

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Abiding in Christ

John 15:7-8

Part 2

There are many things that people in general believe are important. And when people believe that something is important they invariably are willing to expend an incredible amount of time, energy, and resources to pursue those things.

Certainly we, as a church, are in fact proving this. A number of years ago we came to the conclusion that expanding our facilities was important and ever since then we have been expending an incredible amount of time, energy, and resources to pursue it.

And this continues to be true right up to this very moment. People in our church are continuing to give their time, energy, and resources. Obviously, we as a church family have bought into the importance of this project.

But for us, as disciples of Christ, there is something of far greater importance than whether or not we are able to put up this building and this brings us back to the topic of “abiding in Christ” and **John 15**. This topic was initially introduced by a word picture in **John 15:1-2**. Let me read these verses for you. **“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. (2) Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.”**

Though the phrase **“abiding in Christ”** was not specifically mentioned in these verses, there is no doubt that the picture painted for us in **John 15:1-2** was a visual picture of what it means to abide in Christ. I believe that this should be very apparent to us in light of the fact that immediately following this word picture the topic of “abiding in Christ” was introduced.

So, what did we conclude that “abiding in Christ” means? To abide in Christ means that the life of Christ is flowing through us.

And what happens when we are abiding in Christ; or in other words, what happens when the life of Christ is flowing through us? Our lives will bear fruit. It can't help but bear fruit since the manifestation of Christ's life in and through us is the fruit.

So how does a true disciple of Christ or one who has embraced Jesus as their Lord and Savior release His life?

This happens when we are filled with the Spirit or when we by faith fully and completely give up the control of our lives to the Spirit so that the life of Christ, who is indwelling us in the person of the Spirit, is able to flow through us, manifesting His love, His joy, His peace, His patience, His kindness, His goodness, and His self control.

So are you this morning abiding in Christ or are you not abiding? Are you manifesting the life of Christ or are you not manifesting the life of Christ? It is one or the other. It can't be both.

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So why is it so important that we know whether or not we are abiding in Christ? This is the question that we began to answer two weeks ago.

First of all, it is important that we know we are abiding in Christ because if we are abiding in Christ, then we will not bear just “a little bit of fruit” but rather “much fruit” (John 15:4-5). Let me read for you **John 15:4-5. “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. (5) I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”**

So let me ask you this question. What is God's will for us in Christ Jesus? God's will for us in Christ Jesus is that we bear fruit, not just a little bit of fruit but rather, over time, much fruit.

When I first came to Christ and embraced Him as My Lord and Savior He pruned me by exposing my sin and produced in me a godly sorrow that led to repentance. Nothing has changed! God in His faithfulness has continued His pruning process. He continues to expose my sin. He continues to produce in me a godly sorrow that repeatedly leads to repentance. And what will this ongoing pruning process produce? It will produce fruit, but not just a little bit of fruit but over time much fruit!

You and I, as true disciples of Christ, may not be what we want to be but we are not what we used to be and certainly everything we are, we are by the grace of God.

So why is it important for us to know that we are abiding in Christ? It is important for us to know that we are abiding in Christ because those who abide in Christ will over time not produce just a little bit of fruit but rather much fruit.

So, what is the second reason that I shared with you? Why it is important for us to be assured that we are abiding in Christ? The second reason is that if we are abiding in Christ, we can know that we will not be gathered up and burned (John 15:6). Let me read for you **John 15:6. “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”** This gathering up and casting into the fire of fruitless branches is speaking of the final judgment.

People, such as Judas, may publicly attach themselves to Christ and may be viewed as a branch but if they have never come to Christ by faith and embraced Him as their Lord and Savior so that Christ might indwell them and begin to live His life through them they will, in the sight of God, never produce any fruit and will inevitably face the final judgment. Oh, they may do things that the world may view as good, but from God's viewpoint that which is done apart from the strength and power provided to them through the life of Christ, all their so-called good works, are only filthy rags.

So why is it so important for us to know that we are in fact abiding in Christ? It is, first of all, important for us to know because if we are abiding in Christ we can be assured that we will not only bear fruit but we can be assured that over time we will bear much fruit.

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And secondly, it is important for us to know that we are abiding in Christ because we can also be assured that we will not be gathered up and burned in the final judgment.

This morning we will continue on giving you reasons why it is important for us to know that we are in fact abiding in Christ. So, what is the third reason why it is important for us to be assured that we are abiding in Christ?

