

Abide

The Power and Beauty of God's Word

January 30, 2022 | Abide Part 5 | Bomi Roberson

WARM UP QUESTIONS: The word abide can mean “to remain, to stay, to dwell or to reside.” How do you feel when you are in your own dwelling place? What is it like when you invite someone to come hang out with you in that place?

READ: John 15:1-11

FOCUS: Jesus is the true vine who imparts life to His people. As we abide in Him, we will be aligned to His will resulting in prayers that trust His ways and a life of obedience where we find joy in His love.

OBSERVE: One of the main themes of the gospel of John is the deity of Christ. God introduced Himself to Moses as “I am”; in this book, Jesus makes seven “I am” declarations showing that He is God and the expected Messiah. John 15 focuses on vineyard imagery which is familiar to the Jews because it was an important aspect of life and the economy in Israel.

Jesus is preparing the disciples for the moment that He will be physically taken away from them. He describes the continuing relationship that the disciples will have with Him after His departure in terms of a vine and its branches.

- As the vine is the source of life and sustenance for the branches, this imagery also alludes to other false sources of life that people turn to, such as money, power, religiosity and other traditions.
- Jesus is the true source of life and giver of life (through creation) but, also, the sustainer of life.
- The vinedresser is responsible for caring for the vines by nurturing them and pruning them. The vinedresser's goal is to help make the branches bear fruit.
- Abiding in Christ empowers us to live lives that are faithful and fruitful, bearing the fruit of a changed life that affects our relationships with others as well.
- Pruning is necessary for greater fruitfulness. It is typically done in two ways: 1. Cutting away of dead branches. This is like cutting away or turning away from the old ways and the old self that lead to spiritual disease and rot in our souls in the process. 2. Cutting away living tissue so that the remaining branches can be stronger and healthier. This is like cutting away things that hinder growth and our potential to bear much fruit, things that rob us of spiritual vigor and life.

REFLECT:

- A branch can only have life when connected to the vine. When it is not connected to the vine and is lifeless, it becomes useless as well. When our lives are not connected to Christ, we find no meaning and we become purposeless. Only in Christ can we produce much fruit. What does it mean for us that Christ invites us to abide with Him, to enjoy His presence as we would our own dwelling place?

TAKE ACTION:

- Be deliberate and purposeful this week to cultivate intimacy with the vinedresser and allow His Word to cleanse and purify. Ask God to examine all aspects of our lives to make them fully integrated and internally consistent with God's will and character. Choose to abide in Christ, staying with Him and focusing on relationship with Him above anything else. When we choose to “abide in Christ”, He promises to “abide in us”.

PRAY: *Jesus, move in my heart to desire to abide with You. Help me to be deliberate and purposeful to seek intimacy with You, to dwell in Your Word and to receive Your pruning. Come abide in me and help me to become increasingly fruitful in Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.*