

ABIDING IN CHRIST



by
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ABIDING IN CHRIST

Please open your Bibles to John chapter fifteen and verse one. I would like to preach a message entitled "Abiding In Christ." In John 15:1-11, Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Brethren, you ought to abide in Jesus Christ every day if you want to bear much fruit, if you want to get your prayers answered, if you want to have the joy of the Lord.

We are going to notice three things: number one, the importance of abiding in Christ; number two, the meaning of abiding in Christ; and then number three, the conditions of abiding in Christ.

Please notice number one, the importance of abiding in Christ. Why is it so important that you abide in Jesus Christ every day? Jesus said it is so that you would bear much fruit. Look at verse five, which says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Jesus had been talking about the fruit of the vine, but what did he mean by that? What is that fruit of the vine? You are to reproduce yourselves in the lives of others. Just as grapes bear grapes, and oranges bear oranges, you are to reproduce yourselves in the lives of others. That is, you are to go out and win men to Christ. You are to disciple those converts that they may go out and win men to Christ and disciple those men. It is the job of every Christian today to reproduce himself in the lives of others. It is not just the pastor's responsibility. It is not just the evangelist's responsibility. It is not just the missionary's responsibility. It is not just the deacon's responsibility. It is not just the Sunday school teacher's responsibility.

If you have been cleansed by the shed blood of Christ, if you have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, you have an awesome responsibility

to reproduce yourselves in the lives of others. You have the highest calling of God on your lives. You are His ambassadors. In II Corinthians 5:20, the Bible says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." You are the very representatives of Jesus Christ, God's Son, the King of kings. And you must, with every opportunity, warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come and point them to Christ who is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

In Matthew 28:18-20, the Bible says, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." What was Jesus saying in John chapter fifteen and verse five? He was simply saying this: If you will abide in Me, you can bear much fruit. Let me ask you something. Are you bearing much fruit? Are you reproducing yourself in the lives of others? If not it may very well be you are not abiding in Jesus Christ.

Another thing that comes out of abiding in Christ is answered prayer. Look at verse seven, which says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." What is the Bible saying? The Bible is saying this: If you will abide in Jesus Christ you can ask God for anything, anything at all, big or little. It says that I can have from God what I will if, when I ask for it, I am abiding in Christ.

Are you interested in getting your prayers answered? Jesus said, if you would abide in Me, you can have what you prayed for. Listen folks it is the very nature of God to hear and answer prayer. It is the norm for God to hear and answer prayer. Listen to the Bible in Psalm 65:2, which says, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." In Mark 11:17, the Bible says, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer?"

Think with me. Why would Jesus say, in Luke chapter eighteen and verse one, that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" if He were not a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God? Why would the Apostle Paul command us, in I Thessalonians chapter five and verse seventeen, to "pray without ceasing" if God were not by nature a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God? I submit to you that God Almighty is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. In Jeremiah 33:3, the Bible says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

What was Jesus saying in John chapter fifteen and verse seven? He was simply saying this: If you will abide in Me, you can have what you prayed for. So let me ask you something. Are you getting your prayers answered? Are you getting results when you pray? If not, it may very well be you are not abiding in Christ.

There is something else that comes from abiding in Christ, and that is the joy of the Lord. Look at verse eleven, which says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Jesus

Christ, God's Son, intended the child of God to have the joy of the Lord every day. The child of God can have joy in times of hardship. The child of God can have joy in times of sorrow. The child of God can have joy in times of trouble. What was Jesus saying in John chapter fifteen and verse eleven? He was simply saying this: If you will abide in Me, you can have the joy of the Lord! Question: Are you a joyful Christian? If not, it may very well be you are not abiding in Christ.

You say, preacher! What is going to happen to me if I do not abide in Jesus Christ? Look at verse six, which says, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Jesus was not telling people how to get saved and stay saved in this passage of Scripture. Do you know what Jesus was teaching? Jesus was teaching us about branches that are symbols of God's people. The branches are you and I. The Vine is Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit is that blessed Person who is in Christ, and who is in you. And if you will abide in Christ, the Holy Spirit of God that produced the marvelous life in the Son of God can produce that same sort of life in you today. And you, who could not function apart from the Vine, can begin bearing much fruit, can get your prayers answered, can have the joy of the Lord.

