

Abiding In Him – Part 2

We came into the Kingdom of God through the doorway of salvation and then we looked at faith, the fuel of the spirit realm; now we've moved into abiding in Him. And we're beginning by looking at principles to abide by. We got about half way through that last time and we'll continue forward from this point on.

This is a poster that serves as a summation that we are lost, then we come through the cross, we are saved, we come into His Kingdom. The problem most of us run into is we want the fruit immediately because we're now saved and think that's how it's supposed to happen. But He has a process that we're to engage in and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in order to bear the fruit. He's given us principles to abide by to bring us into the position called abiding in Him, where we really see Jesus as He is in a magnified way. And out of that position of abiding in Him is where the fruit comes; the fruit of the Spirit, what we call Christlikeness in one word. The option is to apply the principles to come into abiding or do nothing; because He tells us apart from Him we can do nothing. So all our hard efforts, if we are not using the keys to the Kingdom that He has given us in order to come into this position called abiding, will yield nothing, at least nothing that will bring Him glory, nothing that will bring Him pleasure, nothing that will bring about Christlikeness, nothing that will release the fruit of the Spirit, you see. So we have a simple choice, we're now in the Kingdom; we're with Him for eternity future, that's guaranteed, we have the assurance of our salvation. But we're to be transformed by applying these principles to come into the place called abiding in Him. Last week as we started, we began to work down some of these simple principles that I've selected to use where we now are saved, we have our salvation; but we're not yet abiding in Him. When we're born into the Kingdom as children of God, we're in His family, but we have not yet occupied that position called abiding in Him. We began to work out our salvation, walking by faith, being faithful over little things and we'll pick it up now with sowing and reaping.

If we sow Jesus Christ, we will reap more of Jesus Christ. That is to say we'll reap the position of abiding in Him. We cannot come into abiding in Him when we sow things other than Him. So we sow Him (it's no surprise) by the Word of God and everything that the Word of God teaches us about Him. Galatians 6:7 tells us – For whatever a man sows, this shall he also reap. John 1:14 – The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. So we have the written Word and we have the incarnate Word and we're to sow both. Luke 8:11 – The seed in the parable of the sword is the Word of God. Deuteronomy 8:3 – Man is to live by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Isaiah 55:11 – So shall My Word be which goes forth from My mouth, it shall not return to Me void without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the matter in which I sent it. Romans 10:17 – Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. And one that I like in the New Testament, I Thessalonians 2:13 – The Word of God which also performs its work in you who believe; because the Word of God is living and active. It's not just something that you memorize; it brings the power of God in association with it. And it will perform its work in you who believe. Now all this comes together on this principle and this simple understanding. If you sow the Word of God in your life, you

will reap more of God, including coming into the state called abiding in Jesus Christ. If you sow something else, other than the Word of God, you will reap that other thing. If you sow fear, you'll reap fear. If you sow anxieties, you'll reap anxieties. If you sow condemnation, you'll reap condemnation. Now those are not failures of the Word of God, they're all successes of the Word of God; because the Word of God tells you, what you sow you will reap. Now sowing nothing is not an option because remember, anytime that you do nothing, you default to the flesh. And you'll reap more of the flesh. So if you want to abide in Christ, to grow into His image, transformed into His very likeness, engage in sowing the Word of God.

The next one: pay attention. Hebrews 2:1 – Pay attention lest you drift. If we don't pay attention, we will drift. Hebrews 12:2 – Fixing your eyes on Jesus—that's a command—fixing your eyes on Jesus. I Peter 1:13 – Fix your hope completely on the grace brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Fix your hope, not you will be fixed in your hope, fix your hope. That's a commandment, that's something we're to engage in. So when you pay attention, fix your gaze, fix your hope, all on Jesus, you will come into the position of abiding in Jesus; if not, then not. If you do not pay attention, then you drift away from Jesus, default to the flesh. You cannot abide in Jesus while defaulting to the flesh because you don't pay attention. And remember Romans 7:18 tells us – In your flesh dwells no good thing. Scripture speaks of the set of the mind and I believe that your mind is always set on something and set by something. I believe that you will either actively set your mind or you will allow it to drift and it will set itself. But unfortunately, the way your mind sets itself is because of all the old memories, all the old experiences, all the old habits, all the old emotional hot buttons, and if you don't pay attention and set your mind, it will drift and by default, will revert to all those things; your unrenewed mind will never set itself on Jesus; and thus, will not abide in Him. Your mind will be set. Either you're going to set it by using your will, or it will be set by all the old patterns of the unrenewed mind. So the pathway to come into the position of abiding in Him is for you to pay attention, use your will, to set your mind, on Jesus. And then you'll come to abide in Him. In other words, we're to pay attention to pay attention; because if you're not paying attention, you will not set the mind and you will not abide in Him.

