

“Abide In Christ”

March 29, 2020

John 15:1-10

I want to begin with a word about Janet and myself. We are both fine. As you all know, this is a great time to be with your loved ones, to appreciate each other, and to realize that everyone appears to be working together to face this challenge that is upon us. For quite a while now we’ve all gotten on board with social media. And now, the buzz word of the day is social distancing. And yet, even with social distancing, many people are finding a closer relationship with their loved ones. And, all in all, it appears to be a very frightening time in the world.

It’s a very hard time for everyone. Keep trusting God and keep on asking Him to send someone who will find the answer to this coronavirus. And keep praying for each other.

All my children, surprisingly, are extremely busy because most of them are teachers. And they’ve all got very busy schedules – everyday. And they’re all well and they’re all working, including the grandchildren.

So, thank you very much for two things; one, for your prayers and calls and your concern and your texts and emails. And two, thank you for taking the time to be here to join together as we open the Bible.

Please find with me I John chapter two.

I’d like to get you to think today about the largest need we have. Could you identify the largest need you have right now? Is it to be healthy? Is it to be secure? Is it to be wealthy? Is it to fulfill your responsibilities as a father or a mother or a son or a daughter or student or a C.E.O? Is it to achieve your goals?

I’d like to answer the question from the Bible. So, if you’ll find with me this second chapter of First John, please follow at verse twenty-four. And, as I read, look for *the one thing* that you can count on as your greatest need.

I John 2:24 “*Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

(26) These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you [lead you astray]. (27) But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as He hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

(28) And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

What, according to the Apostle John is your greatest need? Isn’t it this? Fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

And to see this, look again with me at the 24th verse and one word, in particular. It’s the word “abide.” It’s used here six times and it’s translated a little differently each time.

Look with at verse twenty-four. I John 2:24 “*Let that therefore **abide** in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall **remain** in you, ye also shall **continue** in the Son, and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

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(28) *And now, little children, **abide** in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*”

I’ve titled today’s message “Abide In Christ.” Shall we pray?

What is your greatest need? It’s the one thing the LORD wants to supply for you – fellowship; fellowship with Him; fellowship with the LORD. And John describes it by this tender, sweet, wonderful word “abide.”

“Abide” always describes a relationship. It’s the Old English for “stay, continue, and remain; even wait.” Let’s say you were going to a motel and quote “stay” overnight. Or, we’d say “the stars *stay* in their position.” Or, we might say “this law will *stay* in effect until ...” So, it’s an ordinary word.

And Jesus, as He so often does, pours something amazing into this *ordinary* word something amazing. Jesus said “I am the Vine. Ye are the branch. Abide in Me.” So, to abide means to stay in dependence upon Him just like a branch must abide in a vine if it’s going to experience the flow of the vine’s life. So, abide is a relationship word.

There’s a story in the Bible about two sisters; the story of Mary and Martha, two women who were good friends with the LORD. And one particular day they heard that the LORD was coming by for a visit. Here’s the story.

Luke 10:38 *“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. (40) But Martha was cumbered [burdened] about much serving, and came to him, and said,*

Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. (41) And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful [anxious] and troubled

[burdened] about many things: (42) but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Now, I’m imagining that Martha is the older sister here. It’s *her* house. She had the responsibility to see that her guests for well-cared for. And she did just that for her Guest that day.

Now, what’s the most important thing for Martha? Isn’t it to fulfill her responsibilities for her guests? There’s no doubt about it. Martha understood her role very well. And, I’m sure you’ll agree that serving her guests was extremely important. But, here’s the question. “What was the most important thing?”

Her sister Mary, who, I’m sure knew how important it was serve the guests, also knew that there was something more important; and that was to choose fellowship with the LORD over everything else; to choose to stay where the LORD was.

And the LORD confirms it. Here’s what Jesus says when Martha came to Him with her question. Luke 10:41 *“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful [anxious] and troubled [burdened] about many things: (42) but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”*

Both sisters had made a choice. Both knew what was important. But, according to the LORD, one of them had chosen what He calls “that good part.”

You see, if abiding is the most important thing for you, then, yes, serving will still be important, for sure. Working will be important, for sure. Fulfilling your responsibilities in your home and at your job will be important, for sure. Raising your children will be important.

Yet, according to Jesus, Mary’s choice to put fellowship with the LORD over everything else was something that would not be taken away from her.

