

Abide 01 – was spc 65 – **Abide to Thrive – Jn 15:1-6**

4 Part Series - 1) Abide to Thrive 2) Abide in the Word 3) Abide in Prayer 4) Abide in Fellowship

Have you **considered** your **New Year's Resolution** yet??

If not – allow me to **suggest** the most *powerful*,
truly *life changing* **Resolution**, you could *ever make*

NO I'm not talking about **Power ABS** or **Thigh Master**
Or the Super Nitro Powered **BOWFLEX** automatic
look-like-the-person-on-TV all in one **Magic Gym**

I'm talking about **Truly THRIVING** where it matters **THE MOST**
I'm talking about **Thriving** in things of **ETERNAL VALUE**

The **TITLE** of the **MSG** today is - **Abide to Thrive**
& we're going to **Jn 15:1-6**

The focus of this msg isn't so much the **nuances** - of the **V-by-V**
study of this text - - you can get that in our **JOHN series**

The **focus today** - is how to **THRIVE** in your *walk with Christ*

But **here's my concern** with a msg like this

So often – when the **Preacher** starts talking about
“Improving” or *“Growing”* in our **Walk with Christ**

we kinda **start feeling** the
“OUGHTA – BETTER – SHOULD” Sermon coming on

You know – where you feel like I’m saying:

You **OUGHTA** - - You **BETTER** - - You **SHOULD !!!**

This is (prayerfully) **NOT** - one of those sermons

So – let me **paint a picture** for you that **MIGHT help** you
feel differently about the **Miracle** of - **ABIDING in Christ**

IMAGINE a “**Christmas Carol**” like setting – You know,
with **Ebinezzer Scrooge** & the **Angel** of “**Christmas FUTURE**”

& **this Angel** comes to **YOU** in this setting - & he says –
allow me to **show** you **your future** walk with Christ

& then you see . . . **YOURSELF** - & you are Living -
Mature in Christ – You’re **Secure**, **Peaceful**, **Joyful**

You’re confident in God’s plan & God’s direction
you’re **anxious** for **nothing**
you have **peace** that **passes understanding** – &
you have the **JOY** of the **Lord**

your **circumstances** aren’t all **PRETTIED UP** all perfect
but you have this **settled peace** about you

you **KNOW** that can **DO ALL THINGS** thru **Christ** who strengthens you

& you to say to the Angel

REALLY ?? - - That’s **ME ??** - - **Really ??**

I get to **THAT POINT** in my walk with Christ ?? . . . **WOW!!**

& the angel says – **YES** you do – **IF**
you will **LEARN** to **ABIDE** in Christ !!

Let’s Pray

We're going to talk today about
the TRANSFORMING MIRACLE of ABIDING in Christ

But PLEASE Remember – This is NOT
an OGHTA, BETTER, SHOULD msg

This is SO MUCH MORE than
you OGHTA, you BETTER, you SHOULD

ABIDING in Christ - is the CONDUIT (the Channel) – THRU WHICH
all Victory, All Peace, & All Joy in the Christian life COMES

It is the Conduit THRU WHICH the POWER of the *Holy Spirit* flows

& pls hear me when I say – EVERYTHING we talk about
in regard to our lives being TRANSFORMED today . . .

It ALL comes thru the Power of the Holy Spirit in our lives
this CANNOT be done without Him!

If we've been a Christian longer than a month – we've learned that;
VICTORY over the world
PEACE the passes understanding
the JOY of the Lord

DON'T just POP out of the Microwave !!

We HAVE these things POSITIONALLY – “In Christ”

But taking them from a “Positional Truth” – to a “Practical Reality”
takes a little more than just waking up in the morning, RIGHT?

& so we MUST keep our minds on the vision of a “Life in Christ”
where we actually walk in VICTORY, & PEACE, & JOY

& we **must understand** that the only way to get from HERE to THERE
is **TO LEARN** - What it **MEANS** - to ABIDE in Christ
& **HOW** - to ABIDE in Christ

We're **looking** at the **ILLUSTRATION** of the **VINE & BRANCHES** –
from the Upper Room Discourse – in **Jn Ch 15**

& it's **critical** in this Illustration – that we understand
the **CONTEXT** - & the **PRIMARY POINT** - Jesus is Teaching

Because **to focus** on a “secondary truth” here can easily lead
to some **misinterpretation**

The **CONTEXT** of this Passage is – **The Final Training**
of the **DISCIPLES** prior to the Jesus going to the cross

The Context is **NOT about Unbelievers !!**
Even Judas is already **gone** by this point

It's critical we see – this passage is **directed at DISCIPLES**
people who are **ALREADY** Following Christ

It's **NOT** about **Salvation** - It's a **continuation**
of the Upper Room Discourse - - started in **Ch 13** with;

Jesus washing the Disciples **Feet**

One Disciple would **Betray** Him (& Judas left)

A **new commandment**

Another Disciple would **Deny** Him (Peter)

