

Abide in Me: The Father's Glory

John 15:8

17/12/2023

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TRANSCRIPT:

John 15:1-8 reads, "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, 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, 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, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Father, we come before You again through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is our Redeemer. We ask that You would send Your Holy Spirit, O ascended Lord and Savior, to us to open the eyes of our understanding, to minister the grace of God to us, and to empower the preaching of Your word. Not unto us, O God, not unto us be glory, but unto Your name be the glory, for Your mercy and for Your truth's sake. And so, may You be glorified as You minister to Your people this day. May it result in the holiness of Your people, that they might praise You all the more for Your greatness and for Your majestic power. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

We come now to a consideration of the final verse in our series in John 15 regarding abiding in Christ. And that verse is verse number 8 which reads, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." This last text of our series centers the hearts of the disciples of Jesus to the ultimate purpose of their fruit-bearing. Why should the disciples bear fruit? Why should they abide in Him? Yes, Jesus says, "I've written these things that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Yes, they should abide in Him so that they might commune with Him and have the fellowship and joy that comes from that relationship. Yes, they should have abiding life so they can experience the privilege of a

powerful prayer life and an effective prayer life. But here in verse number 8 is set for us the ultimate purpose of fruit-bearing, and that is that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

And the Lord Jesus wants His disciples to get a hold of this, that the ultimate purpose of fruit-bearing is so that our lives might sing and show forth the praises of My Father. And Jesus in this passage of scripture isn't teaching us that our good and our joy and our communion is at the expense of the glory of God. Neither is it teaching us that God having glory means we're not having any good. In fact, what Jesus says here doesn't contradict anything else that He says in the text. God has so wisely crafted the accomplishment of His glory as interconnected with the good of His people. So that Jesus in the same discourse can say in verse number 11, "These things concerning your abiding relationship with Me have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." So Jesus in the same breath can say, "This is all for your joy." And in the same discourse say to His disciples, "This is all for My Father's glory." Because God has so wisely crafted that the joy of His people is tied up in the glory of His name. This is the wisdom of God.

And so as we consider the ultimate purpose, do not think that this annuls the lesser purposes, or that somehow God, to uphold this one, must diminish the others. No, God has designed the Christian experience in such a way that when He receives maximum glory from His people, is when they are most, as one man said, satisfied in Him. That the joy of God's people brings them to more of a powerful expression of the glory of God. And for any of us who have tasted of that joy, know that we most glorify God when we are most satisfied in Him, as has been coined by John Piper.

But let us look at verse number 8 here in verse number 15. And before we move on to some of the applications and things that we need to learn from this text, we must understand what it is saying. In verse number 8, the Lord Jesus says, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." The two words "by this" are very important. In fact, sometimes has been debated. What is "by this" referring to? Is "by this My Father is glorified," but what is the "by this"? "By what" is the question that we naturally should be asking about this text. But what it naturally does is takes us back to verse number 7 because Jesus has just described in verse number 7 about "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall be done for you." And He goes on to say that if you abide in Me and My words abide in you, and you so have a communion and fellowship with Me that your prayer life becomes effectual, your prayer life becomes effective because My will and yours are one in the sense that your will has been broken and melted and the word has shaped you. He says, "You can ask whatever you

desire, and it shall be done for you."

At this point in verse number 7, as we considered last week, Jesus is explaining, if I could say, the highest pinnacle of Christian communion. He's talking about something here that is described as much fruit, bringing forth much fruit. He's talking about abiding in Him and His word abiding in you in such a manner that your life is taken up in God. Your will is bent towards God so that you can ask with an assurance according to His will whatever you desire, and it shall be given to you. This is the deep influence of the word of Christ upon our hearts, a harmonizing of our will with the will of God that makes our praying efficacious, makes it effective. As I said, this is the height of Christian communion whereby we become effective and more than just effective. It's kind of like we become a sort of partner with God in the accomplishment of His purposes in the world.

