

## Abiding In Him – Part 1

Now we have some new faces with us today. This will not be an extensive review, but just to give points on the map as to where we've been. We prepared to go on a journey to the cross of Christ. We started where God told us to begin; in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth to awaken within us a revelation of the Holiness of God, to then awaken within us a deeper revelation of the sin of man, to set the stage for understanding our judgment of God (which is the root of all sin), which sets the stage for God's judgment of us. Leading us then into the outflow of the judgment of God to either the reality of Hell or the reality of Heaven; and the difference is, of course, the cross of Christ. Then when we came through the cross, we came into the Kingdom of God. We came into the Kingdom of God through the doorway of salvation. We then looked, somewhat extensively, at how to begin to work out our salvation. Then we moved into faith, the fuel of the spirit realm; because without faith, it is impossible to please God. We looked at what faith is; we looked at how to begin to walk by it; to contend for it to bring us to a level of Christian aggression; because the Kingdom of Heaven is taken by violent men, not passively received. To bring us then to the end of our faith which is to live and move and have our being in Jesus Christ. Thereafter, we are releasing the new self, releasing the Spirit of Christ that's within us.

Today we begin the subtopic of abiding in Jesus Christ; and today we begin to look at principles to abide by. So the end of our faith, remember, positions us (at this point) what I consider from a testimonial sort of way the missing link on the spiritual journey for many Christians; it's a place of abiding in Jesus Christ. John 15:4 says simply – Abide in Me and I in you and if you don't abide in Me, you can do nothing. So why is this the missing link? Because we desire to avoid the process of becoming Christlike. Scripture does tell us that without a vision, the people perish. That's Proverbs 29:18 in the King James Version. That is a true statement because it is Scripture and all Scripture is true. The Scripture also tells us that we have to integrate various aspects of the truth of God because of Psalm 119:160 – the sum of Thy Word is truth. So we never take a truth and function in it in an isolated fashion carved out from the rest of the truth of God. We're to walk in the harmony of Scripture, in the fullness of the Word of God. So we do need a vision to live by, but that's not the whole truth. We're to live by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God – Deuteronomy 8:3. Now even the secular world, the non-Christian world knows that we need a vision. Remember the book, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People; not the seven habits of highly effective Christians, the seven habits of highly effective people. One of the seven principles is begin with the end in mind. That's the vision, because the old saying, remember, if you don't know where you're going, it will never matter where you are and it will never matter which way you're going.

Now in simple terms as Christians here on Earth, our vision is to become like Jesus, so that His Kingdom comes to planet Earth. Now I'm not speaking of the millennial kingdom; I'm speaking of the Kingdom of Heaven that comes on Earth by having the operational principles of Heaven released onto planet Earth through us as disciples of Jesus Christ. Now we have a tendency to want to go from the beginning to the vision

without going through the process of the intermediate steps. We want to go from salvation to Christlikeness immediately and without pain. We want to go to Heaven on Earth without leaving Earth. But the truth is we only go to Heaven by leaving Earth, by dying to the things of this world. That is God's way. Now remember truth is what God is and how God views everything else. So this is simply how God views the reality. We are saved, we are to walk as He walked, to be transformed from glory to glory into the image of Jesus Christ; but there's a process that we're to go through. Now when we want to do it another way, we simply continue the root of all sin, which is to judge God. Now as you would know, we go to Heaven by leaving Earth in one of two ways. The first is obvious; that's when we die physically. Then as we're told in II Corinthians 5:6-8 – basically, we are absent from the body and present with the Lord in Heaven. But salvation followed by suicide is not God's way. That would mean that we could never be earthen vessels, never be living epistles, never be ambassadors to tell others about Him, and never operate to bring (in an embryonic form) His Kingdom of Heaven onto planet Earth through us as earthen vessels. The second way that we go to Heaven, by leaving Earth, is to die to this world. That's when we are in the world, but not of the world as we're told in John 15:19. It is to deny self, to walk in self control, and thus, to be in the world but not of the world. Then the Kingdom of Heaven that is within us, according to how God views reality as we're told in Luke 17:21, is released onto planet Earth through us. That is God's approved way. That's simply how He views reality.

