

## Abiding In Him – Part 5

The old-timers remember we went on a journey—started in the beginning, looked at the holiness of God, to understand the sin of man, to understand how we judge God in our self determined declaration that we're self determined, setting the stage for His judgment of us; then looked at the outcome of that judgment which is either the reality of Hell or Heaven dependent on your relationship to Jesus Christ and specifically what He did in His finished work on the cross. And then came into the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, we came through that doorway called salvation to come to a deeper understanding of what it is and to begin learning about working it out. Then moved on into faith, the fuel of the spirit realm to understand it, to learn to walk by it with an aggressive attitude of contending for it so that we come to the end of our faith which is where we are living and moving and having our being in Jesus Christ. That brings us to discussion on the place called abiding. We do not come into the Kingdom born again into the position of abiding in Him; we are in Him for our eternal salvation, but we have not yet learned to abide in Him. So we are commanded to do that and we do that by taking the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, the pre-abiding principles I call them, to apply them in order to progressively come into that position of abiding in Him; and in that place of abiding in Him is where we get even a clearer view to see Him as He is rather than as previously the limited way that we thought Him to be. And at this place of abiding, the key revelation that we're to receive is the abiding love of God.

So we're moving into that session today. And my goal is to swan-dive into the love of God because we literally are engulfed in an ocean of the love of God; but to regard it in that light we have to explore our principles that we've used to get to this point. Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God...because if we don't live in the light of that verse, we will not live in the light moment by moment of the love of God. If we begin with God, we have to ask ourselves, what is God? And remember this; at a minimum out of Genesis 1:1, God is these two things: the only uncreated thing in all of existence and the only self determined thing in all of existence. Beginning here is what empowers us to begin to receive the revelation of the Holiness of God, the other thanness of God. He is so other than anything that we've ever contemplated, anything that language can describe, anything that a frame of reference from our own thought process can approach. He is simply other than and God says through the Prophet Isaiah, to whom would you compare Me? I'm so other than; who will you use for a meaningful comparison? Remember, if we cannot be in awe of this Being, then we cannot be in awe of anything; and that's what provokes holy fear, the awe and reverence of God. And that's important because of Proverbs 1:7 – The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; and that includes the knowledge of His love. So I go through this brief review to kindle the flame that is within you of the holiness of God so that we have the fear of the Lord, so that we walk in awe and reverence of this God because His love is holy. It is an other than kind of love. And if you're not impressed with this Holy Being flowing out of Genesis 1:1, you will not be impressed with the love of this Being.

So let's remind ourselves of the critical essences of God. He is the sovereign majestic creator King. We're told that in Genesis 1:1. He is love. We're told that in I John 4:8. So why did God create anything? It flowed out of His nature; it's Who He is. He loves to create and He creates to love. But He didn't just create creation in a random way just to pass the time and entertain Himself. He created it, in large part, for us, to reveal His glory but to reveal it through us. So He

created even such things as the fertile soil for the purpose of feeding us. The geologic deposits that we use now: the oil, coal, and gas to be available eventually to meet our energy needs. In fact, scientists have discovered at least thirty-five variables that if any one of those variables had been off from its functioning by 10 to the -60<sup>th</sup>, that's a decimal point with 59 zeros followed by one. If the error (if you want to call it that) had been off by that much on any one of these 35 variables, then life could not exist on planet Earth. Think of it—that out of billions of celestial objects, Earth is the only one identified that could even remotely sustain man. So the incomprehensible vastness of the created order, and the precision of that created order, were created for (including at least one purpose) providing a habitat for man. Imagine that! Think of that in the heart of God, that that is the love of God for man even before man. He loved us that much.

But then He created man. Well, why? You can't go deeper than it flowed out of His essence. He loved to create and created to love. This is like every other created thing; but God did not simply create man to be like every other created thing. Genesis 1:27 – He created man in His own image. He set us apart from every other thing in the created order. He created us as eternal spirit creatures because the Bible tells us He is spirit; so to be in His image, we are created as eternal spirit creatures. And they are not only eternal spirits; they are created with a God ordained purpose of becoming one with God for all eternity future. We are, in a word, created to love God. How do we know this? Well paradoxically, remember, because of this poster. God is; that's Genesis 1:1. God is love – I John 4:8. Love is relational; relational is choice. If one choice is God, every other choice is ungod or in our present language, ungodly. So what do we call our rejection of God for the ungodly? Sin! Well, who is sin? Romans 3:23 – All have sinned. Well, what's the consequence of sin? Romans 6:23 – The wages of sin is death. Well, what is death? We can kind of understand physical death; but spiritual death is eternal separation from God, eternal mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual torment which is Hell, which is the lake of fire for eternity future, outer darkness of no communion with God, having no relationship with God in that which we would contemplate flowing out of His love, meaning grace, and mercy, and forgiveness and so on, no communion with God, while receiving the wrath of God. That is what Hell is and that is what the consequence of sin is.

