

## John Ch 15:6-11

“Abiding In Christ”

Vs6 (Jesus says here)

I don't know that anyone has *ever* selected this vs as a beginning point for a bible study before, but such is the case with where we're at today. Welcome to Calvary Chapel, if anyone doesn't abide in Christ he is cast out as a branch and withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned. What more needs to be said?

“Personal godliness,” and the breakdown thereof, was the primary topic at hand as we came to a close last week. and We were discussing that which would constitute the actuality of fruit in a person's life as intended by Jesus Christ in this passage that lies before us. Because often times as we think of a fruitful life, we think of a busy life, we think of results, but machines produce results, factories punch out results, but it takes a living organism to produce fruit. Even so to simply be busy about religious rigor and pious traditions of man is not necessarily to lead a fruitful life. Because I can put on a façade of religious activity and be bearing zero fruit in the eyes of God, because the fruit that God is looking for in my life is the product of my *abiding* in Christ, the overflow of the life of Christ in me, not the results of the expenditures of my flesh.

So leading people to Christ, or how big our church grows, or how involved in the ministry we become, those things don't necessarily indicate the level of fruitfulness in our lives. and As we stated last time though what Christ is speaking of here certainly can encompass *those things*, *those things* by no means encompass what Christ is speaking of, because if they're not the overflow of Christ in me, then they're nothing more than a fabrication of my flesh. Remember Jesus Christ is the vine, and what the vine is inherently, and intrinsically will be reproduced in the branches, therefore if there's no regard for personal godliness in my life, and I'm living like the world every other day except a few hrs on Sunday morning, then it doesn't matter how much I may give, how many people I lead in the sinners prayer, how much responsibility I take on with in the church, I'm not bearing fruit in the eyes of God.

So personal godliness is the fruit that the Father (the vinedresser) is looking for in my life, now we realize that as personal godliness begins to break down as demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ, the 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost characteristic we see in Christ is love (which we'll talk more about today). We realize that Jesus was a Man of personal holiness, meaning that He walked in obedience to God's Word. He was a Man of humility, and full of grace. He was one who *did* lead people to Himself, He came to serve and not be served, He was One who gave of Himself, and was a Man of thanksgiving and praise. and All of those things the bible speaks of in regards to the fruit of our lives, and all of those things are apart of the make up of personal godliness. (and If you'd like scripture references for those things grab last weeks tape or c.d.) But I just wanted to re-emphasize as we began our time today that I can be busy about many of those things, and not necessarily have regard for personal godliness in my life.

But it's impossible that I should be growing in personal godliness without being involved in *those things* to some degree or another. So that I can do good works, but that doesn't make me godly, but if I'm growing in personal godliness, good works will take place in my life, and we took the time to distinguish these things last time. But see the difference there, one is the overflow of Christ in me, the other is just a works routine that has an outward appearance, but no inward relationship with Jesus Christ which is what God is looking for to bring forth fruit in our lives, because Jesus made it clear here in vs 4-5 when He said,

Vs4-5

Nothing of eternal value is possible apart from Jesus Christ Now we remember here that Jesus is speaking to His disciples, those who know Him, have been grafted *into* Him, and are being used *by* Him. But then as we get to vs 6 Jesus says here that if we *don't* abide in Him, we're cast forth as a branch, and the branch withers up because it's not receiving life from the vine, and they cast it into the fire and it burns. Now there are certain words that I didn't draw your attention to as we traveled through this last time, specifically the words "unless" in vs 4 and "if" here in vs 6. But you need to realize that these words constitute condition and choice.

I stress again that Jesus is teaching in a parabolic form here and the primary thrust of a parable is to emphasize one main point. and As we've already established, the main point that Jesus is seeking to communicate in this portion of scripture is the need to stay as closely connected *to* Him and as deeply rooted *in* Him as possible that we might lead fruitful lives. But surely at the very least we need to see here the fact that there are ramifications that are attached to human responsibility and the choices that we make regarding our relationship with Christ. and That you and I have the choice of whether or not we're going to abide in Christ.