Now if we try to do it another way, then we will never get to function in the Kingdom of Heaven until we die and go to Heaven. But when we try to do it that way (by bypassing the intermediate steps), we kick against the goads as Jesus told Paul on the Damascus road. The goads are to keep us on the narrow way to becoming Christlike. In other words, to bring Heaven to Earth through us. When we kick against the goads, we have a tendency then, when our flesh gives us pain, to blame God for deserting us, while leaving us in the pain and not taking us out of the circumstance. The core Scripture as most of you would know is John 15:1-10 about abiding in Him. So think of abiding as a midway point between the doorway of salvation and the endpoint on Earth of Christlikeness. Now all Christians have entered the doorway; we are born again; but precious few have become Christlike. Well, why is that? Because they try to bypass the pit stop at the midway point called abiding in Him. In simple terms, they wanted to go to Iowa City without leaving Cedar Rapids. We tend to want to be translated to our vision of Christlikeness like Philip was translated from the Gaza Road to Azotus in Acts, chapter 8. But God wants us to be transformed, not translated. He wants us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds as we're told in Romans 12:2. Transformation is a step-by-step process from glory to glory that takes us from the doorway of salvation into the position of abiding in Him. Then functioning in our position of abiding in Him, continues the process of transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ; and thus, bringing the Kingdom of Heaven onto planet Earth through us; and thus, having His glory cover the Earth to whatever degree it can through us.

Luke 14:16-24 tells the story of a man throwing a banquet. And it summarizes, in a way, I think our attitude as Christians for the most part. The first man said I need to look at some land; consider me excused from the invitation. The second one says I have five

yoke of oxen to train; consider me excused from the invitation. The third said I recently married; consider me excused from the invitation. So all of these you will note have one thing in common. All of them wanted credit for wanting to come without coming. And that's how we tend to think. We want credit for wanting to abide in Him without abiding in Him. We want credit for wanting to become Christlike without becoming Christlike. Thus, we join in as the example is shown in this parable by wanting credit for coming without coming, wanting credit for wanting to come without coming.

Now as we go to the next poster, recall two spiritual principles. All spiritual principles can be distinguished but not separated. You never leave one to function in another because they're all an interconnected spiritual reality. Secondly, no model can ever capture the fullness of spiritual truth. Now on this poster, I've labeled it "abiding matters." I like things that have double meanings because it helps me remember them. Abiding matters can have two meanings. One is it can have details related to, such as money or financial matters. Secondly, it can mean it matters in the sense that it has an influence. So holding those two warnings about models in mind, I want to use this simple model of our continued journey in the Kingdom of God beginning at salvation and ending in Christlikeness. You will note that, of course, to the left of the cross we are lost, dead in sin; then we come through the cross at which point we are said to be saved; we come into the Kingdom of God. Now when we come into the Kingdom of God, we have two choices (one choice—two options is a better way of saying it). One is to function in a pre-abiding condition, beginning to use as babes in Christ the principles that God has given us by which we abide. The second is to do nothing; because we're told in Scripture apart from Him we can do nothing. Unless you abide in Me, you can do nothing.

So we're going to do one of two things. We're going to apply our principles to abide by, to come into the position of abiding; or we're going to do nothing. Now nothing doesn't mean a vacuum that nothing occurs; it means you can do nothing to fulfill the Kingdom of God on planet Earth except you abide in Him. You can do all sorts of things that equal nothing according to how God views reality. You can do things that yield dead works, that yield dead testimony, that open us to the charge of hypocrisy, and kill the abundant life. You can do those things; but you can't do the things of God that yield the precious stones and so on that survive the fire of God unless you abide in Him. When we're first saved we know nothing of abiding in Him. That's why we're not born into the Kingdom in a position of abiding in Him. We're born into the Kingdom as babes in Christ, not even knowing of the position of abiding in Him. But we're then to progress to the point of abiding in Him in order to continue the process to end up in Christlikeness. And we do that by operating in the spiritual principles that He has given us. The one who remains in a pre-abiding condition until he dies is simply the one who continues to drink milk. He's the one who refuses to operate in the principles that we're given by which we're to abide. The one who abides in Him, who progresses to that position, is the one who eats meat; because the position of abiding in Him is where the meat is. And the meat is what is required for the transformation into Christlikeness. The one who seeks to remain in the pre-abiding condition, by not applying the principles to abide by, is the one who produces wood, hay, and stubble. He shall be saved yet so as by fire. He'll still end up in Heaven after physical death; but he will not bring the Kingdom of Heaven to reveal Jesus Christ

to planet Earth which is to say he will not produce the precious stones. That's I Corinthians 3:11-15.

