

Abiding in Christ (Session 1)

by Joseph Carroll

This sermon emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ through the Holy Spirit to live a fruitful Christian life.

Duration: 42:54

Scripture: John 15:1

Topics: "Abiding", "Dependence on the Holy Spirit", "Abiding in Christ"

Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the significance of abiding in Christ, explaining that true spiritual life and fruitfulness stem from a continuous dependence on the Holy Spirit. He highlights that the Christian experience is marked by new beginnings initiated by God's Spirit, and that understanding and knowledge come from the Spirit's illumination. Carroll stresses that without Christ, we can do nothing, and that our role is to let Christ live through us, rather than seeking to accomplish things in our own strength. He encourages believers to embrace humility and recognize their need for the Spirit's guidance in their lives, ultimately leading to a fruitful and glorifying relationship with God.

Transcript

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for Thy presence. We thank Thee for Thy Son, the Living Christ, in us, by His Spirit. We rejoice this morning in the potential of that life which is ours in Him, of what He desires to be in us, through us to others.

We omit before Thee not that we desire a blessing, but we desire His glory. And consequently, Father, we ask Thee to bless us that we might be a blessing to others for His sake, not for ours. We ask for that illumination of the Spirit of God, without which we cannot see and therefore cannot understand.

With all simplicity and with faith and hope, we would sit at Thy feet, dear Lord, and trust Thy Spirit to do that which He wants to do in our midst during these days together, that we might go forth from this place to bear much fruit, to the glory of Thy name, Thy great name. And this we pray with thanksgiving, in Jesus' name. Amen.

We will be reminding ourselves continually of the great truth that comes from those first verses in the book of Genesis, that wherever there is a need, God's answer to the need, be it sinner or saint, begins with the ministry of the Spirit of God, always. God must initiate, He must begin, in the beginning, God. This is always true, in the beginning, God.

It was a dear friend of mine, a man of God, who said, the Christian life is an experience of multiplied new beginnings. It's a good word. The Christian life is an experience of multiplied new beginnings.

And those new beginnings always begin with a moving of the Spirit of God. He reveals His truth through His word that will meet our need. And when He moves, the next step, of course, is what? Life.

We see. We see. You may have read a passage of scripture a hundred times, but we've never really seen it.

The Apostle Paul prayed a great prayer for the Ephesians in the first chapter of his epistle. He prayed that the eyes of your heart being enlightened. He prayed for the eyes of their heart to see, that they might know.

And that's God's order. The moving of the Spirit, the seeing, the light, the knowledge. And that's God's order.

And let me say again, He doesn't have any other order. If He did, the Apostle Paul wouldn't pray that prayer. We seem to think if we get more knowledge, or attend more conferences, or pray more, or study the Bible more, we're going to become more spiritual.

We may, we may not. It depends upon whether we respond to the Spirit of God. He is our teacher.

He's your only teacher. I wonder if you've ever made Him that. Our Lord said, He shall teach you all things.

He's your teacher. You might say, what are you doing up there this morning, Brother Carroll, if He's, if He's our teacher? Well, He gives some men the gift of teaching. And I'm here because He has given me that gift.

I'm not clever. I'm not brilliant. But I have a gift.

And that gift was given me by the Spirit of God. Because He had a role for me to fulfill. Therefore, He provided the gift in order that I might do the will of God whilst here on this earth.

No credit to me. He divides to every man several as He will. He may give several gifts.

But the gift is not enough. The gift must be empowered by the Spirit. Otherwise, it doesn't achieve God's objective in the teaching of the Word.

So you must have the Word and the Spirit always together. You must not separate them, because it's His Word. It's the living Word of God, not a dead Word.

Now, if a dead man preaches that Word, it is dead, unless God, by a sovereign act of His grace, sees fit to use it. But that's exceptional. So let's be clear about how we're going to be taught this week.

We're going to be taught by the Spirit of God. We're going to sit at the feet of our Lord Jesus, and we're going to trust the Spirit of God. I say to the students perhaps a hundred times a year, and I hope they've got it by now, three things must ever be before you.

Unceasing dependence on the Spirit, number one. That's always number one. Unceasing dependence on the Spirit within you, your teacher, your guide, your remembrancer.

