



Abide in Him 1 John 2:28-3:3

Bible Study for February 5, 2020

The title of today's lesson, which I believe is the theme of this passage, is "Abide in Him." Let me ask you a question: If someone approached you and asked, "What does it mean when the Bible says we should abide in Christ?" What would you say? What does it mean to abide in Christ?

But, is this question even relevant? Does it matter? After all, if I've been saved by grace and I know I'm going to heaven. What difference does it make whether I know what it means to *abide in Him*?

May I suggest that it is very important? In fact, this week's text indicates that whether or not we have abided in Christ will be the basis of either our confidence or our ashamedness at the Christ's return (v. 28). This God-breathed information raises the importance of abiding in Christ to an eternally important level.

So ... What does it mean to abide in Christ? Why should we abide in Christ? and, How can we abide in Christ? These three questions are each answered by this week's text of Scripture in **1 John 2:28-3:3**.

Scripture Reading and Prayer for Illumination

What Does It Mean to Abide in Him? v. 28 A Definition

We can understand what John means by the phrase "abide in Him" by examining how it is used in the context here in 1 John and by how it was used by Jesus in the Gospel of John:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (John 15:4-8)

So, Jesus said that to abide in Him meant to allow His Words to abide in us and this is the basis of our ability to bear fruit.

But whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1John 2:5-6)

Again, we see that abiding in Him is related to His Word, namely those who keep His Word are in Him.

Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. (1 John 2:24)

Here we see that allowing the Word "that which you heard from the beginning" to abide in us is the equivalent of abiding in Christ.

But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie--just as it has taught you, abide in him. (1 John 2:27)

This verse emphasizes the aspect of being taught by the Holy Spirit of God. Those taught by the Spirit abide in Him.

When you put all these together a definition for *abiding in Him* emerges:

Abiding in Him is reading, hearing, studying, memorizing and meditating on the Word of God in reliance upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of obedience which results in a life of fruitfulness.

Are you abiding in Him? Are you committed to a pattern of reading, hearing, studying, memorizing and meditating on the Word of God? Do you rely on the Spirit? Do you obey? Are you fruitful?

Why Should we Abide in Him? vv. 28; 3:2-3 A Motivation

From the late eighteenth century comes the story of Colonel Davenport, the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives.

One day in 1789, the sky of Hartford darkened ominously, and some of the representatives, glancing out the windows, feared the end was at hand. Quelling a clamor for immediate adjournment, Davenport rose and said, "The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. Therefore, I wish that candles be brought."

Weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday at two times (11:30-12 and 12-12:30). Both in Capitol Annex 436 or, if occupied, the 4th floor lounge (404).

Why should we Abide in Him? He has commanded it. He has provided to us this precious book, the Word of God by which to obey it. He has given to us the Holy Spirit to teach us from it. The one who has commanded our abiding and provided the means for our abiding is soon returning. I choose to be found doing my duty! How about you?

The text of Scripture repeats the phrase twice (vv. 28; 3:2) “when He appears.” It doesn’t say “if” but “when.” He is coming! We believe in a literal, personal, bodily return of Christ to this earth.

This text also tells us that there will be two responses at the return of Christ: confidence and being ashamed (v. 28). Those who have confidence will be those who have abode in Christ. Those who are ashamed will be those who failed to abide in Christ.

There are many illustrations of this principle in our everyday life. The employee should be at work all the time in anticipation for the bosses’ return, etc. But the one we can all identify with would be of the child who has been left instructions by his parents of something to do while they were away. If the child obeys, he is able to greet his parents with confidence at their return. If the child disobeys, he will be ashamed at their return.

How will you greet Christ when He returns? With confidence because you’ve been obedient to His command to abide in Him or with shame because you’ve neglected the study and obedience to His Word?

How Can we Abide in Him? vv. 29; 3:1-2 A Foundation

John explains to us how we can abide in Him when he speaks of our sonship. In verse 29, John further explains our abiding in Christ as resulting in practical righteousness. In the same verse he explains *how we can abide in Him*: we’re “born of Him.”

Because we are “born of Him” there should be a family resemblance: He is righteous, we should do righteousness. So, we can examine ourselves by asking the question, “Is there any family resemblance?” Children are expected to look like their parents, whether that is a good or bad thing, others will decide.

But just thinking about the fact that we’ve been “born of Him” causes John to explode in adoration to God. He pauses to marvel at the condescending love of God which calls us the “sons of God.” Words cannot express the wonder which grips the apostle’s soul. Someone suggested that the word “Behold” or “See” here means “Just take a look at.” While the phrase “what manner/kind of love” literally means “from what country.” Where did it come from? It’s out of this world!

If the apostle was excited that we are “called the sons of God,” imagine his delight in v. 2. “Beloved, now are we the Sons of God.” This is how we abide in Him, by the fact that we’ve been born again. Because we’re born again we have a desire to study the Word of God, we have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. If you find those things to be lacking in your life, you haven’t experienced the new birth.

This doesn’t mean that Christians never have struggles. We do. There is a battle against sin and Satan to be fought. We have, at our very best, an imperfect family resemblance. But, because we are sons there is an anticipation for a day when the imperfect family resemblance of this life is replaced with the perfect family resemblance when we see Him.

Some of you are discouraged today, the trials of this life have beat you down, but there is a hope that goes beyond this world. You may be frustrated with your growth as a Christian. I believe all “real” Christians are frustrated with their growth as Christians. Allow verse 2 to comfort you when it says, “what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

From looking at an ugly rose root can you prophesy the existence of a perfectly colored, velvet textured, perfumed rose? *No, it does not yet appear what it shall be.* From looking at an acorn can you prophesy the existence of a great oak? *No, it does not yet appear what it shall be.* From looking at a scrawny, fuzzy, awkward eaglet can you prophesy that one day it will soar with tireless wings upon the air, and that it will defy the cyclone and scream at the clouds? *No, it does not yet appear what it shall be.* From looking at a crawling, hairy, earthbound caterpillar can you prophesy that someday it will lift itself from the dust upon wings of multicolored beauty and make its home among the flowers? *No, it does not yet appear what it shall be* (Roy Laurin). But as the songwriter wrote: “Someday the silver cord will break, and I no more as now shall sing; But O the joy when I shall wake within the palace of the King! And I shall see Him face to face, and tell the story saved by grace; And I shall see Him face to face, and tell the story saved by grace.”

Conclusion:

1. Believers, Purify yourself (v. 3)! Abide in Him! Are you reading, hearing, studying, memorizing and meditating on the Word of God in reliance upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of obedience which results in a life of fruitfulness.
2. Unbelievers, Jesus said very clearly to Nicodemus, “You must be born again!” (John 3) If you’ve never trusted in Christ and repented of your sin you’ve never been born again. In your flesh there is no way for you to please God. But Christ bids you come unto Him. Trust in Him today and have the assurance of being born of Him and therefore be able to abide in Him so that you may have confidence before Him when He appears.