

Abide With Me

by James Smith

Abiding in Christ is essential for our spiritual growth, happiness, and usefulness.

Scripture: Matthew 6:34, John 15:4-5, Romans 8:1, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 4:19, 1 Peter 2:4

Topics: "Abiding In Christ", "Union With God"

Description

James Smith preaches on the importance of abiding in Christ, emphasizing that our union with Him is essential for our comfort, stability, and usefulness. He explains that abiding in Christ requires us to be engrafted into Him by faith, feel our need of Him daily, and seek all our supplies from Him. Smith highlights the necessity of thinking, hearing, reading, and communing with Christ, as well as trusting Him and identifying our cause with His. Abiding in Christ secures our safety, happiness, supplies, and usefulness, ultimately leading to a revival of pure and undefiled religion.

Transcript

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine -- neither can you, unless you abide in Me." John 15:4

Union with Christ is one of the greatest privileges of the believer; and to be one with Christ is the privilege of every believer. Nor ought anyone who professes religion to be satisfied without knowing, and daily realizing -- that he is one with Christ. Our comfort , our stability , and our usefulness , very much depend on this.

The union between Christ and His people is represented by Himself by the figure of a vine and its branches ; teaching us that our union with Him is as real , as close , and as necessary -- as the union of the branch with its parent stem. O what a glorious privilege to be one with Christ! Thus . . .

receiving all our supplies from Christ,

partaking of the nature of Christ,

bearing fruit like Christ,

being absolutely dependent on Christ for all our spiritual life, vigor, and strength. Being one with Christ, our Beloved Lord gives us this gracious and necessary direction, "Abide in Me."

Let us make this the great object of our lives, and keep it constantly before our minds. And in order that we may be enabled and encouraged to abide in Jesus -- let us consider . . .

what it supposes ,

what it requires , and

what it secures .

Holy Spirit, as the glorifier of Jesus -- be our teacher:

unfold the truth to our understandings ,

apply it to our hearts , and

write it in large characters upon our memories .

What does abiding in Christ suppose?

Of course, that we are engrafted into Him by a true and living faith, and that we rest alone on Him for our acceptance with God; for unless we are in union with Christ -- we cannot abide in Him. But being in Christ, in order to our actual and experimental abiding in Him -- we must daily feel our need of Him. One great part of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is to . . .

empty us,

strip us of self ,

lead us to feel our own weakness,

and bring us as poor sinners to look to Jesus alone, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

And just in proportion as we feel our need of Christ, and realize our absolute nothingness without Christ -- shall we prize Him, enjoy Him, and exercise dependence upon Him.

As we must daily feel our need of Christ -- so also we must have a scriptural knowledge of Christ. Just in proportion as we know Christ -- shall we make use of Him, cleave to Him, and rejoice in Him. Well did the Apostle know how necessary the knowledge of Christ was, and therefore he prayed for the Ephesians, who knew so much of Christ already, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." And giving expression to the desire of his own soul, he exclaimed, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

O how little do many of us know of Christ, and therefore it is that we make so little use of Christ, receive so little from Christ, and do so little for Christ! Our sense of our need of Christ, if it is deep and increasing -- will lead us to seek to know more of Christ; and knowing more of Christ, we shall daily come to Christ for all our supplies.

This is the next prerequisite to our abiding in Christ, we must come to Him. We come to Him at first -- as poor, lost, helpless sinners, that we may be saved by his merit and mercy. And as believers , we must

continually come to Him . . .

with all our burdens -- that He may bear them;

with all our cares -- that He may manage them;

with all our sorrows -- that He may sanctify them;

with all our foes -- that He may conquer them;

with all our sins -- that He may cleanse them;

and with all our needs -- that He may supply them.

All that we need is in Christ -- and it is in Christ, for us. Our deep necessity fits us for Christ -- and His infinite fullness fits Him for us! Our trials, troubles, temptations, disappointments, and vexations -- are to teach us our need of Christ; and what we receive from Christ is to make all these things blessings to us.

Fellowship with Christ is necessary to our abiding in Christ. Peter describes the Christian life thus: "Coming to Him as to a living stone . . . you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:4-5

If therefore we would abide in Jesus, we must more and more feel our need of Him; we must increase in our knowledge of Him; we must seek all our supplies from Him; and realize that we are in union with Him!

What does abiding in Christ require?

Many things -- and we will notice a few of them. We must think of Him, or exercise the intellect upon Him. As we are capable of thinking, and have the power of fixing our thoughts upon an object -- we must make Christ the great object of our thoughts , and think of Him. That we think of Christ so little, so seldom -- is one great reason why we enjoy Christ so little.