Our choices make such a difference. How beautiful that the LORD has given us the power of choice. Think, for just a moment, about your choices today. As important as all the things are in your life, God has completely slowed down your world. He's allowed a way for the entire world to slow down. And, wouldn't it be, in part, so that you'd make some choices today you wouldn't have made a month ago. God, the Creator of the universe, God, the Heavenly Father, wants your fellowship more than anything else you have.

Sure, everything in your life is important. But, what's most important?

Let me show you, then, from I John, the three things John says relates directly to your abiding in fellowship with the LORD.

First, what you hear from Heaven; verse 24.

I John 2:24 *"Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain [abide] in you, ye also shall continue [abide] in the Son, and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

John knows there's power in the Word of God; especially His promises. So, here's Grandfather John, Pastor John, John, the Apostle encouraging you and me to fill up our hearts and minds with God's promises.

You see, the One Person in the universe that will never lie and Who cannot lie is the LORD. What had John's readers heard from the beginning? That God offers the promise of Eternal Life.

Promises are the norm for God. And keeping those promises are also the norm for God. That's why it's so important for you, when you read His Word, that you record those promises in your heart. Yes, memorize them.

You and I are so prone to believe things that are contrary to Scripture. We can often know something intellectually

from the Bible. We can even believe it intellectually. But, when it comes to promises, that moves the word from your head to your heart, so-to-speak.

And, what can you do today with this passage? You can go to your Bible, find a promise, memorize it; make it yours. And when you need it, God will bring it to your mind.

Abide in what you hear from Heaven. Abide in His promises; stay in them; rest on them; enjoy them; believe them; wonder about them; but keep them warm and fresh because God is all about promises. He's the Only Reliable Promiser in existence.

And, says John, if you will let those things *abide* in you that you heard at the beginning of your walk with Him, He promises this. You will abide in the Father and in the Son.

What you hear from Heaven is the key to your success in this life.

Think again about your life today. What's going on? What's important? What's most important? That you get your job back or that you believe God's promises? That your life get back to quote "normal" or that you experience fellowship with the Father and with the Son?

It's a pure choice. It's your choice like it was Mary's choice to put fellowship with Jesus at the top of her to-do list.

First, then, what you hear from Heaven.

Second, what you realize with your spirit; verse 26.

I John 2:26 *"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce [lead you astray] you. (27) But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as He hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."*

John knows the power of God's promise. But, he also knows there's power in your responding to the LORD when you recognize something with your spirit. So, here's Grand-

father John, the Apostle John helping us with what's happening in our spirits.

The Holy Spirit, the One John calls "the Anointing," is your Teacher. But, as you are about to see, He teaches beyond your mind. He teaches your spirit. Who is it that enables you to recognize spiritual things? The answer is the Holy Spirit.

Think about what happened when you were saved. The Bible says you were born of the Spirit. What does that mean? It means that the Holy Spirit has come to live within your spirit. At the moment of salvation, you became spiritually alive. The Spirit gave you a new birth. But, He's more.

You see, the Holy Spirit is a Teacher. He is *your* Teacher. And as your Teacher, He teaches your spirit the things of the LORD.

Imagine, if you can, a fountain. Now, imagine if you can, that you are a fountain. Every fountain needs two things; a source; a water source. And every fountain needs flow. A fountain without a source and without a flow is a piece of concrete.

But give that piece of concrete a source and give that source a flow and it becomes what it was made for – to send forth water.

It's a beautiful picture of the Spirit of the LORD *in* you and *through* you. You see, the exact same thing holds true for your spirit and the Spirit of Truth. Jesus said that if we come to Him, if we believe on Him, then out of our bellies would flow the water of the Spirit.

So, Christian, you are the LORD's fountain. His Spirit sends the Truth from the Source, Himself, and through you to others.

Haven't you heard the expression "He/she is like a fountain"? He's got so much knowledge. It's like "he's got all

the answers." So, you think of that person as a quote "fountain of knowledge."

Here's what the Apostle Paul says about this.

I Corinthians 2:11 *"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save [except] the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."*

You see, when Jesus was about to leave the world, one of the last things He wanted the Apostles to know was this. He took the time to let them in on a wonderful reality. Jesus was and is a Teacher. And, now, having completed His earthly mission, He's on His way to the Cross.

And, when He leaves, He promises to send Someone in His place. He sent us a Teacher. He's sent *His* Spirit. And He sent Him to live inside *our* spirits to instruct us, to teach us; to remind us of the things *He* said and the things *He* taught while He was here.