Think about last week's sermon, think about verse number 7, "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you." That is you becoming like Christ, that is you being molded, shaped, transformed by Him. Your will bent towards His, you can ask whatever you desire, and it shall be done for you. What God is doing, He's inviting us into the throne room of God whereby we may pray His prayers, if we could say that, we may pray as our Savior would pray according to His will, and so see the fulfillment of God's purposes in the world by means of our praying. That's the highest manifestation or expression of communion with Christ, to be as it were a partaker of the fulfillment of God's purposes in the world by the extent of that communion. And He's saying, "By this My Father is glorified, by this is My Father glorified." By this kind of praying, by this kind of communing, by this kind of abiding, by the word of God abiding so richly in you, by that My Father is glorified.

And He further describes what that is, what that life is that glorifies the Father, and He describes it in verse number 8 as a life of much fruit. He says in verse number 8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit." By a life that is reflected in verse number 7, and that life is My Father glorified in, and that life is a life that produces much fruit or a life that has much fruit hanging from its branches. What He's simply trying to say is this, that a life that is lived in the vine, abiding in Christ, depending upon Christ, communing with Christ, a life that has its will bent towards Christ, that has the word of God dwelling richly in us, is a life that is fruitful. Meaning that you could go to the branch of that Christian and see great bunches of grapes, fruit hanging from that vine. The idea of much fruit is the idea of many, a plentiful amount, an overflow, an abundance of fruit hanging from those branches, the branches of those who abide in such a manner as we considered last week.

This is the fruitfulness and the effectiveness of one who is an abiding dis-

ciple in Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus goes on to say in verse number 8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so you will be My disciples." What Jesus is saying here is that if your life is characterized by this abiding life, by this dependence, by this kind of efficacious prayer, your life is a life of much fruit. And a life of much fruit proves itself to be My disciple. What He's simply saying is this is what it looks like to be My disciple. This is what it looks like to really enter into all that I have for My followers, all that I have for those who follow and hear and are taught of Me. The presence of much fruit reveals the presence of much life. Little fruit, little life. Much fruit, much life. So the abundance of fruits testifies to the life of the vine within the branch. And what that does is Jesus is saying this is what proves you to be My disciples. This is what shows forth that you really do belong to Me. That you are one of My followers and will be one of My followers until the day that I see you see My face. This proves you to be true.

Think about that just for a moment. Think about that just for a moment from this perspective. What Jesus is telling His disciples is this: The way you show forth that you truly belong to Me in an unmistakable way is by the abundance of your fruit. You know when we want to know whether someone is converted or whether someone is truly a believer in Jesus Christ, and I'm not saying we shouldn't ask this, but the question that we ask is, "How did you come to know Christ?" We want to know about the testimony. That is true. We should know about how people have come to Christ as an important part of the way and manner in which they came. But for some people, their moment of their coming is not also clear as to others. Perhaps their age, perhaps there were different times, seasons, struggles. Even the expression of what they experienced at that moment may not be as clear as we would like it to be from our judgment standpoint. But what Jesus is saying here is this, that how you join the vine is not the proof of whether you belong to the vine. What is the ultimate unmistakable evidence that you belong to Me is not by your profession but by the proof of your life, by your produce.

Some people's testimonies may be a little bit seemingly shaky to our ears, but God knows them that are His. But the Bible teaches us beyond this, what is the unmistakable proof of one who belongs to Jesus is the life of Jesus, is the Christlikeness of the fruit of Christ that emanates from their life and hangs on their branches. There are a lot of people that can say, "I believe in Jesus," and some people have an amazing sort of testimony. I was thinking about this the other week because a testimony was sent to me. I was thinking about this the other week. There are people of all kinds of religious persuasions that have certain stories of changes in their lives or experiences or things that happen at the moment that they came to their newfound faith. But what Jesus is simply saying is if My life is in you and you're abiding in Me, there will be much fruit, and that will be evidence

that you really belong to Me.

