

ABIDING IN CHRIST

Ken Birks

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I would like to talk about what it really means to abide in Christ and what happens in our lives as a result.

Websters defines abide as to endure without yielding, to bear patiently, to accept without objection, to remain stable or fixed in a state, to continue in a place.

Strongs concordance #3306 (Greek word Meno for abide) says it means (to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy); Other words that are used interchangeably are, continue, dwell, endure, be present, reunion, stand, tarry (for).

John 15:1-10 shows us the importance of abiding in Christ and what can be a result in our lives if we are faithful to continually abide in Christ.

John 15:4-5 *"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.*

II. ABIDING IN CHRIST - WHAT IT IMPLIES.

As we begin to look at this wonderful subject, let's consider, first of all, what abiding in Christ implies in our lives.

1. Abiding In Christ Implies We Are One With Christ.

John 15:4 *"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.*

This was one of the foremost things on the heart of Jesus as He prayed for us in John 17. His desire was that we would experience that same oneness that He and the Father experience. The union between the Father and the Son was inseparable. Jesus told Philip, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father."

John 17:20-22 *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:*

We are a part of Christ and He is a part of us. We are inseparable. To abide in Christ is to continually abide in His presence. He will never leave nor forsake us. In fact we are seated with Him in the heavenly realm.

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...*

Ephesians 2:4-6 *God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..*

2. Abiding In Christ Implies That We Are In Communion With Him.

2 Corinth. 13:14 *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*

The Greek word for communion is koinonia, which means having a common partnership or fellowship. It denotes sharing which one has in anything, a participation, fellowship recognized and enjoyed. It involves a participation in the knowledge of the Son of God, the sharing in the realization of the effects of the blood as set forth by the emblems in the Lord's supper and participation in what is derived from the Holy Spirit.

1 Corin. 10:16 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

It also involves a participation in the sufferings of Christ and sharing the resurrection life possessed in Christ.

Philippians 3:10 *...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..*

Communion with Christ speaks negatively of the impossibility of communion between light and darkness.

1 John 1:6-7 *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

III. ABIDING IN CHRIST - WHAT IT INVOLVES.

1. Abiding In Christ Involves Dependence Upon Him.

John 15:5 *"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.*

In our union and oneness with Christ it is important that we continually rely upon His grace that works so mightily in our lives. Hudson Taylor once noted that "God uses men who are weak and feeble enough to lean on him."

1 Corinthians 1:2 *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to*

shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty..

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

Dependence upon Christ involves our ability to trust in Him for the grace and the things that are needed in our lives. As we do He will bring us into the kind of fruitfulness that God desires in our lives.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. {8} For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but her leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.*

Illustration: Fruitfulness & dependence upon God.

A few years ago, the Associated Press released a study done by an agricultural school in Iowa. It reported that production of 100 bushels of corn from one acre of land, in addition to the many hours of the farmer's labor, required 4,000,000 pounds of water, 6,800 pounds of oxygen, 5,200 pounds of carbon, 160 pounds of nitrogen, 125 pounds of potassium, 75 pounds of yellow sulphur, and other elements too numerous to list. In addition to these things, which no man can produce, rain and sunshine at the right time are critical. It was estimated that only 5% of the produce of a farm can be attributed to the efforts of man. If we were honest, we'd have to admit that the same is true in producing spiritual fruit.

2. Abiding In Christ Involves Obedience Unto Him.

John 15:9-10 *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*

John 15:14-15 *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

Obedience brings us into a greater dimension of Christ's presence and enabling power. When we disobey Him we are quenching the Spirit within us and rejecting His abiding presence.

John 14:21 *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and [manifest] Myself to him."*

3. Abiding With Christ Involves Continuance.

John 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "**If you abide (continue) in My word, you are My disciples indeed.**"

Many of us never receive the abundance of Christ's blessings and fruitfulness, because we lack the staying power for whatever reason. Remember the Greek word here also means to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy.

Galatians 6:9 *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

Donald Grey Barnhouse cites an amazing example of lasting fruitfulness.

In Hampton Court near London, there is a grapevine under glass; it is about 1,000 years old and has but one root which is at least two feet thick. Some of the branches are 200 feet long. Because of skillful cutting and pruning, the vine produces several tons of grapes each year. Even though some of the smaller branches are 200 feet from the main stem, they bear much fruit because they are joined to the vine and allow the life of the vine to flow through them.

He is the vine, and we are the branches. And when we need pruning, the goal is always more fruit.

IV. ABIDING IN CHRIST - WHAT IT BRINGS.

1. **Security** - Psalms 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2. **Cleansing** - John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
3. **Confidence** - 1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
4. **Usefulness and fruitfulness** - John 15:4 "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.
5. **Victory** - 1 John 3:6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In closing I would like to close with this illustration about bearing fruit from something that happened in the life of Benjamin Franklin.

Bearing fruit is essential to Christian discipleship. A life well lived is a more effective witness than words well said.

Benjamin Franklin learned that plaster sown in the fields would make things

grow. He told his neighbors, but they did not believe him and they argued with him trying to prove that plaster could be of no use at all to grass or grain. After a little while he allowed the matter to drop and said no more about it. But he went into the field early the next spring and sowed some grain. Close by the path, where men would walk, he traced some letters with his finger and put plaster into them and then sowed his seed in the field. After a week or two the seed sprang up. His neighbors, as they passed that way, were very much surprised to see, in brighter green than all the rest of the field, the writing in large letters, "This has been plastered." Benjamin Franklin did not need to argue with his neighbors any more about the benefit of plaster for the fields. For as the season went on and the grain grew, these bright green letters just rose up above all the rest until they were a kind of relief-plate in the field - "This has been plastered."

"By your fruits shall all men know that you are my disciples."

If you are truly abiding in Christ it will be known by those who know you and observe your life.