If we are abiding in Christ, we can know that our prayers will be answered (John 15:7).

Let me read for you **John 15:7**. **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”** What an amazing verse! What an amazing promise! What did Jesus say? He said, **“if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”** Ask what? Whatever you wish!

Is Christ telling His disciples that they will receive anything they wish for in prayer without any conditions or stipulations? No! He is not telling them that. He is telling them that He will give them whatever they wish for if they are abiding in Him and if His word is abiding in them.

When we are abiding in Christ it positions us to pray effectively because our prayers will be seen by Christ's Father as an outflow of the life of His Son whose prayers He always answers (John 11:38-42). Let me read for you **John 11:38-42**. **“Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. (39) Jesus said, 'Remove the stone.' Martha, the sister of deceased, said to Him, 'Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.' (40) Jesus said to her, 'Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?' (41) And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, 'Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me. (42) And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me.”**

How often does Christ's Father answer His prayers? Christ's Father always answers His prayers therefore Christ's Father will always answer the prayers of those who are abiding in Christ because Christ's Father will see their prayers as an expression of the life of His Son.

Does this mean that our prayers will be answered exactly as we pray them if we are abiding in Christ? No, not necessarily. Not only do we need to be abiding in Christ but His word also needs to be abiding in us.

Though abiding in Christ may position us to have our prayers answered by Christ's Father, our prayers will not be answered as we pray them unless our prayers are an outflow of Christ's teachings and therefore His will. This is what I believe is being communicated to us when Christ's speaks of His word as abiding in us as a condition of answered prayer or as a condition for receiving whatever we ask for in prayer.

And this is consistent with the teaching of John in **1 John 5:14-15** when he tells us, **“And this is the confidence that we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

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(15) And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Now let me ask you a question. If our prayers are an outflow of Christ's life, as we abide in Him, and if our prayers are an expression of Christ's will, as His word abides in us, is there anything that Christ's Father will not grant us? And the answer is what? No! And this is exactly what Jesus is telling His disciples when He tells them, **“If you abide Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”**

Let me ask you a question. If you know that you are in fact abiding in Christ and His word is abiding in you, if you as a husband pray the following prayer, “Lord help me to love my wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her,” how certain will it be that the Lord will answer that prayer?

It will be totally certain! Why? It will be totally certain because you have met the prayer conditions laid out for us in **John 15:7**.

But now let me ask you a different question. What happens if we are abiding in Christ and we somehow inadvertently fail to pray according to His will? We want to pray according to His will but we are unable for whatever reason to discern it or know it. This situation I don't believe is specifically addressed in **John 15:7** but rather I believe that it is addressed in **Romans 8:26-27**.

Let me read these verses for you. **“And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; (27) and He who searches the heart knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”**

We might experience this situation when our wife, whom we have sought to love as Christ has loved the church and gave Himself for her, falls critically ill. How do we pray then? Certainly we can pray for the things that we know to be Christ's will in respect to what is revealed to us in God's word, but what about her healing? The Scriptures, I do not believe, will provide us an answer to this question. But this should not prevent us from praying for her healing knowing that even in our weakness that the Spirit Himself will intercede for us according to the will of God.

Based on **John 15:7** and **Romans 8:26**, whether we know the will of Christ in a specific matter or do not know the will of Christ in specific matter, if we are abiding in Christ while praying something very good will happen.

What will be that very good thing? **John 15:8**, **“By this is My Father Glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”** The very good thing that will happen if we are abiding in Christ while praying is that we will bear much fruit, thus glorifying Christ's Father and thus confirming that we are His disciples and this will be true whether we are able to discern what the will of God might be in a specific matter or not.

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The key to an effective and powerful prayer life that bears much fruit and glorifies God is abiding in Christ. It is this kind of prayer life that will allow us and those around us to be transformed from glory to glory as more and more of the life of Christ is seen in and through our lives.

There are many things that people in general believe are important but there is nothing more important as disciples of Christ than knowing that we are abiding in Christ. Why?

Not only will we have the assurance that we bear much fruit, not only will we have the assurance that we will not be gathered up and burned, but we will also have the assurance that our prayers will be answered.

May God give us the grace each day to abide in Christ so that our prayers will be answered in such a way that our lives will manifest more and more of Christ's life and therefore His fruit.