And there's a sort of kind of false assurance that many of professing Christians can have, even those that have been brought up in a Christian home. "I prayed a prayer when I was this age," or "I came to know Christ because I believe these things in what the Bible says." But the Bible teaches us, even the devils believe and tremble. But what Jesus is saying here is the devils don't bear fruit. The devils don't have the life of Christ in them. The devils don't commune with the Savior. What Paul says to the church at Corinth, "You cannot commune with devils and also with Christ. You cannot eat from the tables of devils and also from the table of Christ, the Lord's supper," saying communion with Him. What the Bible is teaching us here, Jesus is teaching us here, is that the evidence, unmistakable proof of a person's profession is the fruit that hangs from their tree. Isn't it interesting, when we see a faithful Christian who is living for the Lord Jesus Christ and is walking with seeking God, we very hardly question whether that person belongs to God, do we? We're not trying to work out, "Is this person really converted or not?" Why? Because there is fruit hanging off that branch that only point to the reality that he must know Jesus. He must know Jesus. Not only just have known Jesus, he must still know Jesus in the sense that he must be communing with his Savior and bringing forth fruit unto God.

Jesus said a similar thing in John 8:31. Listen to these words, "He said then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on Him, to those who believed on Him, 'If you continue in My word, then are you truly My disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" Jesus said this to them, to those Jews that believed on Me. He didn't say to them, "Because you believed on Me you're alright now, live as you please." He said, "Continue in My word, and then you'll prove to truly be My disciples." If you keep reading at the end of chapter 8, the same Jews which believed on Jesus, the Bible says in verse number 39, they took up stones to stone Him. You be the judge. Was their faith the faith of a true disciple? "Oh, we believed in Jesus." "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so prove yourselves in a way to be My disciples."

What Jesus is teaching His disciples here is that fruit-bearing is the goal that the Christian is aiming for, but he's aiming for that in light of his bigger goal and purpose, which is the glory of God. The glory of God. What does it mean to glorify God? This entire text is centered around that truth. What does it mean to glorify God? To glorify means to ascribe to God worth, to ascribe to God majesty, to simply magnify Him or to exalt Him. When you ascribe to something worth, you are saying that item is important, that item is of value, that item is precious. And when the believer glorifies God, that's what happens. It ascribes to God value, worth, not that it adds to

His value, but it ascribes to Him value. It ascribes to God value, worth, honor, praise.

This is well illustrated when at an art gallery or a museum. If ever you've been to an art gallery or museum, you walk in, and you find paintings in the art gallery, in the museum, and those paintings are usually framed, especially the really important ones, aren't they? Framed. The framing could be a picture frame; it could be embedded in the wall so that there would be a frame, the wall would act as a frame. Some of these pictures have a frame, and they have lighting particularly around it, so as to shine upon the picture, so that the picture might stand out. All the methods that are used by people in a gallery or museum so as to bring to our attention the beauty of the painting are all methods of highlighting. They're all methods of trying to attract the attention of the ones that are walking by to the painting itself.

Now, the frame does not add any beauty to the painting. The painting is as beautiful as it is. The painting itself is beautiful; the frame doesn't add to the beauty of the painting. It is not the painting. The painting is essentially has its own beauty. The artist designed and has its own technique, own beauty that comes through that. It's as beautiful when the man is judging it or the judges are judging it when they're judging it with the frame or without the frame; they're judging the quality of the painting. So the frame doesn't improve the object's excellency; it doesn't add to the object's beauty, but what the frame does is that it serves to highlight the beauty that is. What the frame does is that it more fully helps people to recognize the magnificence of the painting. And we know this because when we go to an art gallery, we never comment on the frame. We comment on the beauty of the painting. In fact, we lose sight of the frame as we behold the painting itself. No one pays attention to the frame in light of the glory of the picture. The frame serves to attract the attention of others to the picture.

And what the Bible teaches us is that when we're glorifying God, that is exactly what we are doing. And the Bible teaches us that God made man to this end, that he might glorify God. The Bible teaches us explicitly what the Westminster Shorter Catechism teaches in its first question: What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is what? Glorify God. And to what? To enjoy Him forever. What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. For man has been created for this end. As Romans 11:36 says, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Him be glory forever and ever. Amen." Colossians 1:16, "All things were created by Him in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him." The 24 elders that sing the praises of the Lamb in Revelation 4:11 says to Him, "Thou art worthy, O God, to receive what? Glory, honor, power. Why? For thou hast created all things, and by thy will they are and

were created."