Now we know that it is God that grafts us into the vine, but once we've been grafted into the vine, it's our choice whether or not we choose to abide, and should we choose "not" then we need to be aware that there are consequences to the choices we make. and According to what Jesus is saying here, the consequences are pretty severe, "Well what are the consequences?" It depends upon your theology, let me rephrase that, the consequences are the same regardless, but depending upon whose theology is right, only time will reveal, but it's pretty big dice you're rolling.

There are those who say, "Well, we have to remember that the emphasis is upon bearing fruit, not salvation, therefore what's being said here is that the aspect of being used of God, being in that place whereby you'll be a fruitful branch will be severed." and What they mean is that Jesus is in essence saying here that you'll be shelved, or shipwrecked, or whatever term you want to you, basically disqualified from the ministry, but that you're still going to Heaven. and

They quote from 1 Cor 3 which says, *“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”* 1 Cor 3:11-15 and Surely the bible teaches that you can be rendered disqualified from the ministry, or being used of God in an effective manner due to some sin or something in your life, but that doesn't mean that you're going to hell. Forgiveness can be there, but we still reap what we sow.

But then there are others who say, “You're either in Christ, or you're not, and if you're cast *out* then you're not *in*.” and Of course there are all kinds of references in the scriptures, OT and NT which speak of the fact that if we don't want anything to do with God, then He's not going to force us to stay, but that He will cut us off and give us over to our own way. You recall when J.B. was ministering just prior to Jesus' coming on the scene and as he was speaking to the nation of Israel he said, *“...bear fruits worthy of repentance,”* Matt 3:8 and he rebuked them for placing stock in their national identity like we spoke about last time, and he went on to say, *“...even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”* Matt 3:10 Jesus said, *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”* Matt 7:19-20 and It was right after that that He went on to say that on that day not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord...shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven” even though they were engaged in all kinds of religious activities.

Why? Because those things weren't the overflow of the life of Christ in them, they were just religious rigor and fabrications of the flesh, it's not about what you do, it's about who you know. It's about know Jesus Christ personally and intimately. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter ch 2 he speaks there of the danger in coming to know Jesus Christ and then willfully walking away from Christ, and how it's better to have never known, than to have known and then go and entangle yourself again in the things of the world. In the book of Romans (though Paul uses the olive tree as his example) he says, *“...if God did not spare the natural branches,(speaking of Israel) He may not spare you either.”* Rom 11:21

So there are very viable arguments either way. You say, “Well, which is it? Are we talking about a breach in eternal security here, or being rendered ineffective *to* the kingdom, but still being accepted *into* the kingdom?” I'm afraid I can't let you off that easy, it's something you're going to have to study through, and take up with Jesus. It seems to me to be wise to simply make the resolve that you're going to abide in Christ, and then you don't have to worry about it. Let me tell you something, I believe whole heartedly in eternal security, as long as you abide in Christ.

“But what if I don’t abide in Christ?” Then that’s your problem, that’s something you’re going to have to deal with between you and the Lord, I don’t worry about whether or not I’m going to make it, because I’ve made my resolve to abide in Christ so I don’t have anything to worry about it. and My suggestion to you is to do the same, don’t flirt with how much you can sin, and still have salvation, you just purpose on your heart to stay as closely connected *to* and as deeply rooted *in* Christ as you can possibly be and you’ll have nothing to worry about. Abide in Christ.

So then with all the stress that’s laid upon the need to abide in Christ we would do well to establish exactly what that means. Jesus basically says here that if you don’t abide in Him that your life will be *pointless*, but if you do abide in Him your life will be full of *purpose*. Notice

Vs7

Now we notice here that Jesus is reverting back to the subject of prayer, He mentioned a minute ago back in Ch 14 vs12-14, now He brings it up again, in vs 16 He’ll bring it up again. and towards the end of Ch 16 He’ll mention it even again. and So Jesus places tremendous emphasis on the power and purpose, and priority of prayer. Now in ch 14 we spoke of what it meant to have an effective prayer life, and here Jesus is speaking about effective prayer life again, but it’s predicated upon 2 things. and The 1<sup>st</sup> thing that Jesus draws to our attention (if we’re to see the hand of God moved through the power of prayer) is that we need to abide in Him. “If you abide in Me.”

