

'Abide in ME'

Good morning everyone usually when I come to bring a message I have a few ideas 'buzzing about in my brain' regarding what to say to you (hopefully prompted by the Holy Spirit) I typically then, run with one of these ideas.

This particular time I had a message that I thought was suitable, I had put a lot of work in on it, it was perhaps a challenging word , but as time went on, I had a 'check in my spirit' this was perhaps not the right time to bring it.

The sense I got was; 'I didn't want to put anything more on you this morning! - Not wanting to 'increase a burden' by giving you more things to do, that's not because we shouldn't be doing things or being busy at this time because I think we should.

I have said recently; some of the things we should be considering doing are; ways we can 'fertilise the ground here at church in 2022', a call to action, I will maintain this is a word to us all at this time, and I would say again, to pray about ways that you, personally, may 'give it your best shot' this year at CBC.

But this morning I felt just wanted to 'affirm you' in your faith, encourage you as a 'child of God' and I was very aware that for us all; any action we take, should come from a right place, a place of security and peace with God.

And I particularly wanted to pick up on one portion of the message I gave a couple of weeks ago, I didn't go into any depth then, but I wanted to focus on this one aspect I mentioned and that is this command to; **'abide in Me' from John 15**

I'll read it to you again;-

John 15; 1-5

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it **abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.**

"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing"**

So I want to look this morning, in a bit more detail, at this whole area of **‘abiding in Christ’** and just for clarity because the word ‘abide’ is not often used today.

The original meaning of the word ‘Abide’ means; **‘not to depart, not to leave, and to continue to be present:’** with something or someone.

You may remember what I said a couple of weeks ago; that our relationship with Jesus is the most important thing in our lives– we are to, as Matt: 6 say’s; *‘seek his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you’*. It’s the starting point where everything begins.

Everything else will flow from this, so how important it is to get this right, our relationship with God that is, before we do anything for Him.

It goes back to what Christianity is all about - a relationship - a ‘knowing’ intimately of another, and that one is, Jesus and Him knowing you.

It’s about a ‘love relationship’ – ‘we Love Him because He first loved us’. If we are not communing with Him, abiding in Him, daily, constantly, then what we do is pointless anyway really.

So this morning I would like to look at some of the ways we are ‘to abide’ to ‘remain in the vine’ attached to Jesus, if we get this right as I said earlier everything else will flow from it. It will be like the person in Psalm 1;

“That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers”.

Firstly & fairly obviously you can only abide if you first have come to Him ‘come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest ‘Jesus says (Matt 11:28) - Jesus sends out an endless stream of invitations to ‘come to Him’ in the gospels His door is always open...

Who do you naturally go to when things go wrong? Or for that matter when things go right! Do you go ‘into yourself’ or take your troubles your successes to someone else? Jesus wants to be your first point of call in every circumstance of life.

The truth is you won’t ‘remain in anything’ for very long unless you have a bond or affection for It, and If you don’t ‘know Jesus’ in that affectionate way, like a close friend, the ‘lover of your soul’ you will not be able to ‘abide in Him’.

Can I firstly encourage anyone to ‘come to Him this morning’, if you haven’t already; Jesus says “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” Rev 3:20

Or indeed if you have drifted away from that friendship, that intimacy you once had with Jesus, you can renew that again today, please seek prayer this morning.

Secondly ‘abiding’ is a place of rest.

Most crucially it’s the starting point of our Christian journey, Watchman nee said ‘every Christian should begin his Christian life from a place of rest’ in his book ‘sit, walk, stand’ he says we must first learn to **sit** before we can **walk** before we can **stand**.

The point he is making is; we have to first **sit down** - rest in the finished work of Christ, ‘lay our burden down’, recognise what he has done for us, before we then go on to do things for Him.

In fact the book of Genesis tells us Adam was created on the sixth day so the first day after Adams creation was the 7th day -the Sabbath rest of God. It’s interesting the first day of man’s life here on earth was a **rest day**. How we have lost that today!

This is an important truth because we have to find the true source from which comes before all we do, further on in John 15 it says; ‘we can do nothing without Him’ this place of ‘rest’ is the basis for all our ‘doing’ in the Christian life.

When we are ‘busy doing things for God’ it’s a good question to ask; why I am doing these things? What motivates me - is it for His glory? Or for our own ends?

This is the starting point folks - this ‘abiding’ were talking about is firstly a ‘place of rest’ from where all things flow.