Why should the creature glorify God? Because God made the creature. All creation is to testify that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork, day unto day uttering speech, declaring to us that God is glorious. And God made man for this end. But as we know, as the scripture teaches, that man fallen in sin failed to glorify his creator, as Romans 1:21 so explicitly says, that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, but they became idolaters. They became sinful and worshipers of devils, worshipers of the flesh, worshipers of the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, and the lust of the flesh.

But my friends, God set out to redeem a people for Himself. And so that in 1 Corinthians 6:20, Paul says like this, "For you were bought with a price," the price of God's own Son, shed, the blood of the Lamb of God, shed for our redemption, to take our sins, to bear our sins in His own body upon the tree, that we might go free. We who believe in Him might be saved, that we might have everlasting life, that we might know Him, the one and true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. And he says, "But you have been bought with a price for what ends?" Yes, for our salvation, but to what ends? To the praise of His glorious grace. "For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God," Paul says. "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." God has bought you; you belong to Him as His new creation; therefore, magnify Him, therefore glorify Him, therefore show forth His praises.

Turn with me to 1 Peter 2:9. 1 Peter chapter 2, verse number 9, so clearly teaches us this important truth. In 1 Peter 2:9, it says, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Why has God chosen us? Why has God made us priests? Why has God set us apart as a holy nation? Why, why, why has God shown such mercy to us in Christ Jesus? My friends, it is clear in this text that we should show forth the praises of Him, His praises, He who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We who were not a people are now the people of God; therefore, praise Him. You know the words here that we would show forth or proclaim the praises of Him literally means to publish the praises of God. Isn't that beautiful? Publish them. Make Him known as glorious. Publish the praises.

The excellencies of God. Who is God? He's excellent. He's magnificent. He's glorious in His splendor, in His mercy, in His grace, in His power. And in one sense, what he's saying here is your job as the Christian is to go about and praise Him and praise Him and show those praises in the way you speak, in the way you live, in the way you move, in the way you act,

to show that He's worthy, to show that He's glorious, to be the frame, as it were, of God that magnifies the gloriousness of His beauty to the lost and dying world.

So how has this got anything to do with John chapter 15? It's got everything to do with John chapter 15. The analogy itself teaches us the same thing. "I am the vine; you are the branches." Think for a moment now, if ever you go to a good vineyard and you taste, for example, a wine that is of amazing quality, or you eat from a vine's precious grapes that are so delightful, what is the first thing that you say? "Where did this come from?" If you want to know more about it, who do you want to speak to? The vine dresser. "I am the vine, the true vine, and My Father is the vine dresser." You come across a good crop; you want to talk to the vine dresser. You want to know his designs. You want to know his techniques. You want to know his manner. You want to know his ways. You want to know how on earth did this man produce such an effective crop? "I've had these grapes before from another farm, but they don't taste like this one. I want to know the secret of the vine dresser." Isn't that what happens when we taste of the produce of a good crop, of a good vine? We want to know the secret of the vine dresser. We want to know the way of the vine dresser. We want to know of the vine dresser. We want to know where it comes from, the farm, the farmer, all these things. And so the illustration itself speaks to us of this. The compliments of the quality of the produce falls to the vine dresser. And sure, the compliments also fall to the vine. But one thing you can be certain of is no compliments go to the branch, right? No one says, "Did you see the way that branch held that fruit?" The answer's in the branch. The key's in the branch. Let's talk to the branch. We need to know more about the branch. No, no one says that. "Tell me about the vine dresser. Show me the vine. Tell me about the vine dresser. Show me the vine. Tell me the vine dresser. Show me the vine." Because this is where the glory of the fruit comes from.

And what Jesus wants us to realize is that all the fruit-bearing that is in our lives is not for our glory. It's not because of us that we are who we are. As Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." The grace which saved me keeps me. The grace which saves me and keeps me sanctifies me. The grace which brought me thus far will lead me home. So that when everyone asks of me, "What is it that is this beautiful fruit that comes from your vine?" The answer should be, "Come, meet the vine dresser. Come, let me tell you about the vine." Because it's not in us. "For a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abides in the vine. No more can you, except you abide in Me."