Was God surprised by the sin of man? No. Did He simply stop with the sin of man and exercise the third aspect of His critical essences—that is His fierce judging of all unrighteousness? No. Well, how do we know these are answered no? Ephesians 1:5 – He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself. Imagine that—That He predestined a Savior for us before there was an us. He knew that we would sin. He conceived the solution for our sin even before there was an us. That's the love of God for you before there was a you. He loves you that much. Well, couldn't He have simply just excused our sin? No. That's one of the fallacies of mankind, remember? God is Holy; He is perfectly pure; He's an other than kind of purity. By His very nature, He cannot ever excuse a single act of unrighteousness. Habakkuk 1:13 – Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil and Thou cannot—cannot look on wickedness with favor. He cannot because it would violate His nature. He loves righteousness that much because He is righteous and He loves all that He is. Well, why does God not simply and justly condemn us to Hell for all eternity from the moment of our first sin? Because He's love. John 3:16 – For God so loved the world. Because you see, Hell would mean being apart from Him for all eternity future. But love is a passion for oneness. He loves us that much. So He sent us a Savior. Just any Savior? No,

because only a perfect one would do. Because the value of any sacrifice for sin is either zero or infinite. If the sacrifice is perfection itself, which is Jesus, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, it is of infinite value to pay the price for sin. If the sacrifice for sin contains any imperfection ever, then it is worthless to pay the price for sin. Who is the only perfect one? God, Himself.  
Revelation 15:4 – Thou alone art holy.

So we've seen that the process of salvation was predestined in the will of God – Ephesians 1:5; but how was it initiated? Philippians 2:5-8 (speaking of Jesus) – Who although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped (or held onto) or clutched. Remember the horizontal relationship of the Trinity—the Father equals Son equals Spirit. But no, Jesus the Son of God did not consider that equality of the horizontal relationship to be clutched and let all mankind go to Hell. So He condescended, if you will, to humble Himself, empty Himself, took the form of a bondservant, came in the appearance of a man, and humbled Himself by being obedient to the will of the Father to the point of death, even death on a cross. So He gave up the glory of Heaven to come to Earth as a man. Why? He loves you that much. He could have stayed in Heaven to judge the world, but He couldn't have stayed in Heaven and saved the world. He came to Earth as a vulnerable baby, born in a stable. Imagine that! The God of Genesis 1:1 came to Earth in the form of a baby to be born in a stable. Why? He loves you that much. He came as a man.

Well, what is life like as a man? Well one way is we are tempted. What is temptation? It's the inner solicitation to do anything contrary to the will of God. So what is evil? Anything contrary to the character, the purposes, the plan, the will of God in all its fullness. It means exercising our God-given choice to choose anything other than God. Now what do we do when we succumb to temptation? We choose ungod rather than God, because every choice is nothing more than that choice. When we do so, what we're saying to God, is I do not love You as much as I love this other thing that I'm choosing above You. Was Jesus tempted like we are? Hebrews 4:15 – we have Jesus as our high priest Who has been tempted in all things as we are. Did He yield? No. the verse continues – yet without sin. He never sinned. Imagine that! He never chose ungod over God, the Father. Well, how did He do that? Love—the passion for oneness. John 5:19 – I only do what I see the Father do. You see, Jesus had denied self. Jesus died to any choice other than the will of the Father. And we're told that literally in the Garden of Gethsemane – Luke 22:42 – not My will, but Thine be done. He constantly, without exception, chose the will of God the Father over any other choice. And He did that out of two loves. The first love of God the Son was, of course, for God the Father; the second love which is like unto the first, is that Jesus loved us that much. Because He said, could I not tell My Father and He would send twelve legions of angels to save Me from the horror of the cross? He could have done that, but had He done that, He could have been restored to the Father, but we would have been in Hell for all eternity future. He loved the Father that much to go to the cross and accomplish the redemptive plan of God the Father and He loved you that much to do the same. He basically said I would rather go through this Hell of the cross for you than to spend eternity in Heaven without you. I love you that much.

Matthew 7:20 – By their fruits ye shall know them. Well, how do we know the heart of Jesus? Well look at the cross. It all goes back to the cross, the physical suffering, the whips, the thorns, and the nails. Well, why look at it? Because that's the revelation of He loves you that much.