Beloved, we should think . . .

of His glorious person;

of His free and abounding grace;

of His infinite and everlasting merit;

of His deep and tender sympathy;

of His authority and unlimited dominion;

and of His eternal and changeless love!

We should think. . .

of what He was in glory ;

of what He became on earth ;

of what He did while here below;

of what He suffered on our behalf; and
of what He is now doing at the right hand of God.

We should think of . . .

His nature,

His offices,

His relations, and

His glorious second advent!

Oh, how much there is in Jesus to occupy our thoughts , and feast our souls! Is it not astonishing that we do not think of Him more? Never, never, shall we enjoy deep spirituality; or rise above our doubts and fears; or rejoice in God; or be very useful among our fellow-men -- unless we think of Christ more!

As we must think of Christ -- so we must hear and read of Christ. The senses should be employed on Christ, as well as the intellect . If we can hear at all -- we should go where we can hear of Christ, not only on the Lord's day -- but on other days too. If we can read at all, we should read of Christ; and as Christ is the most important subject, and as we are more deeply interested in Him than in anything else -- we should read of Him most. It is one thing to read religious books -- and quite another thing to read of Christ ; for many religious books have very little of Christ in them. Nor should we so much read what man says of Christ -- as what God says. God's own book should be our book , and we should read it, that we may know more of Christ, and become more like Christ.

We shall never abide in Christ as we ought, unless we hear more of Christ, read more of Christ, and think more of Christ. But we must not stop at thinking, hearing, or reading of Christ -- we must actually commune with Christ. There is often much prayer -- and yet little communion with Christ. We should realize that Christ is present with us. That we are alone with Him . That he is giving us His whole attention . That he expects us to tell Him . . .

all that troubles us,

all that grieves us,

all that pleases us,

all that we need , and

all that we desire .

We should keep back nothing from Him -- but speak to Him freely on every subject, and every circumstance. And realizing that Christ is with us, listening to us, and by sympathy entering into all our circumstances -- we should expect to receive . . .

intimations of His will,

proofs of His approbation,

communications of His grace, and
the consoling influences of His love.

Our thoughts should ascend to Jesus, and His thoughts should descend and take possession of our minds. Without more direct, sensible, and secret communion with Christ -- we shall not much enjoy our union with Christ, or attend to the admonition to abide in Him.

Having communion with Christ -- we must trust Him. He requires us . . .

to treat Him with confidence;

to believe what He says;

to expect what He promises;

to do what He bids us.

We must trust him with the salvation of our souls , and having put them into His hands, having committed them to His keeping -- we should rest satisfied that He will save them. We must trust Him with the body as well as the soul, believing that He feels an interest in the one as well the other. Yes, we must ask Him to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure; to fulfill in us all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power. And we must trust for temporal concerns also, looking to Him for food and clothing, as well as for grace and glory.

We do not half trust the Savior as we ought. Our confidence in Him is not worthy of Him. Our doubts, fears, and misgivings dishonor Him. Let us therefore seek grace that we may trust in Him at all times; trust Him for all, and trust Him notwithstanding all.

As we must trust Jesus, so we must identify our cause with His . Christ and His people are one. As the branch and the vine are one, as the members and the head are one, as the building and the foundation are one -- so Christ and his people are one. He has identified Himself with them -- and they should identify Him with themselves. He has identified His cause with theirs -- and they should identify theirs with His. Jesus takes an interest in all that concerns them and theirs -- and they should take an interest in all that concerns Him and His. "You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are His."

Christ says, "My person, My obedience, My grace, My Spirit, My word, My wealth, My glory -- is yours! You shall taste My sorrows now -- and share in My throne, kingdom, and glory by and by." We therefore should say, "My person, my property, my time, my talents, my influence, my all -- is yours. You, O my Savior, shall be honored by . . .

my poverty or wealth,

my adversity or prosperity,

my sickness or health,

my life or my death.

I will be for You, and for You alone now -- as I hope to be with You and like You forever.

Beloved, let us think of Christ more,
let us read of Christ more,
let us commune with Christ more, and
let us identify ourselves with the cause of Christ
-- so shall we abide in Him.

What will abiding in Christ secure?

1. It will secure our safety . Noah was not so safe in his ark; Lot was not so safe in Zoar; the man-slayer was not so safe in the city of refuge -- as the true believer is in Christ. Abiding in Christ, to him there is no condemnation; every sin is pardoned; the whole, the perfect, the glorious righteousness of Christ is his! All the glorious perfections of His nature are thrown around the man who abides in Him. He is . . .

safe from Satan , who cannot destroy him;

safe from sin , which shall not have dominion over him;

safe from men , for no weapon formed against him shall prosper;

and safe from death , for Jesus has said, "He who keeps My sayings shall never taste of death." In Christ! his person is secure.