Thirdly you cannot abide unless you have giving it all over to Him as the song says ‘give Him my all not just part ‘what does that mean? It means God doesn’t want to be left out of anything in our lives.

Tell me what do these 3 scriptures have in common?

Proverbs 3.6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths”

Philippians 4.6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” –

1 Corinthians 10:31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”

Common factor :-) ‘Including God in everything’

I think many of us live in what I would call ‘compartmental Christianity’ in that we only include God in the crises points in our lives, when things go wrong , or just part of our week, but God wants 24/7 Christianity.

He says ‘acknowledge me in all your ways’. ‘In every situation’, ‘whatever you do’.

We have to find God in the ordinary, mundane things of life.

The 15th century monk Brother Lawrence in his classic book ‘practising the presence of God’ said this about including God in everything:-

“It is not needful that we should have great things to do. . . We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him (or wash the dishes) and if there is nothing else for me to do,

I kneel in worship before him, He who has given me the grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up, but a straw from the ground for the love of God.”

And that’s the key - the attitude you do it in – we can stop our busy schedules and become aware that God is with us in everything we do - and pray a silent prayer;

“Lord, thank you, You have given me the strength, the privilege to do this – I acknowledge you in it – help me to do it to this best of my ability – help me do it for your glory”

Fourthly you can only abide if you know who you are? - Your identity, He will only allow a ‘child of God to abide with Him’ and that is **what you are**, if you have come to Him - this is what he says about you;

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here”

John 1:12 “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”,

1 John 3:1 “see what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are”.

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And this is where many of us get 'mixed up' because we don't feel like a 'new creation' we don't think we are a 'child of God' because we feel the 'rubbish' going on inside of us - but remember what we learned on the FIC - a fundamental change occurred when we became Christians **our identity has changed.**

There is a very moving passage from FIC booklet regarding this: I'll read from it;

"Regardless of the mess you have made or how you feel about yourself the truth is that, if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord you are now a son or daughter of God himself. You are righteous, clean and holy on the inside.

You can clothe yourself with Christ because at the deepest level of your being He has already made you holy. When God the Father looks at you now, he doesn't see Christ covering your mess. He sees you just as you are. A new creation, holy, wonderful in his sight and he delights in you"

Fifthly we have to keep on abiding - To abide, to remain in the vine is an **ongoing thing**, continual dependence upon Christ, it is to keep yourself in the position of child-like-trust and dependence upon Him.

How do we do that? Well it's 2 opposites! - The things **we do** and the things **we don't do** and we have **to do** both to continue to abide. Let's go back to Psalm 1 to explain this - firstly what **we don't do**;

"Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers",

Then what **we should do**;

"But whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night".

And by not doing the wrong things (verse 1) the negative and doing the right things (Verse 2) the positive the outcome is; you will be like a tree (verse 3)

"Which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers".

Sixthly and finally we see Jesus as our 'model' our example of perfect 'abiding' of complete unbroken fellowship with the Father

Jesus says; 'The Father and I are one' 'I only do what the Father tells me to do' now Jesus was God - but He gives us an example of what 'fully abiding' is - what a complete relationship is all about, and one day we will 'see Him face to face' we will 'know Him as we are known', there will be no more barriers, we will truly know the 'peace that passes all understanding' and abide with Him forever.

So in Conclusion I want to encourage you this morning in these 6 areas;-

1. Firstly 'come to Him' accept his invitation –if you haven't already – leave your old life behind become a friend of Jesus. Or renew that relationship again today.
2. Secondly find that 'place of rest' - 'quit from your strivings' and **sit** at Jesus feet like Mary did in Luke 10- it should be the source of all we do.
3. Thirdly include Him in all you do - don't 'sideline Jesus' in any area of your life 'acknowledge Him in all your ways'
4. Recognise 'who you are' your identity in Christ and the privileges of being a 'child of God'
5. Fifthly **keep on** abiding - maintain the position of child-like-trust and dependence upon Him. Keep away from the things that will 'pollute your pool' and be active in the things that will 'delight the Lord' & 'produce good fruit in season'
6. Look to the Lord Jesus 'the author and perfecter of our faith' follow His example - one day we will be 'one as he is one' but we can experience that intimacy at a growing level now.

Finish with a some verses from Ephesians 1 - my prayer for you.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

and his incomparably great power for us who believe".

Amen

Tony Troy

16/01/22