Look at the emotional suffering in the Garden – Luke 22:44 – and being in agony, He was praying very fervently and His sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground. At what? The contemplation about what He was to endure. Now why did that happen? Because of disturbed physiologic functions secondary to the emotional stress arising out of the contemplation of what was in His immediate future. Yet He did it! Why would He do it? Because He loved the Father that much, to only do the will of the Father and He loved you that much. Then look at the spiritual suffering. Begin with the earthly model to remind us of marriage where two become progressively toward oneness. Then look at the agony in our divorce courts where the two had progressed toward one; now reverse course and come back into complete two-ness; and think of the frustration and the anger and the depression that flows out of such natural events. And then look at the Father and the Son. John 10:30 – The Father and I are one, except one time – Matthews 27:46 – My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Imagine that! That the divine God, having now to have this God, the Father turn His back on God, the Son, the second member of the Trinity, because the second member had sin upon Him and the Father could not look upon that bundle of sin with pleasure, you see, and with approval. Why would the Father go through that, seeing His Son, turning His back on Him, and why would the Son do that and be willing to endure that? Because He loves you that much.

Does His love stop there? No. John 14:2-3 – Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you. Think of that! Why does He go to prepare a place for us? The verse continues – that where I am, you may be also. That's the passion for oneness. The passion of Jesus that He not spend eternity without you being where He is—in Heaven, with Jesus, with the Father, a place reserved for you because He loves you that much. Does His love stop there? No. Hebrews 7:25 – Even now He forever lives to make intercession for us. Now what does intercession mean? Well in simplified form, I use the poster called the gaps to explain it. The gap that we're to stand in, here as New Testament Christians, is the gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be in the will of God. But the gap that Jesus stands in is the gap between my righteousness and the righteousness of God. Why does He intercede for us like that? Why does He stand in the gap for us forever? Because He loves us that much. Does His love stop there? No. John 14:16-17 – And I Jesus, the Son, will ask the Father and he will give you another helper that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth. God, through Jesus, gives us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. Remember, not a thought, not a philosophy, not positive thinking, not a doctrine, not an abstraction, not an angel. God, Himself, dwelling in us, purchased for us through what Jesus did on the cross. Dwelling in us—well why? Because He loved you that much. The Holy Spirit then stands in the gap between what you can do and what God calls you to do. He is our helper, He is our source of power, our source of truth.

So we've explored some evidences of love; now let us remind ourselves of what love is. Love, in my progressive revelation, remember started out as more or less caring, then effortful caring; and then sacrificial service and ultimately to the point the way I now use it as a passion for oneness. John 17:22 – Jesus prays that they (that's us) may be one just as We are one, just as He is one with the Father is the oneness that He's praying for to occur in us. John 17:23 – that they may be perfected in unity—oneness. Colossians 3:14 – And beyond all these things, put on love which is the perfect bond of unity—oneness. So to understand love, then as a passion for oneness, let's go back to God and know His love by looking at some of His fruits in His attitude toward us. Remember the Psalmist says who is man that You're mindful of him? But He's not

just mindful. Matthew 10:30 – Even the hairs of your head are numbered. He is that mindful, not just mindful in an abstraction; but He knows if hair 212 is out of place. He's that mindful of you because He loves you that much. Colossians 1:17 – In Him all things hold together. See, He didn't create this created order and then desert it; He upholds everything in it including you. Why? Because He loves you that much. He testifies endlessly of Himself to you. Well, how? Remember, the external conviction of creation in both its vastness, its complexity, and the minutiae of its detail. Romans 1:19-20 – Since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made so that they're without excuse. He has testified of Himself through the created order. Psalm 19:1 (in the King James Version) – the Heavens declare His glory and the Earth testifies of His handiwork. Well why would God testify endlessly of Himself to every man? Because He so loved the world.

Then there's the internal conviction: the conscience. Romans 2:14-15 – The gentiles instinctively do the things of the law, because the law is written on their hearts and their consciences bear them witness. The internal conviction of eternity: Ecclesiastes 3:11 – He has put eternity in our hearts: the external witness of the created order; the internal witness of the awareness of eternity future and the internal witness of the conscience. Then by the Word of God in both its forms, the written Word (Scripture): II Timothy 3:16 – All Scripture is inspired by God. And remember, that's not for an omniscient Being's benefit; He knew it before He wrote it. It is written for our benefit; He loves us that much. And then the incarnate Word Jesus: John 1:1 and 1:14 – And the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. Why? He loves us that much. And then the Spirit of God: John 15:26 – The Holy Spirit will bear witness of Me, Jesus the Son of God. God testifies endlessly to the human race, unsaved and saved, by any of these mechanisms, external conviction, internal conviction, written Word, incarnate Word, and for us as Christians, by the Holy Spirit. Why does He testify so endlessly of Himself? He loves us that much.