2. Abiding in Christ -- all things work together for his good . Happy believer, no one shall ever pluck you out of your Redeemer's hands, or sever you from your Savior's love! Abiding in Christ will not only secure our safety -- but our happiness! Happy, thrice happy is the man who is in Christ.

He is not only pardoned -- but justified;

not only justified -- but accepted and pleasant in the sight of God;

not only accepted -- but adopted, and is God's beloved child;

not only a beloved child -- but an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ!

Is it not enough to make a man happy, to know that God . . .

has blotted out all his sins;

has given him a glorious, eternal inheritance;

and never looks upon him, but as in Christ, nor treats him otherwise than as a beloved child?

3. Abiding in Christ not only fixes us in a happy state -- but secures our supplies . All that we need for the body and for the soul, for life and in death -- is provided for us, secured to us, and will be conferred upon us -- as we need it. O how precious the Apostle's words to the Philippians: "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus!" Well may our beloved Lord say, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matthew 6:34.)

Beloved,

the God who has numbered the very hairs of our heads;

the God who has redeemed our souls from everlasting death;

the God who has made us so one with His Son, that we are forever united with Him

-- this God has provided for all our needs, has promised to supply all our needs, and will be as good as His Word.

4. Abiding in Christ will also secure our usefulness . We long to be useful, and by our usefulness to glorify our God, and honor our beloved Savior. Usefulness does not depend on great gifts, on exalted station, or on bodily vigor; but it does depend very much on our union to Christ, communion with Christ, and abiding in Christ. "He who abides in Me," says Jesus, "and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit ." Not only fruit, you see -- but much fruit. O if we were living in close and intimate fellowship with Jesus, if we were abiding in Him as the branch in the vine -- then how useful we should be!

Let us then be deeply impressed with the consideration that our safety , happiness , supplies , and usefulness -- depend on our abiding in Jesus! And just in proportion as we wish to . . .

realize our safety,

enjoy solid happiness,

live without care and anxiety, and

to be useful in our day and generation

-- shall we endeavor to abide in Jesus.

My dear friends, we live in stirring times, everything is full of life and vigor -- except the Church of Christ, which ought to be more so than anything else. We hear of the outpouring of the Spirit, and of a great revival of religion in another land, and we need the same blessing in our own. Many seem to be impressed with this fact, and means are being used to obtain such a blessing. But is it not to be feared that many are looking to meetings, to excitement, and to the use of means -- rather than to God. And is there not reason to fear that the feelings produced by exciting circumstances and startling news from abroad, will end with them? It is not mere excitement that we need -- but something purer, deeper, and more spiritual. We may have physical excitement, mental excitement, and even spiritual excitement -- and it may end in nothing. We need deep spirituality. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need abiding in Christ, that we may . . .

breathe the spirit of Christ,

copy the example of Christ, and

so be extensively useful in the cause of Christ.

Shall we have a revival of pure and undefiled religion? Shall we be instrumental in obtaining and bringing about such a blessed state of things? If so, we must attend to the following things:

First, we must be in Christ. Apart from Christ, without union to Him -- we can do nothing in this matter. As poor sinners, we must feel our need of Christ, come to Christ, obtain salvation from Christ, and by faith and love be united to the person of Christ. No union to Christ -- no grace, no spiritual life, no acceptance with God, or access with confidence to God. Without union to Christ, we have no power with God; and unless we have power with God, we shall have no power with man for spiritual and saving purposes.

Second, we must be intimate with Christ. We must live by faith in Him. We must walk with Him. We must carry everything to Him. We must seek all we need from Him. We must be constantly . . .

going to Christ,

conversing with Christ,

and obtaining from Christ.

The branch receives from the vine night and day, summer and winter; there is a constant communication from the root, through the trunk to the branches, and hence the buds, the blossoms, and the fruit.

Just so, there must be constant fellowship between Christ and our souls. The more we receive from Christ, the more we can do for Christ. This leads me to observe,

Thirdly, that we must act for Christ. There are many things done by religious people, and in the cause of God -- but they are not done for Christ. Jesus could not say, "You did it unto Me." We may act from pity -- or from pride, for applause -- or to satisfy conscience; but we should act for Christ. The glory of Christ should ever be our aim and end in all our religious actions. As all that Christ did, as the Savior -- he did for us; so all that we do as Christians -- should be done for him.

Now, unless we are in union with Christ, we cannot be intimate with Christ; so unless we are intimate with Christ, we shall not, in our efforts and endeavors to do good acts for Christ.

Fourth, we must be like Christ. We may possess His nature, for "if any man has not the Spirit of Christ -- he is none of His." We must become His disciples, and learn of Him. We must . . .

copy His example,

breathe His spirit,

and imbibe His temper.

