

Lesson 54

Abiding in Christ

Introduction:

As the Last Supper began to draw to a close Jesus commanded His disciples to **believe Him** when He said, *“I am in the Father and the Father in Me.”* For the disciples this was a profound statement. What did Jesus mean? How was this possible? Even in our day, to a large degree this statement remains a mystery. Yet as Christians we believe His statement and much of our theology has been formed around it

Icebreaker:

How can Jesus be in the Father and the Father in Him? The gospel of John begins with the introduction that Jesus is the Word. Thus the Word is in the Father and the Father is in the Word. A concept which we can understand is that there is only one God, who is the 1) the Creator (Father, brain, thought or idea originator), the Word (Son, offspring of the Father’s thoughts – everything will be brought under subjection to what the Father says) and 3) the Spirit (Power, the animator or the one who accomplishes the task that the Word declares). In this aspect humans resemble God, they have thoughts, they speak words to express their thoughts and use their bodies or others to accomplish their will or thoughts.

Introduction continued:

Before we get into today’s lesson lets reflect on some other Scriptures:

1. *It is impossible for God to lie.* (Hebrews 6:18) Why? Because He is one ... His thoughts, words and actions are in agreement. If they were in disagreement they would not be one.
2. *For all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.* (Deuteronomy 32:4)
3. *Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ) If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? **The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.*** (John 14:6-10)
4. (Jesus is speaking to the Father) *“Sanctify them in the truth; Your **word** is truth.* (John 17:17)
5. *It is the Spirit who testifies, because the **Spirit** is the truth.* (1 John 5:6)
6. (Jesus is speaking) *“You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. But even **if I do judge, My judgment is true;** for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me.”* (John 8:15-16)
7. *“If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. **He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word (truth) I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.** “For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His*

commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” (John 12:47-50)

8. *But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON **EVERY WORD** THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’ ”* (Matthew 4:4)

Reading The Scripture:

Abide In Me

John 15:1-11

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: “Follow Me: A Message from God”, a Journey with Jesus)

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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. 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. 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. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

The Commands:

1. Abide in Me, and I in you.
2. Abide in my love.

The Lesson:

As the disciples leave the site of the Last Supper with Jesus, He expands on the idea of oneness with God. Only this time He speaks of the disciple’s oneness with Him. He begins the conversation by declaring, “*I am the true vine.*”¹ Through the analogy of a grapevine² Jesus connects this oneness with Himself to the disciples being able to bear fruit.

Group Discussion:

1. Since Jesus calls Himself the “true vine”, is there an untrue vine? Yes. (Ezekiel 17:1-10).
2. What fruit is Jesus talking about? The fruit of the Spirit as enumerated in Galatians 5:22-23.
3. What is the purpose of our bearing fruit? It glorifies God and blesses others.
4. What does God do when we don’t bear fruit? Lifts us up (vs. 2). The goodness of God leads a man to repentance (Romans 2:4)
5. How are we able to bear fruit? By being in Christ (vs.4). Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
6. How can we bear more fruit? God prunes us (vs.2). Through discipline (Hebrews 12:5-6) Loss of focus produces leaves not fruit.

¹ This is the seventh and last “I AM” statement Jesus makes concerning Himself in the Gospel of John.

² The analogy he uses fits perfectly with what had just transpired: He and the disciples had been having communion with one another as they shared in the bread and wine.

7. What is the purpose of pruning a grape vine and how is it done? It will produce better quality grapes. Grapes only grow on one year old vines and only the uppermost spurs are left.
8. How do we bear much fruit? (vs.5) By recognizing that we can do nothing apart from the Lord therefore we remain in constant fellowship with Him.
9. How do we know that we are abiding in Christ? We continue to partake of the bread and wine. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:53-56)³
10. What happens if we don't remain in fellowship with Christ? (vs.6) We wither and dry up. Then we are gathered up and cast into the fire to be burned.
11. What happens if we forsake the bread and wine? We in effect are saying we have no fellowship with Christ and are not obeying what He commanded us to do.

The Lesson continued:

Continuing the lesson, Jesus remarks that if His disciples remain in Him and His words remain in them then they can ask whatever they wish and it would be done for them. At that point the disciples were probably thinking ... which words? Jesus was quick to reply! He issued them another commandment and then told them how to keep it. *Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love.* This was the same way that the Father had treated Him.

Group Discussion:

1. Since Jesus is the Word of God how important are His instructions to us?
2. Are Christians not having their prayers answered because they are not obeying what Jesus told them to do?
3. What does the following verse mean to you?
By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1 John 2:3-6)

The Point Of The Lesson:

Since we have been born again by the Spirit of God and God dwells in us then our words and actions should line up with the Word of God.

Application:

Read the songs of two different vineyards. Isaiah 5:1-7 and 27:2-6

³ According to Jesus: **1)** A believer abides (dwells) in Jesus when he eats Jesus' flesh and **2)** Jesus abides (dwells) in a believer when the believer drinks Jesus' blood.