The next principle: who do you say that I am? Such a simple concept – Matthew 16:15 – But this is not just vague abstract theology; this is practical Christianity. It's personal. And the way He's phrasing that to us is with your last thought, your last word, your last deed, who did you say that I am? If you said by your last thought, word, and deed that You're the Christ, the Son of the living God, then you're heading toward abiding in Him. If you said anything else than that, then you are withdrawing from Him and precluding abiding in Him; because you cannot abide in the One if you are saying something opposite to what the One says about Who He is. And your every thought, word, and deed will either be rooted in He's the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Son of Man, the Lamb of God, He is my Savior, He is my creator, He is my judge, and so on; He is all those things and sum all those things up in Jesus or your last thought, word, and deed flowed out of some other soil in contrast and in competition with that. So who do you say that I am?

Seek ye first – Matthew 6:33 – Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. So if you do not pay attention, do not fix your gaze, do not fix your hope, do not set your mind on Him, then you are not seeking Him first. Seeking includes asking – James 4:2 – You have not because you ask not. Seeking includes testing the motive of the asking – James 4:3 – When you ask, you ask with the wrong motive. When you recognize that you need something, check your motive, then ask for it; and then follow the heart of David because there's another dimension to this. Psalms 27:4 – This one thing I ask for that I shall seek. Whatever you ask for, you are to begin to aggressively seek. That's why passivity doesn't work in the Kingdom of God. You cannot come to abide in Him just by divine action when you refuse to engage in the process that the Author of your salvation has told you to engage in.

The other dimension we talked about – Matthew 7:7 – Ask, seek, and knock. We have a tendency to think of those as three different ways of saying the same thing; and in a way it is true. But there's another dimension that I use that Scripture to make a point about. Following David, that which I ask for, I shall seek. And then knock everything out of the way that interferes with your seeking that which you have asked for. That's to take it to the point of violence, Christian aggression in a godly way. Matthew 11:12 – The Kingdom of God is taken by violent men. He has provided it; it is there for us; He set the table before us; now we pick up the knife and fork and begin to eat aggressively so. Now when you do those things, you will come to abide in Him. When you refuse to engage in these spiritual principles, you cannot abide in Him; because how can He give you more of that which you do not value enough to seek? That's all part of James 4:8 – Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you. So there's a process that we are to engage in; and it's nothing more than various acts of worship. Because remember our will, we think of as our chooser, but in reality our will is our worshipper. That's the only reason we have a will is to use it to worship, to bring glory to God. And we do not worship that which we are refusing to choose. We do not worship that whose principles we are refusing to engage in, and so on.

So these three components to coming to this place called abiding in Him. Matthew 7:7 – He who seeks will find. Well that's true; but there are two qualifications. Matthew 6:33 – Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. We will seek and find when we seek Him first; that means as our highest priority. And that's nothing more than a paraphrase of the first of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:3 – Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Because whatever we're seeking before we seek Him has become a false god in our lives. Jeremiah 29:13 (as the third dimension) – You shall seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all of your heart (with whole-hearted devotion). That means taking the seeking to the point of violence, to knock everything out of the way that is interfering with your seeking that which you have asked for, Christian aggression. And it's nothing more than to fulfill Matthew 13:44 and 46 where it speaks of the pearl of great value and the treasure in the field; for which a man sold all that he had with joy to buy the land so he could have this treasure. That's depicting for us seeking Me first, seeking Me with all your heart, seeking Me to the point of violence in the pursuit of that which you have asked for and you now seek with all of your heart by knocking everything else out of the way. And I believe the application of these principles, or refusal to apply these

principles, is why so precious few Christians ever come into the abundant life, you see; because we ask but then demonstrate that we do not value that which we're asking for because we refuse to use the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven that He has provided for us.

We are always in a position of abiding. We will either abide in Jesus Christ or abide in judging Jesus Christ. Remember, the principle of agreement. You only have two choices: agree with God or judge God. And remember that judging of God is the root of all sin. The one who judges Him by refusing to engage in these divinely given principles, will never desire to abide in the One that he considers himself capable of judging by disagreeing, you see. Because how could you want to abide in a Being that you're capable of judging? So if you agree with Him, you will come into abiding in Him. But if you disagree with Him by refusing to engage in His principles, then you are continuing to judge Him; and if you judge Him, you're in self worship. And how can you come into abiding in Him when you're worshipping yourself? He will oppose you; because He gives His grace to the humble and He resists the proud, you see. Matthew 7:1 tells us – judge not that ye be not judged. And it is true that applies to our judging one another about judging not. But at its root, it also implies about judging God; because when we know these principles and refuse to engage in these principles, then we are disagreeing with God, considering our thoughts higher than His thoughts, refusing to come into the place called abiding.