Next poster. On the second poster, what I've done is to omit the extreme left and the extreme right of the previous poster. That is to say I left off the lost and started with salvation. On the right I left off Christlikeness and end here with abiding; because the subject that we begin to introduce today is principles to abide by. Now principles to abide by has three potential meanings. One, we abide by them; we walk by them, they're principles that we use—we apply. Secondly they're principles that we apply to come into the position of abiding. So there are principles to abide by as the goal. Thirdly, once we come into abiding, they are principles that we abide by in order to remain in the position of abiding in Him. So what are these spiritual principles? Now for the newcomers today, it's not bad that this is the subject for today because I'm going to introduce these spiritual principles that we've hit on before to one degree or another. We'll review at least some of them. Now when we apply these spiritual principles, we are beginning to honor God as God; because as Christians we have a tendency to honor God—we go to church, we look at the Bible, we meditate occasionally and so on; but that's a far cry from honoring God as God with the energy and the aggression and the contending for the faith and so on that Scripture talks about. Now each of these can be thought of as a key to avail ourselves of the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus Christ has made available to us. Remember we have the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. We are in the Kingdom of Heaven in a positional sense, positional sanctification; but we're called upon to function in the Kingdom of Heaven by using these keys. We have the keys; they're given to us. Remember an earlier poster, the three different levels; God has made it available; we are avail-able. The question is using our will to make the choice: we avail or not avail that which is available inside us.

The first we'll look at is work out your salvation. When we went through that before, a key revelation that we had to receive was that God loves me and enjoys me as a babe in Christ even in my spiritual weakness at that point. Remember the three levels: Unsaved, God loves me. John 3:16 – He died for me before I was born. Then when saved, God loves me and enjoys me because I'm now in His family for all eternity. Then when saved and mature operating by abiding in Him, He loves me and enjoys me; and now can entrust me with greater and greater things in the Kingdom. The knowledge that God loves me and enjoys me even in my weakness (as a babe in Christ), is what releases me from performance anxiety. That's what allows me to function before my God by rushing to Him when convicted of a sin in the fullness of repentance. If I don't receive the revelation that God loves me, even in my weakness, when convicted I'll have a tendency to run from Him in self condemnation. When you run from Him in self condemnation, it's simply to continue to judge God; because that's to say the weight of my sin outweighs the value of the blood of the Son of God. The weight of my sin outweighs the grace of God. It's to continue to judge the weight of your departure from God as being greater than the weight of the blood of the Son of God on the cross of Christ. It's to continue to call unclean that which He has called clean by the blood of His Son, you see. That's to continue to judge God. So self condemnation often looks like humility; but it's the opposite of humility because it's continuing to set your own value as opposed to what

God says your value is, to set the weight of your sin and the value of your sin as opposed to what God says it is, to undervalue the blood of Christ as compared to what God says the weight of the value of the blood of Christ is which is to continue in pride because you are judging yourself as superior to God in making that judgment. Well simply stated, you cannot come into abiding in Him when you are running from Him in self condemnation. I cannot come to abide in a place that I'm refusing to look at or aggressively running from in self condemnation.

So the key revelation about working out your salvation is to receive the revelation in a beginning form of the love that God has for you. If He died for you when you were dead in sin, He will not refuse you when you're a babe in Christ who falls short. And that's what then empowers you, when you're convicted of sin to run to the throne of grace. And when you do that you begin to experience the pleasure of conviction and repentance; because the secret sin that was secret previously is now revealed to you, you run to God, receive the revelation that He knew all along and loves you anyway, enjoyed you anyway; and then you get an ever increasing burgeoning revelation of the grace of God that existed beyond what you were previously aware when you weren't even aware of your sin. That is the pathway of working out your salvation. And that leads you then to function instead of self condemnation, you function in Romans 5:20 – where sin abounds, grace even more abounds. And you have a progressively enlarging revelation of the grace of God. That's when that verse goes from theologic abstraction into spiritual reality in your life. But if you don't have a beginning revelation of the love and pleasure of God for you (even in your weakness), you will maintain a tendency of trying to hide your sin or run from God in condemnation about your sin.

The second principle is walking by faith. Remember here we began to look at what faith is and how to learn to walk by it, walking in a manner consistent with it as opposed to always continuing to pray for more of it while refusing to walk by that which we already have. We learned to contend for it to the point of violence; because My Kingdom is taken by violent men, not by lukewarm men, not by apathetic men, not by pacifist men, not by men who see everything as a cry to pray for more faith—that's good, that's godly, but that's incomplete; because while praying for more faith, you must always examine your heart: am I walking in a manner consistent with the faith that I already have? Because the faith that I have is a gift from God; and always balancing those two frames of reference; continue to pray for more faith. But aggressively contend to walk in a manner consistent with the faith that you already have while you pray for more faith. And that's the attitude of violence of walking by faith that leads you to function in the Kingdom of Heaven instead of continuing to walk in the flesh, passively spiritually, always seeing things in the light of I need more faith.