Now let's explore God as the Trinity. This is showing the vertical relationship in the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What part of God in the Trinity loves you? All parts! Genesis 1:26 – Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. The first expression of the Trinity of the Godhead; the entire Trinity of God was in agreement and harmony to make you and to make you in the image of the Trinity. The Trinity loved to create you and created you to love you, made you in the image of God. He loves you that much. So what's the greatest act of the Trinity? Showing His love; your salvation. Now how was your salvation accomplished? John 6:44 – No one can come to Me, the Son, the Lamb of God except the Father draw him. John 6:37 – All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me. John 15:26 – The Holy Spirit will bear witness of Me. And I Corinthians 12:3 – No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. And then John 6:37 – the one who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out. God as expressed in the fullness of the Trinity, loves you that much to work together in the plan of the Father, to implement it for your salvation, He loves you that much. Now all of those things speak of love, drawing us to oneness, but what describes God's passion for you? Go back to the Song of Solomon 4:9 (this is the description, remember, of the bridegroom and the maiden) – And the bridegroom says you have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eye. And Song of Solomon 6:5 (King James Version) – the bridegroom says, turn away thine eyes from me for they have overcome me. Now in our interpretations of the Song of Solomon, there

are those who say that is a natural story and that it is a spiritual story that ultimately is prophetic of the attitude of Jesus Christ, the bridegroom, for His bride the church. But even those who say that this only has a natural explanation, we need to realize the following. The natural understanding always will be a minimum to explain the attitude of God toward us. Could that natural example of passion for another being exceed the passion of a Holy, other than God functioning in a holy, other than love? It could not approximate, much less surpass the spiritual love of God for us. So this terminology, even if you take it as a natural description would be a minimum explanation of the passion that God has for us. Think of that—that God says at least this if not more; you make My heart beat faster with just a glance of your eyes. Turn away your gaze from Me; I am so smitten with love for you that I am undone by your gaze. Think of that! That's the minimum description of the passion of God for us. He is overcome when we gaze at Him. Well, how do we do that? By reading His Word, by meditation on His Word, by prayer, by obedience; you see, this is the passion of the heart of God for you. It's not just a vague theologic concept. We need the natural example drawing from such things as the Song of Solomon to quicken, to awaken for us that God is not functioning in dullness toward us. He is functioning with a burning passion to be one with us. He loves us that much.

Next poster. Now I'm going to end here today with the next concept and then we'll carry it forward next time. We're going to begin to build toward what I regard as the greatest revelation in the Bible. Now we never want denigrate other portions of Scripture; I'm just speaking of the greatest revelation as it spoke to me. We'll begin with II Corinthians 9:7 (it says) – For God loves a cheerful giver. Now the revelation to me out of that is the following. God does not call us to become anything that He isn't because His passion is to be one with us. Ergo, if God calls us to be a cheerful giver, it means God is a cheerful giver. Now proceed to Matthew 22:39 – where it simply says love thy neighbor as thyself. See God commands us to do that. But recall, God does not command us to do anything that He is not. So when God says love your neighbor as yourself, it means He loves His neighbor as Himself. Well, who is His neighbor? Recall the parable of the good Samaritan? The neighbor was anyone who had a need. Well who has the need in the human race before a Holy God? We all do. So God loves His neighbor as He loves Himself because that's what He tells us to do and He doesn't tell us to do anything that He isn't. He doesn't just love you; He loves you as much as He loves Himself. Now go to John 17:23 (and Jesus says speaking to the Father) – I Jesus in them and Thou the Father in Me that they may be perfected in unity that the world may know that Thou the Father did send Me the Son (and listen to this), and doest love them even as Thou doest love Me. So the same love that the Father has for the Son is the love that the Father has for us. Then John 15:9 – Just as the Father has loved Me, the Son, I have loved you. So the Father loves us as He loves Jesus; Jesus loves us as the Father loves Him. Who's mouthing these words? The Son of God! Who's He praying to? God the Father. Imagine, it says that they may know. That's us! That You the Father loves them as much as You the Father loves Me, the Son of God. Imagine that! So key question to grasp the concept: How much does God the Father love Jesus, God the Son? As much as He loves Himself. Why? Because John 17:22 – The Father and I are one—are one God. So, since the Father and the Son are parts of the Trinity, part of our one God in three persons, then God the Father cannot love the Son less than He loves Himself because they are one. Imagine that! So the greatest revelation in Scripture is not only that God is, and not only that God is love, and not only that God loves you, but that He loves you as much as He loves Himself. If you can grasp that concept, you will never again think, if God would take away the circumstance, I would

know He loved me. If God would heal my illness, I would know He loved me. If God would restore my marriage, I would know He loved me. No, when you grasp the concept that God loves you as much as He loves Himself, you will never again set a threshold by which you will believe the love of God for you.

So we'll end it at that point and pick it up next time.