The next one is the principle of love. Remember love is a passion for oneness. God loves us. God has a passion to be one with us. God, in fact, gave us choice so the relationship could be of love and not simply mechanical robotic slavery. We reciprocate the relationship by simply choosing Him. When we choose Him, we say I believe that You are, I believe that You are love, I believe You have a passion to be one with me, I know love because You laid down Your life for me, I love because You first loved me, and I reciprocate that love by choosing You. Then God will give us the fulfillment of the desire of our heart. So if we desire to abide in Him, to become one with Him, He will bring that to pass. Psalm 37:4; many of us are fond of quoting, He'll give you the desires of your heart; but we leave out the first part; delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. And all I'm talking about is delighting yourself in the Lord, you see; He's the bread of life, eat Him; His blood is what provided you salvation, drink it. Eat and drink, consume Jesus Christ, you see. That's all that He's wanting, to reciprocate the passion for oneness that He has with us. And if so, He will give you the desire of your heart.

The principle of binding and loosing; again given in a different context, but I'm going to use it to make a spiritual point. Matthew 16:19 – Whatsoever you bind or loose on Earth will be bound or loosed in Heaven. When we work out our salvation by running to Him in repentance, walk by faith in Him in a manner consistent with the faith that He has given us, are faithful over little things, pay attention, capture every thought in obedience to Him, say with every thought, word, and deed He is the Christ the Son of the Living God, seek Him first, seek Him with all our heart, agree with Him, and express love by choosing Him, we are loosing Him into our lives, you see. Because He says in Revelation 3:20 – Behold I stand at the door and knock. And that's a letter given to

Christians—to a church. I stand at the door and knock; if anyone opens it I'll come in and sup with him. So we aren't generating these things by our own power; but He has given us a task of opening the door. He likes to be invited in and He will come in and dine with us. Now when we do the opposite of these things by ignoring all these spiritual principles, then we will remain impotent in our functioning in the Kingdom; because we're refusing to come into the place called abiding and we are binding Him in a figure of speech. He's the King; it's His universe; it's His Kingdom; it runs on His principles; apart from Him we can do nothing. So we are either loosing Him to function with power in our lives or we are binding Him by refusing to engage in the process; because He is standing outside our door and He is knocking waiting to be invited in. Now God is sovereign. Thus He cannot ultimately be bound or loosed in any sense of finality; but to fulfill His love, He allows us a certain degree of permissive freedom by which we operate in these principles to either bind Him or loose Him by His sovereign desire. The freedom is always finite and the limits of it are set by Him. But He has given us tasks to engage in as His children in His family, as earthen vessels, living epistles, ambassadors to represent Him, and so on.

Now the sum of the application of all these principles is that we honor Him as God. You honor Him by asking; you honor Him as God by asking and seeking, knocking everything out of the way that interferes with that process. Romans 1:21 – For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks. But they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened. See, we are the bride of Christ, we are called out by Him, we are set apart for Him, we are consecrated to Him; we are engaged to Jesus Christ. The point I'm making is we are to be engaged in being engaged, not just engaged in a passive sense, but engaged in an activist sense to the point of violence with all of our hearts. Now when we are busily applying all of these principles, then we are engaged fully in being engaged to the bridegroom, our Savior Jesus Christ. Then we're honoring Him as God; because what testimony can we give to the world about our Savior when we're refusing to engage in all the principles of the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven which He's given us? John 4:24 – God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. So when we're living lives by active engagement in these spiritual principles, it's the principles of His spiritual Kingdom. And when we're doing that, we are worshipping Him in spirit and worshipping Him in truth; because this is the truth because He said it in His Word and truth is how He views reality and not how you view what He said about reality, you see. (Say that again.) When you're applying these principles, you are worshipping Him in truth; because He stated these principles in His Word and commanded us to engage in them. So when we are doing that, we are living according to how He views reality, rather than how we view what He said about reality, which is the position of judging Him. There is surrender or judge—one of the two. And surrender implies engagement in the process; because you never surrender to that which you refuse to engage in.

