

Abiding in Him

Text: John 15:1-11, 16

Introduction:

There is probably no other passage in the Bible that describes with greater clarity the nature of the relationship God wants to have with us. Jesus defines that relationship using 'high definition' imagery of the union between a vine and its branches – something simple to understand and visualise, yet profound and full of meaning. Jesus paints this picture so that there should never be any doubt as to what a true, authentic, relationship with God looks like.

Jesus says in verse 1, “*I am the true vine*’. In verse 8, (in the Amplified Bible) Jesus speaks of “*true followers*”. So, what is a *true* relationship?

Jesus defines it in one word that He repeats over and over again in this passage: ABIDE.

1. Abiding

Jesus tells us:

- Abide in Me (v.4 – “*abide in Me and I in you*”)
 - Abide in the word (v.7 – “*if you abide in Me and my words abide in you*”)
 - Abide in love (v.9 – “*As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you, abide in my love*”)
- a) To *abide* is an invitation to *reside* – rather than being a *casual visitor* of God’s presence. A visitor will come and go but the invitation is to take residence with Him.

Jesus didn’t die to provide us with a tourist visa to the courts of God so we could come and go, or a temporary visa waver program, but He died to make us citizens of heaven – united permanently, abiding with Him, being regulars in the presence of God.

To abide means to remain, to stay, to continue or to last.

That is how Jesus defined a relationship with God.

- b) To abide, also speaks of the decision to never live independently from Jesus. In a world awash with secular humanistic thinking, it takes humility to acknowledge that without Him we can do nothing.

Abiding means to make the conscious, daily decision to live every moment of our lives plugged into Jesus, plugged into His word and plugged into His love.

2. The results of abiding

Jesus spoke of 3 obvious results of abiding:

- Joy
- Fruitfulness
- Answered prayers

a) Joy

V.11 – *“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full”*

This is obviously not talking about the superficial emotion we sometimes associate joy with, but a supernatural joy – fullness of joy - the kind of Joy that Nehemiah said, ‘*it is our strength*’ (Nehemiah 8:10).

Jesus said, ‘*that my joy may remain in you*’. When we remain in Him, joy remains in us. When I find myself running low on joy, it normally means that I am not abiding as I should. I may need to abide more, to have more joy!

Jesus wants His joy to remain in us. You remain in joy when you remain in Him, in His word and in His love.

b) Fruit

V.16a - *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain,*

God wants joy to remain and fruit to remain. The key to both is abiding.

When we find ourselves not flourishing, not doing well, short of fruit for all of our labour, we have to check to what extent we are abiding. Maybe we aren’t and maybe we have unplugged from Jesus and have become in some way independent.

We flourish, we do well, our fruit remains, when we abide.

c) Answered prayers

The 3rd obvious benefit of abiding is answered prayer.

V.16b - *... that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

V. 7 - *7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

If I am not experiencing answers to prayer it may be that there is a deficit in abiding. I may not be abiding in Jesus like I should and abiding in His word. I may still be praying – but maybe some kind of hurried, desperate, quick prayer. That is hardly ‘quality prayer’.

Quality prayer comes from staying in His presence and finding His word for your situation. If you want more answers to prayer, abide more: abide in Him, abide in His word, abide in His love.

Abiding in His love means to always stay in a place of love, it means to resist the temptation to be offended. Offense will short-circuit your relationship with God. It will block the flow of blessings into your life.

Conclusion

Be diligent to dwell, to abide, to base your whole life in Jesus, His word and His love – that's how joy will remain, that's how your life will flourish and that is how prayers will be answered.