Every Christian should represent Christ in the world, in the family, and in the Church of God; and if we do not give a fair representation of Christ -- we do not answer the end of our new creation.

Until we are more like Christ, it cannot be said of us, "You are manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ, written not with ink -- but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone -- but in the fleshy tables of the heart." O for grace to make us more like Christ.

Finally, we must receive the Holy Spirit from Christ. The Father promised to give His Holy Spirit to the Church. When the Son had finished His work on earth, He went up to Heaven, and received of the Father the promised Spirit. On the day of Pentecost He sent down that Spirit into His Church; and by the wisdom, power, and operations of that Spirit -- sinners were converted, the Church increased, and believers were

edified.

Now, the great thing we need for ourselves , is the Spirit in His fullness and in power. That fullness and power of the Spirit that we need must be obtained from Christ -- but it can only be obtained by close walking with Christ.

The great thing needed by the Church, in order to its union, harmony, and increase -- is the Spirit in His fullness and in power. That blessing would . . .

remove our prejudices against each other,

break down all the walls and hedges that keep us asunder,

lead us more fully into the truth,

and fill us with love to one another.

Then we would love one another as Christ has loved us, and this being the case, the Church of Jesus would soon "appear like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession!"

Then the poor, selfish worldlings around us, would be compelled to exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" And then the conviction would be forced on every conscience, that the religion of Christ is a divine reality, a holy power, and a supernatural nature. Nothing will impact the world -- like the holiness of the Church! This, then, is what we need for the Church -- not worldly titles, places, or honors; not worldly wealth, respectability, or distinctions; not so much great gifts, splendid talents, or powerful minds -- but the Spirit in His fullness and in power!

This is the great thing needed by the world . It has the Gospel, the Christian ministry, the Church, and all various religious societies -- and yet it still lies in the power of the wicked one . There are comparatively few conversions, while multitudes are hardening in sin. Nothing but the Spirit in His fullness and in power -- will awaken sinners to a sense of their danger, convince them of sin before God, or lead them to the Cross for life and salvation. The world is God's enemy. The world is governed by Satan. The world hates the light. And in this state it will continue "until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high" -- and then there will be deep convictions, numerous conversions, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

Reader, are you in Christ? This is a very solemn and important question. Press it home on your heart, nor rest until you can say, "Yes, blessed be God, through free and sovereign grace -- Christ and my soul are one!"

If you are in Christ -- are you intimate with Christ? Is there a constant fellowship carried on between Christ and your soul, in reference to all things, both temporal and spiritual? Remember, if you are a Christian, the Lord Jesus feels interested in everything that affects you, however insignificant it may appear.

Do you act for Christ? Is the honor and glory of Jesus the great end at which you aim, the chief object which you have habitually in view?

Think for Jesus.

Speak for Jesus.

Act for Jesus.

Let your whole life be consecrated to Jesus.

May you sincerely say, "For to me, to live is Christ!" -- and then for you "to die will be gain". Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.

Are you like Christ! I think I hear you exclaim, "Oh, how faint the resemblance! If at all like Him -- O how little!" Well, friend, if you would be like Christ, you must be much with Christ; and if you are much with Christ, you will in Christ see the glory of God, and be gradually changed "into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Will you receive the fullness of the Spirit from Christ? He has it. He has promised it. He is prepared to bestow it. But He will have us feel our need of it, ardently long for it, earnestly seek it, and persevere in our applications -- until we obtain it. In this way the Spirit in His fullness and power may be obtained -- but in no other way. We have not -- because we ask not -- or because we ask amiss. Let us come to Jesus as poor, empty, needy creatures, and seek until we obtain this invaluable blessing at His hands.

And now to conclude, let us pity the Church -- torn and divided, comparatively powerless and feeble as it is. And for the honor of Christ, and out of pure love to the brethren -- let us set our hearts upon obtaining the empowering of the Holy Spirit for it, in greater fullness than it has been enjoyed by it in our day.

Let us also look with joy on this poor unhappy world, which lies under sentence of death, only waiting for the day of execution; and let us endeavor to bring down the Holy Spirit upon it, by earnest, united, importunate, persevering prayer! Morning, noon, and night -- let us pray for it. In public, in private, and in our families, let us pray for it.

And while we pray that the Holy Spirit may descend upon it, let us speak to all about us of Jesus, and try, as if all depended on our efforts -- to save souls from death. The secret of success lies here, in our being united to Christ, abiding in Christ, and acting for Christ; acting for Christ -- as if everything depended on what we do -- and yet depending upon the Holy Spirit -- as if everything depended on His presence, power, and operation alone.

Gracious Lord, make us thorough Christians, and use, oh, use us, to bring about a revival of pure and undefiled religion, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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