To review a foundational Scripture: Hebrews 11:6 – Without faith, it is impossible to please Him; for he who comes to God must believe that God is and that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him. There are a couple of points I want to make about this foundational verse. He begins speaking of pleasing God only by walking by faith. Then

he makes a subtle change of coming to God in the second sentence. In other words, the way to please God is to walk by faith in Him and come to Him; because He is love, love is a passion for oneness. He has a passion for oneness with us. He's not content until every thought, word, and deed is one with Him, which is Christlikeness, you see. So that's the only way to please Him is to walk by faith in all that He says, engage in His principles to come to Him. To come to God, to please Him, you have to walk in accordance with two things. God is and He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. And notice it says who seek Him. And here's the point. He is never fully pleased when you come to Him seeking something other than Him. When you come to Him for Him, you please Him fully. And He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. He is not a rewarder of those who seek only His rewards. Rewards come, but they come to those who seek Him. That is to walk by faith in Him, not in His rewards. Our faith is in Him, not in His gifts. Our pursuit is to behold Him, not to behold only His gifts and rewards. That's to seek Him, to seek His Kingdom, to seek His righteousness; then all these other things are added; because He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, you see. And sometimes I think our efforts (even when we pursue) are wrongly guided because the motivation is to get another gift, to get another reward, to get something from Him; but we're not seeking Him. Thus, we're not honoring Him as God, you see.

So I'll use an example as to how this plays out. Next poster. I feel depressed. Now the world uses mental techniques such as busyness, distraction, positive thinking, back-patting consolation and so on. Those things can be helpful to temporarily elevate ones mood; but they don't go to the root of the problem; because we know the opposite of depression is joy, not temporarily feeling better about yourself which is what happiness is. We know from the Word of God that joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit of God. In other words, it is a product of God. It's part of what God is. On this poster, which we've seen before, I'm taking two words: happiness and joy to contrast them, not insisting that these words are always applied in the way I'm going to use them, but to explain to you how I'm using them so that you understand the spiritual distinction I'm making. The basis of happiness is the cocoon of carnality. Remember, that's cost, comfort, convenience, and control; where human beings are assessing every variable that comes down the pike in terms of what it's going to cost them, how much it's going to inconvenience them, how much control they are going to have to give up, and so on. But the basis of joy is communion with God because it's a fruit of the Spirit. And the ultimate fullness of joy is when we're in total oneness with Him which will be our state for eternity future after we're glorified at the rapture. Because then we will be like Him; because we'll see Him as He is, you see. So that's when we'll have fullness of joy and we're truly one with Him. But the process between now and then is to go from depression to happiness to joy and then ultimately to fullness of joy. That's the pathway of Christian emotional progression.

The second in line, happiness is circumstance sensitive; because your positive mood will only last until the circumstances which produced the positive mood change for the worse. And then your mood is going to change for the worse. But the joy of the Lord is resistant to circumstances; thus, is prolonged, you see. The fullness of joy in Heaven is totally independent of circumstances because you're in proximity to God, seeing His face,

singing holy, holy, holy with the Heavenly chorus where there is joy and nothing but joy from that point on. In regard to time: since happiness is circumstance dependent, then it's time limited. It will last only as long as the positive circumstances last. Joy of the Lord is sustained because it's resistant to circumstantial change, so it lasts longer. But the fullness of joy will be for eternity future because it's not dependent on circumstances and not time limited. Now the access to this place of joy where the fruit of the Spirit flows is when you're in the position of abiding in Him; because the Holy Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus, you see. So when He's bearing witness of Jesus to you and you're responding to that and engaging your heart in that process and you come into abiding in Him, that's where the fruit of the Spirit will flow from and that is the place called abiding. So root of joy is communion with Him. Well, we can't commune with Him without first coming to Him. And that's what the application of all these principles is pointing toward, is for us to come to the position of communing with Him by coming to Him. So the heart attitude of the Christian is I want joy, I need joy, joy is that nonverbal testimony to the rest of the world, only God has joy, I can't earn joy, and I can't get true joy anywhere else. When you have that attitude, you're humbling yourself before Him and He will give His grace to the humble which will include the fruit of the Spirit.