He wants to be to you all that Jesus was to His disciples. I wonder if you know Him. Do you know when He speaks? Do you know what He says? You're led by the Spirit of God.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. They are the sons of God. Walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

The tragedy of the church is it does not know the Spirit of God. You can hear the benediction a thousand times, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and very few know it. Well, let's trust the Lord this week that He, the Spirit, will lead you into fellowship with Himself as your teacher, and you will learn to depend upon Him, and only upon Him.

Don't depend upon me or Attenberg or Dan Johnson. That's the worst thing you could do. But the Spirit of God is within us, and if you pray for us, and if you believe God to answer His promises, He will speak through us.

But the glory will be His, because we are earthen vessels. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, said Paul, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Now, this is all groundwork.

We must get this very, very clear right from the beginning. Don't ever look to a teacher or a preacher, but look to the Spirit of God in the man, and trust the Spirit of God to speak through him. Now, he may just speak one or two words to you, but they're quickening words, they're living words, they can change your life.

They come from the Spirit of God, and you know it. You experience that quickening of the Spirit of God. He's a quickening Spirit.

He's a life-giving Spirit. He's a wonderful person. He is God.

And so we depend upon the Spirit unceasingly. Second, look unto Jesus. Third, live by faith in the Son of God.

Three things. Unceasing dependence on the Spirit, basic to everything. Unceasing dependence.

Second, looking unto Jesus, not to yourself, not to others, looking unto Jesus as you run the race. And third, living by faith in the Son of God, in you. You say, is He without and within? Of course.

Also in heaven, He's all round about you and underneath you. He's everywhere. But He's in you by His Spirit.

The ever-present, indwelling Christ, wanting and waiting to live His life through you by the Spirit. And that's what we're going to consider together during these morning meetings. We're going to come to a very wonderful passage of scripture.

In Australia, one of the hobbies, and very profitable hobbies in recent years, has been hunting for opals in Queensland. It's the northern state, the northeastern state of Australia. And it's the home of opals.

And so in the holiday season, you find literally thousands of people making their way to the opal fields in Queensland. One of these men, who was an expert on opals, went to a certain field, and he saw a little hut belonged to a prospector. And so he thought he would go in and he would see if this prospector had any opals he wanted to sell.

Absolutely nothing. Oh, but just now. Wait a moment, Lord.

I have this knowledge of Scripture. I have all this experience. I have been a Christian maybe 40, 50 years.

It doesn't mean a thing. Do you realize you never improve? The Christian life is the Christ life in you. It's not your life improved.

It's a new life, a person. Christianity is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Now, that's the great truth that you have to trust the Spirit to make real to you.

That without him, I can do nothing. Nothing. Therefore, the branch can make no contribution to the life of the vine.

It doesn't contribute a thing. All it does is take. All it does is draw.

All it does is appropriate what's in the vine. And it bears fruit. Once it stops doing that, it stops bearing fruit and it'll die.

Now, you see why it's such a great gem. Rich truth here. Because it's going to divorce me from myself completely.

Completely. And it's going to center me on the person of Christ. And it's going to force me to trust the Spirit of God to lead me.

Because there's no other way. Without me, ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is with it.

And men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. What a promise.

You see there, it's a big if here. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you. Two things.

You abide in me, my words abide in you. Ask what you will. It shall be done unto you.

Here is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends.

For all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you. That ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Abiding. Now, if you look very carefully at the passage, you're going to see some tremendous results or some amazing fruit, which is the result of the abiding life. I'm going to ask Ray to show onto the screen.

You can have a look at it and take the notes down later, not now. We're just going to have a quick look. Put them in your book and be inspired to study the passage.

The results of abiding and two definitions of abiding. First the results of abiding. There will be much fruit and in this God will be glorified.

The fruit will remain. It will not be no passing effort. We shall be disciples indeed, that is true learners and followers.

Our prayers will be answered and we shall have great liberty in asking what we will. The Lord will have joy in us still. Our joy will be full for in his presence is fullness of joy.

His right hand pleases forevermore. God's love will dwell in us. We shall not sin, that's 1 John 3, 6, that the subject is abiding.

We shall walk in light. We shall have confidence when our Lord returns. Now the results of abiding.

What a treasure house. What a treasure house. Now let's look at the definitions.

I have reduced them but we may give you the full definition later in the week. Godet, one of the great commentators of all time. His definition, the continuous act by which we derive all from Christ by the inward aspiration of faith.

Now that is worth taking down now. You are going to have to get hold of that. What does it mean to abide? He said it is the continuous act of faith.