Now when we apply that principle to that degree, that is what will bring us into the position of abiding in Him. We can negate or reverse that process by not seeking more knowledge to add to our faith. Remember, to your faith add knowledge. You can't have more faith and more knowledge, except you add knowledge and then receive the assurance that that knowledge is in fact true and you can apply it and walk by it. You can negate it by running from God in self condemnation over everything that you construe to

be a faith failure. You can stop it by simply positioning yourself to be idle at the point of asking for more faith while refusing to walk in a manner consistent with the faith that you have. The point I'm making with that is we all know as Christians, God is sovereign, God is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent; yet so much of our prayers for more faith are not because we need more faith; it's because we're failing, refusing to walk by in a manner consistent with our knowledge that we already have about God that He is sovereign, He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and He does love me, you see. We know these things. So most of the time when we cry out for more faith, we're simply refusing to walk in a manner consistent with the faith that we already have in our God. We can negate it, of course, by not contending for it in that manner to the point of violence, to take the Kingdom of Heaven.

The next one is be faithful over little things. Now here we learned that we have a tendency to take big things and think they're the little things. But the true little things that we're to be faithful over is our present thought. We're to capture every thought to the obedience of Christ. When we do so, we begin to tear down every stronghold, every vain imagination that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. But we can't take down that stronghold of many bricks all at once; we take it down brick by brick by capturing our present thought that's opposed to how God views reality. When we do not do so aggressively, then we accept that as a lifestyle which exalts itself against God. Remember the Song of Solomon, chapter 2:9, the bridegroom speaking of the maiden; it says that he stands beyond our wall. The wall is that which exalts itself against God in our thought life which we tolerate with passivity. We cannot come into a position of abiding in Him when we maintain a wall between us built on our thoughts which are exalting themselves against God. II Corinthians 10:5 – we're taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Now there's a corollary principle working in conjunction with this of capturing every thought. That's the principle of agreement. We're going to get to it in a little greater detail, but I'm going to end with at least exploring it in beginning form now.

Isaiah 55:9 – for as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts. When we capture a thought in obedience to Christ, what we're doing is capturing our thought and substituting a thought of God as revealed in His Word. When we do that we are functioning in the principle of agreement that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. That's why we make the swap. So we can distinguish, but not separate the principle of capturing every thought and the principle of agreement, the principle of being faithful over little things, the principle that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, the principle of humility which is to agree with God and modify your position to function in agreement with God. When we do not capture every thought in obedience to Christ, what we're doing is disagreeing with God; because we're saying that His thoughts are not higher than our thoughts. When we do not capture the thought, what we're saying is my present thought is higher than Your thought; because if we really thought His were higher, we would be giving up ours to function in His. So when we keep ours in contrast to His, what we're saying is no, my thoughts are higher than Your thoughts, you see. Can you see how that diminishes God? Can you see how that continues self worship? Can you see how that functions in self

determination rather than God determination? When we truly agree that His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, we will substitute His for our thoughts and joyfully so. When we see a thought in our own thought life that is exalting itself against how God views reality, we would say I'm a temple of God. I'm a temple of the Holy Spirit. Lord, look at this unclean thing that I found rambling around in Your holy temple. You know what to do with it; I don't need it because I don't want/need anything; I don't want to derive pleasure from anything that is exalting itself against the creator God, Who created the Heavens and the Earth; the Earth is His and all it contains including all that dwell therein. My eternal destiny is in Your hands. What pride would it take for me to cling to a thought coming out of my own self nature and exalt it against the thought of this God Who created me to begin with, loves me to send His Son to die for me, has guaranteed me eternity with Him; how can I claim to want to go there for eternity while I refuse to go there right now, temporally, you see?

So all of these spiritual principles can be distinguished but not separated; because the closer you get to the face of God, the more everything is the same. The less you have need for spiritual principles, the more you see the face of God. The less you have need of language, the closer you see God. That's when all these spiritual principles melt away and Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. He's other than; don't need spiritual principles, don't need my thought life, you see; because this God is other than; I can see His glory; I can see what He is; I can see how repulsive all that is before Him; away with that—I don't want any part of that because I'm looking at the face of God. And the refusal to do that is simply acknowledging you've not yet see the face of God enough to begin to have all that burned away and enjoy the fact that it is being burned away. I'm not preaching to y'all; I'm talking to myself too. But my time is up and I think you for yours.