Now how will you know how much you want Him as opposed to simply wanting His rewards? Well He knows your heart already. But how will you know? It's by asking yourself what do I do next after I express that desire? If I simply stop after asking and wait for Him to produce it, then I don't really desire Him. Why? Because I'm now ignoring every single one of the spiritual principles, the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven that He's given to me to apply in order to get the verification that my request is truly sincere. I supposedly want to find Him; He tells me how to find Him; I must seek Him; I must seek Him first; I must seek Him with all my heart; I'm to use His Word as the sword of the Spirit to fight anything that is keeping me from Him; to knock all of the distractions from life out of the way that are keeping me from engaging with Him; whatever I ask for I shall seek and I'll knock everything out of the way that interferes with my seeking. Now He knows you're sincere in your desire; He knew before hand; you didn't know. But by observing what you do after you ask is how you will know how sincere your desire is that you have requested. John 15:11 – Jesus says these things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full. You see, you can't make your joy full; only Jesus can do that and the Spirit of Christ is within you. But you can inhibit Him from being released in your life by turning your back, refusing to pursue, refusing to engage, refusing to value, while claiming to want, you see. A couple of Scriptural examples of how you can begin to walk according to the Word of God when you're feeling down and you want joy. Luke 10:20 – Rejoice that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. So elementary; but when our moods are down, how often do we stop and rejoice and savor that verse that our eternity future is guaranteed with the God of Genesis 1:1, Who loved us so much that He came, gave His life, paid the price for our sin so we could be with Him for all eternity. That is reason to rejoice.

Even more basic: Psalms 118:24 – David, the man who was after God's own heart says this is the day the Lord has made, I will rejoice in it. Not waiting for the product to be

produced; I will rejoice in it because He made it, you see. That's a man after God's own heart. So only He can produce the joy, but we engage in the process and by that we open the door and joy pours in, you see. So we can't be pacifists; but we can't produce it, only He has it; but we engage in it to the degree to reciprocate the love relationship and then it flows. Then you begin to meditate on God, on His essential characteristics, on His Son, on His salvation, on your destiny for eternity future, on His love, on His power, on His faithfulness. You're setting your mind on the things of the spirit. You're capturing every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God; because everything other than the knowledge of God is a vain imagination. You're beginning to agree with God, not only He said it, but I'm in agreement with it and demonstrate it by pursuing it and surrendering to it. That's to lose God, you see. If I truly do those things, I will come to abide in Him and His joy will begin to flow and my mood will improve. But it takes more than just a simple prayer. That which you pray for, you pay for. You begin to pay a price to engage in the process of bringing about that which you are praying for. That's how He knows your prayer is truly sincere and you're honoring Him as God, not just as a divine Santa Claus.

Recall our core Scripture: John 15:1-10 about abide in Me. Verse 4 – Abide in Me and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. Now if abiding were guaranteed, why would He say something like that? Abiding is a commandment for us to engage in to come from the pre-abiding position into the position of abiding. Matthew 7:16 – You will know them by their fruits. See our fruits reveal what kind of branch we are. They reveal if we are attached to the vine of Jesus Christ and abiding in Jesus Christ or seeking to do so. So what kind of fruit will we see if we abide in Jesus Christ? Well in each of us, we'll begin to see the fruit of the Spirit coming into full measure. We'll see Christlikeness growing and evolving within us. Then we'll begin to fulfill John 13:35 – By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another. Inward fruit begins to grow and then it produces outward fruit. Then people in your sphere of influence will begin to respond whereas previously, they didn't. Now they're going to respond in one of three ways. They're going to come closer to you because they say would you explain to me the reason for the hope that is within you? How can you have joy under these circumstances? Or they may respond by fleeing from you because darkness hates light. Or they may respond by persecuting you. Well this is good. Well why is this good? Because previously you were too much like them to provoke a response; but when you are evolving by abiding in Him and producing the fruit of the Spirit, that which we call in summation Christlikeness, you will provoke a response. They will either come to you for the honey that you are releasing; they'll flee from you because they don't want to be confronted with their sin and divine accountability, or they will persecute you because there will come a time when the man who kills you will think he is doing a service to God. But respond, they will. So if no response is occurring in your Christian walk, it just means you are not applying the pre-abiding principles to come into the position of abiding, to have the fruit of Christlikeness produced in you, to have the world confronted with the Spirit of Jesus Christ in an overt way, to provoke them into some kind of a response, you see. Does all that sound exciting?

Well next time we'll begin to prepare even more as we go into the place called abiding in Him, continue on our march in the Kingdom, salvation, walking by faith, apply pre-abiding principles, the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven that is within you, but you are to unlock, to come into abiding, to grow in Christlikeness, to release the fruit of the Spirit in your heart and then out onto planet Earth, and in that small way to bring Heaven to Earth as an earthen vessel, you see. I heard a preacher one time say, it's almost as if we have to be born again to know what happened when we got born again. And that's the point that I'm going to make; because when we go into that place called abiding, that's when everything else begins to melt away and we need to take a fresh look at just Who this is that we're talking about. To be born again to what happened when we got born again. And we'll pursue that next time.

So thank you for listening.