This all ties in to exactly what Jesus was talking about in John 15:7. "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will,

and it shall be done for you." Think about this now. You can ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. If you abide in Me, My words abide in you. We looked at what an abiding life looks like. It looks like the practice of true religion that emanates from communion with the vine. As I commune with Christ, from our lives come effectual, practical, true religion. We live as Christ lives. The fruits of the Spirit are manifest in our lives, and people see that. And what Jesus is saying here is simply what Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Let me ask you this question. May see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. In this passage, it says it's your light, and in this passage, it says it's your good works. Then why are they glorifying the Father which is in heaven? Because they are ours by reason of our relationship to the Father. Because He is our Father, and we are His children, therefore His life is seen in us. That our good works, our light, is really the manifestation of the Father working in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and it's His light in us that is shining forth. And what we do is when we abide in Christ, our life is manifest in a holy, righteous, obedient faith where we live out the Christian life and experience that good works comes from our lives so that people may what? See our good works. They may see the fruit, and when they see the fruit, they say, "Ah, the vinedresser. The vinedresser." They glorify the vinedresser, your Father which is in heaven.

This was true of the Lord Jesus when Jesus Christ, who says, "I do nothing of myself, but all that I say, the Father gives me to say, and all that I do, the works that I do, they are from My Father." Jesus Himself says this. This is what it says of Jesus. "Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying this when Jesus performed the miracle," says, "a great prophet has risen up among us, and God has visited His people." When Jesus, they saw the miracle Jesus did, they said, "A great prophet has risen among us, and God has visited His people." God has visited His people in His Son. In Matthew 9:8, it says a similar thing. "Now when the multitude saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men." They didn't glorify man for the power. They glorified God for what they had seen in man.

And in this way, Jesus sets forth an example for us that as we abide in Him and His life is lived through us, and the power of the living Christ is in our lives, and fruit hangs from our branches, the world will see and testify to the reality that God is the one who deserves the glory, the honor, and the power, and the praise in our works, in our abiding works, but also in our praying. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you," and He says, "By this, by what? Not only by our abiding in Christ from which fruit comes, but the

fruitfulness of an effective prayer life, by this My Father is glorified."

How is the Father glorified by our praying? Well, the Bible very evidently teaches that. When Paul was arrested and was people were pursuing him, actually, and trying to take his life, he says that in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, he goes that God has delivered me, He is delivering me, and shall deliver me, but he says in the next part of that verse in verse number 10 these words, "He said, 'Who delivered us from so great a death, so you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.'" He's saying this, "God has graciously, as a gift, delivered us from death, but He has done so by you helping us in prayer."

And he goes, "Many people have prayed, and God, by the means of many people, has delivered us by the prayers of many people, so that much praise will go to God." You know what he's saying? Many people incorporated by prayer in the purposes of the fulfillment of God's will in the world leads to many faces being lifted up to God with praise. You know what he's saying is, "If you ask what you desire, if you enter into praying with me, you will glorify the Father because when I answer prayer, My name is magnified."

John 14:13, Jesus says this, "If you ask anything in My name, that will I do, why? That the Father may be glorified in the Son." Prayer glorifies God as we join with Him in communion and in fellowship, and as we pray and God answers. This was true of the case of Elijah before the prophets of Baal. Elijah is confronted with the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of Baal and Elijah have basically come to a place where Elijah is challenging the prophets of Baal. He says, "You cry out to your god and see if fire will come down from heaven, and I'll pray to my God and see if fire comes down from heaven and consumes the altar, the offering upon the altar." And when this all happened, and they had tried, and they were crying, and they were cutting themselves, and now praying and now crying out to their gods, and nothing was happening, the Bible teaches that Elijah said this to the Lord, "Hear me," he said, "O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."

The God who answers by fire will be the true God, and by this, our Father was glorified as He led His servant to the mountain to put on show and display the gods of this world, and so He prayed to the Father, and the Father answered by fire, and the hearts of the people were turned to God, that they cried out before the Lord these words, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God," and the Bible teaches that they all glorified God. God used a man that was submitted to the will of God in prayer that led to the praise of Jehovah.

