked what country it symbolized, everyone here would say Russia.

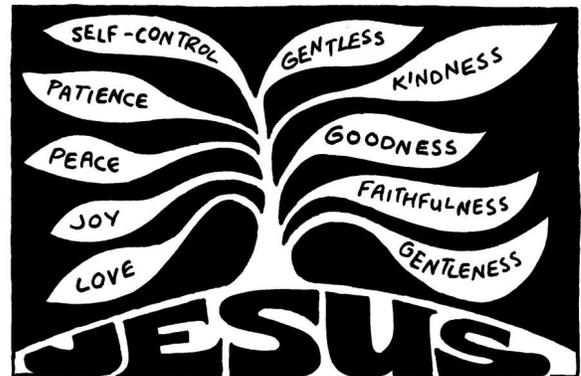
If I held up a picture of a maple leaf and asked what country it symbolized, many of you would say Canada. But if I held up a picture of a grapevine and asked what country it symbolized, some of you would not know.

If you happened to be a biblical scholar or a student of the Bible, you might know, because the Bible often used the grapevine to symbolize the country. And that country is Israel – the Chosen people of God.

In a recent sermon for children, the preacher told the kids, "I have here two branches. If you were one of them, which would you want to be?" He said, "This branch is healthy and looks alive - this branch is dead. The dead branch has been dead for quite a while - there is nothing we can do to save it - but this branches still lives. What does it need to stay alive???"

What killed this dead branch is the fact that it was broken off the rest of the bush last summer. While the rest of the bush grew and grew, this branch just kind of withered - even though there was a lot of rain and a lot of sun. That will happen to this other branch too unless it is reattached to the bush - by a process called grafting. Then it will produce beautiful leaves and good fruit. Jesus compares us to branches on a vine. He calls himself the vine – and us the branches.

When we are part of the vine - we are truly alive, and we produce good fruit - we do good things - but when we become separated from Jesus - we begin to wither and can't really do anything good at all - and if we go on too long like this - we will die. But if we turn back to Jesus in time - and become reattached - and allow his love to flow through us as sap flows through the vine and its branches - then we will live and produce the beautiful fruit of good works and give praise unto God's name."



**The neat thing about children's sermons; they do not need explanation.**