Again the word “if” pointing to choice, so what does it mean to abide in Christ? Simply put it speaks of “continuing with” or “to remain.” But on a practical level if I were to ask you where your “abode” was, you’d probably give me the name of a certain city, a certain street, and an address on that street if reference to your house. That’s your earthly abode, it’s where you live, it’s where you’re rooted, it’s where your life is centered and where the things that mean the most to you in this life are found. That’s your abiding place, and I think that perhaps to think of Christ in that light might help us get a little bit better grip on what Jesus is saying here. We’re to *abide* in Him. That is, we’re to make our home in Him, we’re to plant our lives in the midst of His life, we’re to be centered *in* Him, send our roots down deep *into* Him, and be completely dependant *upon* Him as the One who means more than anything else in this life to us. We’re to love Jesus more, I think Paul phrased it best when he said, “...*for in Him we live and move and have our being,*” Acts 17:28 and Again, “*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*” Col 3:17 We’re to abide in Christ.

I think the details of what that entails practically for us are all summed up in this next phrase, “and My words abide in you.” Because as the word of God abides in you, you’re going to be following through on those things that ensure a constant and close relationship of abiding in Christ.

Now as for the context of effective prayer this makes the 2<sup>nd</sup> condition that needs to be met if we're to accurately claim this promise Jesus makes to us here. and If we take what we've discussed regarding our abiding in Christ and apply it to His word abiding in us then we begin to get a grip on what's meant by this. We're to let the word of God be at home in our hearts, we're to let the life of God's word be planted into our lives, to be centered in us, send it's roots deeply down into us, and let reach the full value of it's intended purpose in and through us. You see it's not enough to simply get into the Word if the Word isn't allowed to get into us. There are all kinds of people who know the Word, but if they were to have their heads cut off, all that they know of the word of God would go with their head. Because it's never sunk down into their hearts, but Jesus is telling us that the word of God needs to make the journey from the head to the heart. We need to take the time to meditate on it, to contemplate it, and allow it to be assimilated into our lives to where it actually begins to shape us, and mold our convictions and our perspectives on life.

The bible says, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.*" Col 3:16 That is, let it inhabit you, be alive and vivacious in you, not in a meager, skimpy little way, but richly, that is abundantly, let the Word of God abound in your life, give it priority, give it precedence, don't throw it on the back burner somewhere, but give way to the Word of God in your life. It used to be said of Charles Spurgeon that if you sliced him he would bleed bible ink. Because the word of God dwelt so richly in him, his whole world revolved around Jesus Christ and the reality of His word at work in his life. Every time he'd speak there would be some sort of biblical connotation or principle come out of his mouth if not a direct quote from the bible, because not only did he abide in Christ, but the word of God was abiding in him, and God used his life in a radical way.

As the word of God begins to shape you, and conform you into the image of the Son of God, as you come before the Father with the mind of Christ, then as what you desire, and it shall be done for you. Ps 37:4 says it like this, "*Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*"

Why because your desire will be His desire, if your delight is in the Lord, then the things that are on His heart will be on your heart, and anything you ask you consent to have the unspoken filter of God's Word weeding out improper prayer petitions and requests. F.B. Meyer makes the comment of a prayer that's self centered and grasping at the prizes of worldly ambition and greed, but as it filters through the words of Christ it encounters the words, "Seek 1<sup>st</sup> the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" and it's turned back surprised and ashamed. Another that is full of cruelty and unkindness towards someone who's maligned or somehow injured the petitioner, but as it filters through the words of Christ it's met with the words, "Love your enemies, pray for them that despitefully use you," and so it's laid to rest, and falls to the wayside. and So in his words, "The words of Christ forbid unsuitable prayer;" F.B. Meyer

So we begin to understand what it means to abide in Christ *and* allow His words to abide in us, and if we're in Him and He in us, the life of Christ flowing through us and the word of God centered in us, then even as Christ was you'll be. Others oriented, self sacrificing, God glorifying, and Jesus says, if this is where you're at, whatever you ask will be done. So take note of the correlation between prayer and the Word of God, they go hand in hand.