Here's what Jesus said that day. John 14:26 *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

You see, the Holy Spirit is your Teacher. He's the Spirit Who *only* speaks truth. And He *only* teaches truth. He can *only* guide you into truth. John 16:12 *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. (13) Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. (14) He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."*

And what was John telling us in I John 2? He wants us to know that we have the Spirit of the LORD living within us, ready and willing to teach us one-on-one.

I John 2:27 *“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as He hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”*

So, now, a question. “How does all this work?”

The best way I know to explain it is with water. You are His fountain. And His Spirit is the Source. You see, truth is like water. But, there has to be a source for the water. And water has to flow for it to be beneficial.

Listen again to Jesus. John 7:37 *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”*

Folks, what are you realizing in your spirit? Whatever it is, it's of the Spirit. He's in you and He's your Teacher. And He's teaching you the ways of the LORD.

So, when it comes to your learning, when it comes to your spiritual education, God has made a way for you to learn. Here it is. He has sent His Spirit into your spirit to teach you His ways.

First, then, what you hear from Heaven.

Second, what you realize with your spirit.

Third, what you can expect when Jesus returns; verse 28.

John also knows there's power in what you expect will happen in the future.

I John 2:28 *“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”*

One day soon Jesus is going to return. It could be today. And what is the LORD's promise to you and me? His prom-

ise is that we'll have confidence and not be ashamed before Him.

That's His promise. That's what's coming next. That's the LORD Jesus Christ Who will descend from the Heaven with a shout and with the voice of the Archangel. And, on that day, all who have fallen asleep in Christ will be raised from the dead and along with those who are alive at that time, we'll be caught up together with them in the clouds and we'll be forever with the LORD.

The key point, though, that John wants us to see is this. Today we abide in Christ. Tomorrow, or whenever the LORD returns, we will go before Him in confidence and with no shame.

We can only imagine what it will be like on that day?

You see, what you can expect when Jesus returns is a day, not of shame, but of confidence. Why? Because life here; life today; life every day is to be a life of abiding in Christ.

When Jesus went to the Cross, He experienced shame and humiliation. But, whose shame was on Him? He had no reason to feel ashamed. But, you and I, our selfishness, our sin, our lives apart from Him are shameful. Sin created shame in the Garden of Eden and it's still causing shame today in the world.

But, the LORD is so kind, so tender-hearted, so loving, so caring that He's removed our shame. And, on that day, we'll rise into the air and meet Him – with no shame. We will come before the LORD Jesus Christ in confidence.

How marvellous! How wonderful! How amazing!

So, what's He calling you to today? To fellowship with Him; to abide with Him.

First, then, what you hear from Heaven.

Second, what you realize with your spirit.

Third, what you can expect when Jesus returns.

Let me conclude with these words. Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin? Your largest need is to have fellowship with God. We're living in a world-wide pandemic. A virus is spreading across the entire globe today. This, in and of itself, should motivate you to recognize that you might not live through this horrible time. Fellowship with God is first.

Do you have fellowship with Him? He came into humanity for this purpose – to die as a Sacrifice and a Substitute for your sin. Jesus Christ went to the Cross on your behalf. Why? Because sin has separated you from Him and He wants to forgive you and for you to experience and enjoy fellowship with Him.

So, will you trust in the Savior today?

Here's the Sinner's Prayer

"LORD, I know that I am a sinner. I ask forgiveness for all my sins. I believe on Your Son today as the One Who paid for all my sins. I take Jesus Christ as both my Savior and the Forgiver of all my sins. I want Your Son to come into my life right now. Thank You for the free gift of Eternal Life; Amen"

Now, finally, Christian, what is Jesus to you today? Is His Life your life? Is His Strength your strength? Is His love your love? You, by your own power, cannot live up to God's standards. It's way too hard. You could never live a Christian life apart from abiding in Christ. When you choose to stay close to Him, *His* life becomes your life. *His* love will become *your* love as your love becomes His love.

So, will you depend upon Him as the Source and Power of your life? Less and less self-dependence. More and more dependence.

So, what then will you do with God's Word today? Will you believe it and trust it as the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Will you, with me say these words out loud?

"I recognize by faith that God has proven His love to me in sending His Son to die in my place, in whom every provision has already been made for my past, present, and future needs through His representative work, and that I have been quickened, raised, seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenlies,

and anointed with the Holy Spirit. I am now depending upon Him for every need in my life. I choose fellowship over everything else."

[Adapted from Mark Brubeck of CRU].

The LORD wants your fellowship. It's a matter of simple trust.

Shall we pray?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRmfVV3avvg>