

ABIDE
John 15:4

In the opening ten verses of chapter 15 Jesus explains the divine-human relationships by the analogy of a grapevine. Jesus is like the main vine. The disciples are compared with branches. The Father tends the branches like a gardener. Ten times in this passage we are told to abide. Five times we are told to 'abide in Christ'. What does it mean to abide in Christ? Last week we talked about our lives being pruned to produce fruit. Today, we talk about abiding in Christ to produce fruit.

- I. Before we can understand what it means to abide in Christ, we need to do a word study on *abide*.
 - A. Μενω – to stay, remain, live, dwell, abide, to be in a state that begins and continues; something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state or endures.
 - B. In Bible it is translated: abide 61, dwelleth 10, remain 17, continue 9, tarry 8, dwellest 1, enduring 1, present 1, and stand 1.
 - C. This verb is used 109 times in the New Testament. It is a key word in John's theology. John used the word *abide* eleven times in chapter 15, forty times in this Gospel and 27 more in his epistles, and once in Revelation.
 - D. What does it mean to remain?
 1. It can mean to accept Jesus as Savior (John 6:54-56).
 2. It can mean to continue or persevere in believing (John 8:31; 1 John 2:19,24).
 3. It can mean believing, loving obedience (John 15:9-10).
 4. Without faith, no life of God will come to anyone. Without the life of God, no real fruit can be produced. "Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me."
 - E. In the context of this passage, it seems to emphasize an ongoing faith and loving obedience to the Father and the Son that result in fruit. The fruit in this passage seems to focus on spirit-generated behavior of Christians.
- II. "Abide in Me and I in you" – Verse 4
 - A. We are to abide in Christ.
 1. Godet's beautiful definition of abiding: "It is the continuous act by which the Christian lays aside all he might draw from his own wisdom, strength and merit, to desire all from Christ by the inward aspiration of faith."
 2. The only way to continue to be clean and pruned (verses 2-3) and to keep on bearing more fruit (grow in spiritual maturity, develop Christian character) is to maintain vital spiritual connection with Christ, the True Vine.
 3. To abide in Christ is to maintain an unbroken communion with Jesus Christ. Abiding depends on keeping Christ's commandments (15:10).

- a. John uses the same word in 1 John 3:24: “And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us.”
 - b. *Dwells* and *abides* are the same word.
 - c. He that keeps His commandments abides in Him and He in him.
 - d. The Spirit which He has given us is how we know that He abides in us.
4. What does it mean to ‘abide in Me’? To abide in Christ is to follow His example of a life obedient to the will of God.
5. To abide suggests an effortless resting in the Lord, confident in the promised union between the vine and the true branches.
6. The abiding believer is the only legitimate believer. The remaining is evidence that salvation has already taken place (1 John 2:19). And not vice versa.
- “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that none of them were of us.”
7. “Abiding in Me and I in you” is the doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints (Matt 24:13).
- a. The ones who persevere are the same ones who are saved. This does not suggest that our perseverance secures our salvation. Scripture everywhere teaches precisely the opposite. God, as part of His saving work, secures our perseverance.
 - b. In 1 Peter 1:5, true believers are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.
 - c. The guarantee of our perseverance is built into the New Covenant promise. God says “I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me (Jer. 32:40). Those who do fall away from Christ give conclusive proof that they were never truly believers to begin with (1 John 2:19).
 - d. To say that God secures our perseverance is not to say that we are passive in the process, however.
 - e. Hebrews 10:23 and Revelation 3:11 call us to hold fast to our faith.
 - f. Hebrews 10:26-29 warns us against falling away. Such admonitions do not negate the many promises that true believers will persevere are found in passages such as John 10:28,29; Rom 8:38,39; 1 Cor 1:8,9; and Phil 1:6. Rather, the warnings and pleas are among the means God uses to secure our perseverance in the faith. Notice that the warnings and the promises often appear side by side. For example, when Jude urges believers to “keep yourselves in the love of God (v. 21), he immediately points them to God “who is able to keep you from stumbling” (v. 24).
8. Abiding in Christ is more than being in Christ as a matter of spiritual position. It is the deliberate cultivation of the bond established with

Christ by obedience and love so that the Christ-life ("I in you") may be experienced as a conscious reality.

B. Christ will abide in you.

1. John 14:23
2. Ephesians 3:14-17
3. Revelation 3:20-21

C. "Abide in Me and I in you."

1. John 17:20-23
2. 1 John 2:3-6
4. 1 John 3:24
5. 1 John 4:15-17
6. Paul did not use the Johannine idiom, but he expresses the same truth when he says in Gal. 2:20, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" and "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

III. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it keep on abiding in the vine, so neither can you unless you keep on abiding in Me" (v. 4).

- A. "Branch" here and in this passage is only found in John 15. It is a tender and easily broken part of the vine.
- B. According to John 9:31 and Colossians 1:23, the fruit, or evidence of salvation, is continuance in service to Him and in His teaching.
- C. "Of itself" – As source from itself and apart from the vine (John 17:17).
- D. The stalk goes up with the grain or fiber spiraling around and around. The branches come out from within those spirals as an integral part of the stock or main vine. They are centered in the vine itself, not appended to the exterior of the vine. So we must be in our relationship with Christ if we would be fruitful. We cannot bear fruit if we are separate from the vine. Without Christ we can do nothing! In the parable of the sower, it was the condition of the heart that made the difference in the amount of reproduction (Matt 13), but here it is the relationship with Christ in the daily life that makes the difference.

CONC: *Abide* means the maintenance of an unbroken connection rather than repose and bespeaks the necessity of a constant active relationship between the believer and his Lord, if the resultant life is to be productive. Five times we are told 'abide in me'. It is as though He were to say, "Children, I am leaving you; there are many things I desire for you, many commands to utter, many cautions, many lessons; but I am content to leave all unsaid, if only you will remember this one all-inclusive bidding, abide in Me, remain in Me; stay where God has put you; deepen, emphasize, intensify the union already existing between you and Me. From Me is your fruit found. Without Me ye can do nothing. Abide in Me, and I in you. Grow up into Me in all things, which I am the Head, rooted and built up in Me, and established by your faith, even as ye were taught. I am stronger, wiser, fuller, better than you; all is mine that it may be yours, therefore, abide in Me, and I will abide in you."

Prayer: “Father, thank you that we can abide in you and in your Son Jesus. Please keep us tightly connected so the sap of your love can flow freely into our lives, and through our lives into the lives of others. Amen.”