Brethren, if you do not abide in Jesus Christ every day, you are throwing away much fruit. You are throwing away answers to prayer. You are throwing away the joy of the Lord.

Are you interested in abiding in Christ? Then you must agree that whatever this abiding in Christ is, it is mighty important. Don't you think so? You can bear much fruit. You can get your prayers answered. You can have the joy of the Lord. That is why it is so important that you abide in Jesus Christ every day.

We have noticed number one, the importance of abiding in Christ; but notice number two, the meaning of abiding in Christ. What then does it mean to abide in Christ? Look at verse four. Jesus said, "Abide in me." That word "abide" here means to be united. What was Jesus saying? He was simply saying this. Be united in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Let us take a growing grape vine to illustrate this biblical truth. As you cut off this part of the branch, you and I both know what is beginning to happen. Death is beginning to set in. For a while, it looks nice, just as it did while it was abiding in the vine; but now it has been cut off from the vine; and by next month, it will have become withered, dry, and absolutely useless to bear grapes. The same is true for the child of God that does not abide in the Vine, that does not abide in Christ. Do you want to live a withered, dry, useless life as far as the cause of Christ is concerned? Then don't abide in the Vine. Then don't abide in Christ.

Let me ask you something. What separates the child of God from fellowship with the Vine? I am not talking about our relationship with God—once saved always saved. We understand that. I am talking about our fellowship with Christ. What separates the child of God from fellowship with the Vine? It is sin. So don't go on in

your sin. In Proverbs 28:13, the Bible says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." What brings the child of God back into fellowship with the Vine? It is confession. In I John 1:9, the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What was Jesus saying in John chapter fifteen and verse four? He was simply saying this: If you will abide in Me, that is, if you will maintain fellowship with Me, certain things are going to happen. You can bear much fruit. You can get your prayers answered. You can have the joy of the Lord in times of hardship, in times of sorrow, in times of trouble. And you will avoid a withered, dry, useless life as far as the cause of Christ is concerned. Don't you see? God wants you to walk in fellowship with Him every day. You can walk with God; you can talk to God; and God, through His Word and through His Spirit, can talk back to you.

Man was not created to walk distant from God. Man was created to walk up close with God. God met Adam and Eve in the cool of the day, walked and talked with them. You can read this account in Genesis chapter three. Micah said, the whole duty of man is to walk up close with God. In Micah 6:8, the Bible says, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

It is not right. It is not right for the child of God not to live in fellowship with Jesus Christ every day; and herein is your problem. Here's why you are not producing fruit in your life today. Here's why you are not getting your prayers answered. Here's why you are not having the joy of the Lord. Jesus said you are not abiding in the Vine. You are not abiding in Me. You are not maintaining fellowship with the Vine. You are not maintaining fellowship with God.

If you do not produce fruit in your life today, it is not because you have not mastered the Romans road. The reason is, you are not abiding in Christ. If your prayers are not being answered, it is not because you have not tried to pray. The problem is you are not abiding in Christ. If your life is miserable, and there is no joy, it is not because you are just under the weather. It is simply because you are not abiding in Christ. Jesus said, if these things are not in you, the problem is that you are not abiding in the Vine. You are not abiding in Me. You are not maintaining fellowship with the Vine. You are not maintaining fellowship with God. Brethren, you should be walking in fellowship with Jesus Christ every day, and that is what it means to abide in Jesus Christ.