Vs 8

Now this kind of takes us back to the beginning, remember what Jesus is speaking of here at its core meaning in regards to fruit. "Personal godliness," as demonstrated by the life of Christ flowing into us, meaning that His attributes and characteristics will be flowing out through us. and He says, by this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, much godliness and the breakdown thereof, more of Him and less of us gives glory to the Father. Now you recall that we said that the chief characteristic of personal godliness as demonstrated in the life of Christ was love. and So that's what Jesus begins to speak of next.

Vs 9

How did the Father love Jesus? Obviously He loved Him fully and unconditionally, not generically or theoretically, but personally and intimately. He made known His love verbally, He responded to Him, strengthened Him, cared for Him, kept watch over Him and honored His commitment to Him. Of course He loved Him from before the foundations of the world, and Jesus is saying here that even as the Father has loved Me even so I have loved you. Fully and unconditionally, personally and intimately, He's spoken verbally of His love for you by His Word, He responds to you, strengthens you, cares for you, He keeps watch over you and honors your commitment to Him. and Of course He's loved you from before the foundations of the world. For God so loved you that He gave His only begotten Son so that as you would simply believe on Him you'd never perish but have everlasting life. and There in the book of Rev 13 we see a picture of Jesus as a lamb having been slain from the foundations of the world. He's loved you with a perfect love and before you were formed in the womb He *knew* you, has been in love *with* you and has a plan and a purpose *for* you. "Now," Jesus says, "Abide in My love." What does that mean? How do I do that? He takes us right back to where we've come from there in vs 7

Vs 10

You guys we really need to see this, Jesus is saying here that abiding in His love is synonymous with keeping His word. Now in ch 14 Jesus said, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" John 14:15 and Here He's saying that if we keep His commandments we'll abide in His love, so if we love Him we'll keep His Word and as we keep His word we're abiding in His love.

Now that's not to say that He doesn't love us if we *don't* keep His commandments, but that if we're refuse to keep and be obedient to His Word then we by our own choice remove

ourselves from the umbrella, or as some people put it, the spout where the blessing come out. Jesus is saying I want to bless your life, but I can't honor disobedience to My word with reward. How many of you who have children have ever told them to do something, and they utterly and disdainfully disobeyed you and so you rewarded them by taking them to 6 Flags? It doesn't happen, it doesn't mean you don't love them, but they have removed themselves from the place of your approval.

That's why Jude said, "...*keep yourselves in the love of God,*" Jude 21 underneath the umbrella of God's blessing. If you step out from under that umbrella don't blame God for the ramifications that come into your life, Jesus says all we have to do to abide in His love is to keep His commandments, be obedient to His word to our lives. and No doubt reflecting on these words John would later write, "...*whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.*" 1 John 2:5 What's the litmus test for knowing you're in Christ? Obedience to His word, if you have no regard for God's word, then you do well to examine yourself to see if in fact you're in the faith. The bible says, "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.*" 2 Cor 13:5 Make sure you're abiding in His love, again John writes, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.*" 1 John 5:3

Love and obedience are like hand in glove, they're inseparable. Jesus demonstrated His love for you in giving Himself for you, how do you demonstrate your love for Him? By giving yourself for Him, by setting aside your dreams, your goals, your wants and desires, and leading your life in humble submission and obedience to Him. and Therein lies the mystery of life, as you lose your life, as you abide in Christ and His word abides in you, your life becomes full of purpose, the power of prayer is coursing *through* you, the word of God is a reality *in* you, the love of God is an actuality *to* you, and the overflowing result, is joy.

Vs 11

We'll pick up on this thought next time.

Maybe you're in that place where your life doesn't really seem to have the purpose that it should. The life of Christ isn't flowing into you and out through you because you've never asked Jesus into your life. You've never opened the door of your heart to Jesus Christ and said, "Lord, you're free to come into my heart and into my life, and make of me what you will." Listen, Jesus Christ loves you with a perfect love, and He has loved you from before the foundations of the earth, and so He came to this earth, and laid down His life upon the cross for you, and for me. and Now if He's compelling you to abide in His love, to surrender your life to Him, to be forgiven of your sin, then today is the day of salvation for you, just open your heart and receive Jesus Christ