Now on again, off again. The continuous act of faith whereby we derive all from Christ by the inward inspiration or aspiration of faith. You got it? The continuous act.

Continuous, whereby we derive all, not something, all from Christ by the inward aspiration of faith. Then Westcott, the great Westcott, another great scholar. The disciple must set his life in Christ and let Christ live in him.

Now that's important. All we have to do is just let Christ live in us. That's Christianity.

It's not simple. The disciple must set his life in Christ and let Christ live in him. In other words, all we have to do is just let Christ live in us.

And we're going to think together about that. Now how do we let Christ live in us? Well both men are emphasizing faith because there's no way I can let Christ live in me apart from faith. And Godet, of course, concentrates right there.

Derive all from Christ by the inward aspiration of faith. So the first thing we must do is stop seeking from any other source but Christ. That's number one.

That's a good start, isn't it? Stop seeking from any other source but Christ and shut yourself up to faith in him. That's Christianity. New Testament Christianity.

For example, there is a verse, we all know it, I trust, Galatians 2.20. What is Paul saying? I've been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Now if you went to a home where Paul was residing and you knocked at the door and Paul came to the door and you would say, who lives here? He would say Christ lives here. Just a moment. Who lives here? Well, I live nevertheless, not I, but Christ.

Christ lives here. Raleigh Reisner told us of an incident that took place in Japan. He went to a Japanese home.

He'd been there previously on a number of occasions and a little Japanese boy came to the door and he saw Raleigh and he shouted out to his mother, Jesus Christ has come! Well, in a sense, he was correct. Jesus Christ had come in Raleigh. Jesus Christ had come.

Now this was the great truth that made early New Testament Christianity vital. Christ was free in them to manifest himself. And that's what it's all about.

Letting Christ live his life in us, through us, to the glory of God in the bearing of fruit. That's what it's all about. Now let's concentrate on that and not forget it.

But how is this life to be experienced? By faith. Paul said, I live by faith in the Son of God. That's how I live.

He didn't live by faith in Paul. Now, Paul was quite a man. I don't think there's any doubt he was the greatest intellectual that ever lived.

Easily. He could have been a proud man. But he grew in grace.

And we find his growth in grace by certain statements he made about himself. He said, I'm the least of the apostles. But he said he was an apostle.

And a little later on he said, I am less than the least of all men. And he meant that. Less than the least of all men.

Now Paul had travelled extensively and he'd been in some of the sewers of the world of that day, especially Corinth. And he'd seen a lot of people that nobody would want to identify within that city. But he said, I'm less than the least of all men.

And yet he progressed a step further when he said, I'm the chief of sinners. He could have had a great deal to have faith in. He did have a great deal in which he could have had faith, you see.

But he had a true estimate of poor. And that's why God used him. It was Augustine who said, the first great grace is humility.

The second great grace is humility. The third great grace is humility. You are not going to live by faith in the Son of God until you cease to live by faith in yourself.

That's where humility comes in. It's only the lowly man, the man who knows his nothingness and his helplessness and his weakness that's going to live by faith. And it's only that man who is going to learn to go to the Lord with everything and not go to his brother who is just as weak as he.

Unless the Lord sends him to the brother and has some word through the brother to him. In the early days of my counselling, and I think I'll get back to it when a person would come to me for counselling, I would

simply say, did the Lord send you? Oh. Would you go back and you ask him if it's his will for you to come to me because if he didn't, I don't have a word for you.

Only the word that he speaks through me is going to meet the person's need. I can't meet anybody's need. There's another word we're going to probably be saying again and again, and it's this, only God can do the work of God.

And that's the ministry of the Spirit of God, to minister to others and meet their need. He does it through his word. But no man can do it.

It's the living Christ by his Spirit through the man. This we must get hold of. It's the living Christ by his Spirit living his life through me.

There are not two sources, Joe Carroll's life and Christ's life. No, I am in Christ, therefore his life is my life. So you don't think of two separate persons, you think of one person.

There was a very great Bible teacher. He lived the latter part of the last century. And the early part of this century's name was Trumbull.

Trumbull was in great demand, not only in the United States, but on the continent of Europe. And he would often travel to Europe to minister in conventions. A very gifted man, well taught in the Scriptures.

But he was a defeated man in his own personal life. He didn't know anything about an abundant or a victorious life. And there were great fluctuations in his spiritual experience.

At times he'd be soaring. Then he'd come down and he'd almost be in the depths of despair and defeat. Hear a powerful sermon, inspire.