As the hymn writer says, "Let my hands perform His bidding, let my feet run in His ways, let my eyes see Jesus only, let my lips speak forth His praise. All for Jesus, all for Jesus, all my being's ransomed powers, all my thoughts and all my doings, all my days and all my hours." When a life is submitted to God in union with His Son and lives out an effective prayer life, they live a life where much fruit hangs from their branches so that the world might know that there is a God in heaven. It testifies to the ungodly that there is a living God.

The question that begs for us, the people of God, is this: Has not the Christian church failed to attract the world's attention? The problem is that we have fallen for the false ideology that we think that if we be like the world, we will win the world. That is a failure to understand that the world is miserable, that the world is without hope, that the world is in need of something. If the world is in need of something that we have, therefore, we cannot be like the world to win the world; we must show them what it looks like to live a life of fruit-bearing unto Christ. They must see that something is different about us. That the God that we serve is a God who answers by fire. He's a living God. He's a true God. He does that which His people ask for, and beyond that, He changes their lives.

Nothing is more attractive to a depressed person than the joy of a Christian. Nothing is more attractive to the warring people in the world than Christian peace. Nothing is more attractive to someone who has been robbed than an honest worker in their workplace. Nothing is more attractive to a greedy man than a contented soul. Such a life, when that man or when that woman realizes that their way leads to death, such a life will see and wonder, "Is there any more to life than the path that I have been taking?" They'll consider, "Is there hope?" They'll ask themselves, "Is there power to change?" They'll ask themselves these questions, but where will the Christian be? They'll ask themselves, and the first thing they run to, "She's a Christian. My broken marriage. Godly marriage. What's the secret?" "Oh, He's the Father. All glory to the Father." "Oh, I see the fruit of your joy. Where does it come from?" "Oh, glory to the Father." "Oh, I'm struggling with sin, and I'm burdened by sin, and I can't break this addiction in my life. How do you break an addiction?" "Hey, He's the Father. He's the vine. He's the Father. They can help you. They help me, and our Father is glorified by that as people are attracted to us."

You know what Paul says to the church at Corinth? He goes, "You are our epistles, written not with ink but with the Spirit, known and read of all men." You know what he's simply saying is, "It's not about letters of recommendation. Our life testifies to the gospel we have preached to you. The Spirit of God has set you free. We don't need letters of recommendation. We need life. We don't need letters of recommendation. We don't need worldly

philosophy. We don't need all these. We need the power of the Holy Spirit so to change our lives that people will look on and know that Jesus is alive."

Does our lives speak of the excellencies of God? Do we show forth His praise? The hymn writer says this, "May the mind of Christ, my Savior, live in me from day to day, by His love and power controlling all I do and say." But he goes on to say, "May the Word of God dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour, so that all may see I triumph only through His power. Only through His power." How does your life frame God? As people walk through the gallery of the Christian church, and as they look at our lives as testifying to the God that we serve, do they see in us a God that is different to the God that they serve? Do they see Jesus in us? Do they taste of our branches and say, "Tell me of the vine dresser"?

Christian, is it not time to abide in Him? Is it not now the hour, in the hour of darkness and in corruption, in a sin-cursed world, when people see wars on every side and trouble, when people are confronted with difficulty in life, when things are getting more evil and evil, is it not now time to abide in Him? Is it not now time to be done with our uncommitted, self-centered Christianity that does not pursue God, that does not love Jesus with all of our hearts? Is it not time to be crucified to the world, and the world to you? Is this not the hour where we should be a people that glory in nothing except in the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord? Is this not the time where we should love Him, praise Him, glory in Him, make Him known to the lost? Is now not the hour to lay our pride in the dust, to lay our glory in the dust, and to take up the cause of our God? Is it not the hour that we should be a people that are found abiding in Him?

I'll finish with these words from John. He says, "Abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." When is the time to abide? It is now. Let us be done with a low level of Christian living, and let us turn to our Savior and commune with Him afresh. Let us pray.