We have noticed number one, the importance of abiding in Christ. You can bear much fruit. You can get your prayers answered. You can have the joy of the Lord in times of hardship, in times of sorrow, and in times of trouble. Then we noticed number two, the meaning of abiding in Christ, which is that you need to maintain fellowship with the Lord and thereby avoid a withered, dry, useless life as far as the cause of Christ is concerned. But notice number three, the conditions of abiding in Christ. Jesus told us that there are only two conditions to abiding in Christ. If you are not abiding in Jesus Christ, you have violated one or both of these conditions. First, you must let His word abide in you. Look at verse seven, which

says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." What was Jesus saying? He was simply saying this. Abiding in Christ and letting His word abide in you are the very same thing. The Bible is teaching us that the way we abide in Christ is to let the Word of God abide in our hearts. In Psalm 119:11, the Bible says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Many of you are listening to me, but that is not letting God's Word abide in you. That is simply taking it in; and for some of you, it is going in one ear and right out the other. That is not letting God's Word abide in you. Listen folks! Letting God's Word abide in you is taking the truths of God's Word and not letting them go.

Letting God's word abide in you is taking the truths of God's word and not letting them go. You say, preacher! What must I do? Before you go to bed tonight, you ought to say something like this: "Lord, you taught me today that, if I would maintain fellowship with you, I could bear much fruit. I can get my prayers answered and have the joy of the Lord." Then you need to go over it again in the morning. Then you need to go over it again in a week and two weeks from today; and a year from today, go over it again. Then and only then are you allowing God's word to abide in you.

Second, there must be obedience. That makes sense. If you are going to take the Word of God in, then you must be obedient to it. Look at verse ten. Jesus said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." If you are going to abide in Jesus Christ, the Bible needs to be more than a devotional book. The Bible needs to be more than a sermon textbook. In Joshua 1:8, the Bible says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Don't you see? You need to live by the truths of the Word of God. The Bible needs to govern your life. The Bible needs to dictate your actions. What was Jesus saying in John chapter fifteen and verse ten? He was simply saying this: You need to do what the Bible says to do and avoid doing what it says not to do. If you do not, you are not abiding in Christ. So don't go around saying, "Jesus I love you! Jesus I love you! Jesus I love you!" if you are not going to do what the Bible says to do or avoid doing what it says not to do. Don't lie about it. In John 14:21, The Bible says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." In John 14:23, the Bible says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." In John 14:24, the Bible says, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." In John 14:15, Jesus said it this way, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Brethren, you show the measure of your love toward Christ by your measure of obedience to the Word of God.

Do you know why some of you are not in fellowship with Jesus Christ today? It is very simple. You have either not allowed the Word of God to have any place in your heart, or you are not doing what the Bible says to do or not avoiding what it says not to do. When you do not abide in God's word, when you do not obey God's word, when you allow sin in your life, you are not abiding in Christ.

Jesus simply said, if you will abide in the Vine; if you will abide in Me; if you will maintain fellowship with the Vine; if you will maintain fellowship with God, you can produce much fruit; you can get your prayers answered; you can have the joy of the Lord in times of hardship, in times of sorrow, in times of trouble; and you will avoid a withered, dry, useless life for the cause of Christ. Jesus said, if ye abide in the Vine....

We have noticed number one, the importance of abiding in Christ. You can bear much fruit, Jesus said in verse five. You can get your prayers answered, Jesus said in verse seven; and you can have the joy of the Lord, said Jesus in verse eleven.

We have noticed number two, the meaning of abiding in Christ. You are to maintain fellowship with God. In Proverbs 28:13, the Bible says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." In I John 1:9, the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

We have noticed number three, the only two conditions to abiding in Christ. First, you must let God's word abide in you, the Bible says in verse seven. Second, you must be obedient to the Word of God, the Bible says in verse ten.

So let me ask you something. Are you right now abiding in the Word of God? Are you obeying the Word of God? Are you allowing the Word of God to tell you what to do and what not to do? Are you reproducing yourself in the lives of others? Are you getting your prayers answered? Are you experiencing the joy of the Lord? Or are you right now living a withered, dry, useless life as far as the cause of Christ is concerned?

Jesus said you don't have to live that way. If you do, you choose to do so as a child of God. What sin doth hinder you from abiding in Christ today?

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

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