Next day begin to flutter and come down again to his very low level. His life was inconsistent. And yet he had this great biblical knowledge.

And he had this great gift, no doubt about it. The Spirit of God had given him a great gift. But he also had besetting sins.

And this is his own personal testimony that he could not overcome these besetting sins. He was a very busy man, very busy preaching, teaching and traveling, but defeated. And he had to admit that he saw very, very little fruit from his ministry.

And this is his own personal testimony that he could not overcome these besetting sins. He was a very busy man, very busy preaching, teaching and traveling, but defeated. And he had to admit that he saw very, very little fruit from his ministry.

And then he got alone with the Lord and he began to seek the Lord. Surely there was an answer to his need. And then he heard a message on the text, to me to live is Christ.

And the Spirit of God quickened him to it. Well to him to live was not Christ, it was Trumbull and Christ helping Trumbull. Now let's get hold of that.

Paul said, to me to live is Christ. But for Trumbull to live was Trumbull with Christ helping him when he felt he had the need for the Lord to help him. There is a difference.

Can you really get hold of that this morning? Can you say that? To me to live is Christ. That's a tremendous statement. That can revolutionize your life.

And the Spirit of God spoke to him through this word. And what did he say? Well Christ up to that time had been an external Christ. Somebody outside.

A savior yes, but outside. Always present to help him when he called upon him. Now that's what Christ was to Trumbull.

Maybe that's what the Lord is to you. But he was an external savior. But then he realized that Christ was actually and literally within him.

Christ was in him. Number one. Number two, Christ was his life.

Two great discoveries. Christ was in him and Christ was his life. That he had taken Trumbull into union with himself.

They were now one. He was in Christ. Bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.

One spirit with his spirit. One. So what happened? Well, put your shock absorber on.

He never again asked the Lord to help him. Never. Man who lives the abundant life never asks the Lord to help him.

Why? As though he were one and the Lord was another. Oh no. We are one.

We are in Christ. You don't ask him to help you. You trust him to live his life through you and meet the present need.

He does it. Through you. By faith.

So never again did he ask the Lord to help him. Why? Here is Trumbull out here. With the Lord helping him.

Well, the Lord is not interested in that. What he is willing to do is do it through you. But he does it.

Because it is his life in you and through you. Now that is the important truth. So never again did he ask the Lord to help.

But he trusted the Lord to do his own work in him and through him. Not to help him but live in him. Live in him.

What does Westcott say? The disciple must set his life in Christ and let Christ live in him. That is the truth. That is abiding.

Let Christ live in him. That is all you have to do. Let Christ live in you.

It is a big all. It is a very important all. There is a vast importance between our doing something and let the Lord himself do it through us.

You see, one is a life of hope. Well, I hope I will get through. The other is a life of faith.

The victorious Lord will triumph. That is the difference. One is a life of hope.

Well, I hope something will happen. The other is a life of faith. Jesus Christ is victor in this situation in me.

There is a big difference there. It is a very vital difference. Why? Without him I can do nothing.

I can do nothing. My wife is a very good cook. Too good really.

And if you bake one of her delicious creations, cake, and invited some guests in and they partook of the cake, and came to my wife and said, where is the pan you bake the cake in? Oh, nowhere. It is a beat up old thing somewhere around there. I had it for years.

All right, where is it? And so she produces the pan and this person profusely begins to thank the pan for the cake. Oh no. She needed that pan.

But she baked the cake. I am dealing with a rather difficult situation in a certain part of the southern United States. And one of the friends involved in this, and he is a dear friend, is a great fisherman.

A great shark fisherman. And I thought, wouldn't it be interesting if he caught a large shark, say a seven or eight foot shark, hauled him in, and all his friends came round and they said, let me see the rod that caught this shark. Or let me have a look at the hook that caught the shark or the line that caught the shark.

Well, my friend will use a rod, he will use a line, and he will use a hook, but he caught the shark. Because without him, that line, the rod, the hook, is useless. Now God, in his infinite mercy, can see fit to use us.

But he does it. He does it. There is a very dear man of God in Australia, his name is Dr. Paul White.

He is quite a character. He has written a number of books, jungle doctor books. He had an amazing conversion.

He was a student, a medical student at City University, and an Irish evangelist, Nicholson, came to the city, and he also was quite a character. And so the first sermon he preached in the biggest Baptist church in Sydney, he made the statement, the archbishop of this city, there is more grace in a wooden chair than in that man. All this was splashed across the newspapers the next morning.

The archbishop, more grace in a wooden chair than in the archbishop of Sydney. And Paul White, he read this in the newspaper and he thought, boy, any fellow to say that about the old arch, he is worth listening to. So, he went along to the next meeting and got wonderfully converted, first night, soundly converted.

Finished his medical training and went out to Africa. Well, he was the university champion, Australian university champion for the mile. And, you know, he is a medical doctor and champion runner, really somebody.

So, he went out to Africa and had to study a language. And he was getting on in the language a little bit. He wanted to preach.

He didn't come out here to sit studying a language all day. He just wanted to go out and preach. So, he had an African helper.

And he was always at this African helper. Why don't you take me on one of your preaching tours? So, he said, all right, all right, Bawana, Bawana, I'll take you, I'll take you. So, one day he said, all right, Bawana,

we're going on a preaching tour, get everything together, three days.

We'll be out in the bush three days. So, Bawana, he really got all dressed up in his white shirt and white shorts and hat. Off they went.

So, they came into this village and all the children of people came running around staring at him. And so, his helper said, well, Bawana, preach, preach. So, Bawana held forth in his best African language of the place.

And it had gone about ten minutes and the helper stopped him. He said, Bawana, shall I finish your message or would you like me to preach one of my own? So, he was shocked. He thought he was doing fine.

He said, well, whatever you wish. So, he finished the message and when the crowd had dispersed and had gone back to their little hut, he said, now, why did you stop me? He said, well, Bawana, we are fishing. We're fishing for souls.

And you're part of the fishing team. He said, I know that, but why did you stop me? He said, well, Bawana, when you fish, you have a rod, you have a line, you have a hook and you have a worm. Bawana, you are the worm.

You are the worm, Bawana. In other words, you're going to attract them. They'll come and stare at you with your white knees and your white clothes.

You're the worm. Well, that's just what he needed to hear. He was the worm.

We somehow get big opinions of ourselves, sinners who made the cross a necessity. How can we ever be proud? We should apologize to worms. Christ didn't have to die for the animals of the field or the worms in the earth.

He died for sinners. We should apologize. We are saved, sinners, by the grace of God and nothing else.

You're the worm. Humility. There's never going to be an advancement in the life of faith without humility, because you're not conscious of your need and you don't realize who you are.

And nothing without Jesus Christ. He's everything, I'm nothing, but in me all things are possible. Praise God.

Now, that's basic to everything. Some years ago I was preaching in a certain city. Some of you people are from this city.

And I preached a series of messages on the 23rd Psalm. And the pastor and his wife were very sophisticated people, highly educated, and very gifted, both of them. So about the third day, we went to lunch together in a certain restaurant, and I said to the dear lady, Mrs. So-and-so, what will you have? And very haughtily she said, how could I ever decide what I should have at any time? After all, I'm only a dumb sheep.

Well, she spoke the truth. Well, that's what the Word of God says we are. Why try to be anything else? You'd think some people were peacocks the way they strut around.

Well, you can go like that, but you're still a sheep. And a sheep is the most helpless of all animals. You see, this is basic.

Until you let the Spirit of God bring you down to where you belong, he'll never lift you up. Because he's going to glorify Christ, he's not going to glorify you, and he's not going to glorify me, and he's not going to glorify any work. His one passion is to glorify Jesus Christ, nobody else.

And when he gets us down low enough, then he'll give us light. And he can take you a long way in a short time. But there are some people who never advance, because they're too big.

They're not little enough to be led. Too big, I can do it. I'm a big boy.

You ever taught children to walk? Especially boys. Well, hold my hand, no, I can walk, I can walk, Danny, I'm fine. Well, you can't walk.

Oh, yes, I'm a big boy now. Down he goes. It's true.

Same with people. Oh, I can do it. Down they go.

And you pick them up, and you dust them off, and you set them on their way again, down they go again. And the telephone rings. They're too big to be taught by the Spirit of God.

And he just doesn't teach them. Growth in grace is growth in dependence on the Spirit of God, because of a consciousness of your own nothingness and your own helplessness. Not until then can this life, which is a life of faith, be lived.

Shall we pray? Father, we do thank Thee for the rest that comes when we realize another must live his life through us. Will you not divorce us from all false concepts and bring us into the faith, rest, life of abiding? In this we pray with thanksgiving in Jesus' name. Amen.

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