I am **the way**, truth, life

Our need & The power of the **Holy Spirit**

& **then** - **ABIDE in me**

& all of this is occurring
on the HEALS - of Jesus instituting Communion

where the entire focus is on “Union” (being one with) Christ
& this text flows perfectly out of - Communion

Jesus is preparing His disciples to live a life of;
Power to Overcome,
Bearing Fruit in the Holy Spirit , &
Supernatural Joy – “In Him”

THAT - is the CONTEXT

& the PRIMARY TRUTH Jesus is teaching here is
“*The need for us to Continually ABIDE in Him*”

The word “Abide” – is used 10 times in 11 vs’s
That’s how you know it is the PRIMARY TRUTH

Alright - Based on Jn 14:31 - Jesus & the disciples
probably have left the upper room at this time

& were on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane

& at some point - Jesus had the opportunity to use a grape vine
as a perfect illustration for this critical lesson

He would’ve seen plenty as they were walking –

But He didn’t need to see one - because the grape vine already
held tremendous significance to Israel

The grapevine was already the symbol of life for Israel

Many times - the **O.T. Prophets** referred to Israel as a **vine**, or as the **“vineyard of God”**

In Christ’ day - there was a **huge golden grapevine** decorating **the gate** leading to the **temple** - (*maybe they saw it*)

Calmet’s Dictionary says: *On the gate which led to the Holy Place, was a richly carved vine made of the finest gold, the bunches which hung from the vine were of costly jewels. The vine had an uncommon importance, and a sacred meaning in the eyes of the Jews*

& so - as **Jesus delivers** His 7th **I AM** statement here
He uses the **Symbol of Life** for Israel
to make His **most powerful statement** - re: **Life as a Disciple**

John 15:1 - ESV

1 *I am the **true** vine, and my **Father** is the vinedresser.*

When **Jesus says** “**true**” - the word means **LIT**; “**genuine**” or “**original**”
He’s saying; “**I am the Genuine, Original, True, source of life**”

& **then** Jesus **says** – and My **Father** is the “**Vinedresser**”

& so we have **the Illustration of**:
the **Vine** (Christ) - the **Branches** (Us) - & the **Vinedresser** (Father)

John 15:2 – ESV → →

John 15:2 - ESV

2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

We start right away w/ a difficult statement

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away” . . .

Notice - this vs. is talking about a branch (us) that is “IN CHRIST**” & that is not bearing fruit - (so it can't be an unbeliever)**

& Jesus says of this branch - - “He takes it away**”**

The Greek word translated “takes away” is “ah-ee-ro” (airo) - & it happens to be a pretty interesting word

**it's translated “take away” 25 times
& it's translated “take up” 32 times**

There are 3 literal definitions for this word;

- 1) “*To raise or lift up*”
- 2) “*to bear up, or carry*”
- 3) “*to take off or take away*”

So if you say; “What does it mean that God is going to “take away” a branch that is in Christ - but not bearing fruit

I can tell you that God is going to;

- #1) Raise up that branch (as if out of the dirt)
- #2) Bear up (or carry) that branch (as if w/ a support)
- #3) Take off, or take away that branch

So - which would you prefer for Him to do to you ????

& the correct answer is NONE OF THE ABOVE !!!

The whole point of Jesus' illustration here is;
YOU DON'T WANT TO BE THAT BRANCH !!!

You want to be the *other branch* – at the end of **V.2**;
... *and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes,
that it may bear more fruit.*

You want to be **this** branch
because **this** branch has the **life of Christ** - flowing thru it

& it is the LIFE of Christ flowing thru this branch
that **TRANSFORMS** it,
that produces **FRUIT** *thru it*, &
that brings it **JOY** (*as we'll see in a minute*)

NOW - **Let's talk** about that word **FRUIT** – just a minute

Too often – when we see that phrase “***Bear Fruit***” . . .
We think - of **WORK !!!** - *Like that's something we have to DO*

But GAL 5:22-23 says - ESV

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; . . .

Isn't that what we **want** in our lives ??

Aren't those the **Traits**
that truly bring **Victory**, **Peace**, & **Joy** into our lives?

THAT - is the fruit that **ABIDING** in Christ **BRINGS**
& **THAT** - is the Fruit that **TRANSFORMS** our lives

& so again – Jesus tells us back in Jn 15:2

. . . every branch that does bear fruit he (The Father) prunes, that it may bear more fruit. . .

So – maybe **you've seen** a little bit of **that Fruit** in your life . . .

But then - **here comes** the **Father** - with the **Pruning shears** !!

& pruning is really **NO FUN** for the branch, is it ???

But **in a Vineyard** – The **Vinedresser** **INSURES**
the quality of the fruit that **each branch** produces

Many of us “**branches**” have **prayed** that we'd be “**more fruitful**”

But we **seldom desire** - the Vine-Dressers “**Pruning**”

There are a number of ways the Vine-dresser prunes His branches;

He **lifts us out** of the dirt

He **puts support** under us

He **cuts away** certain “**parts**” of the healthy branch

He will **even cut away** existing fruit

in order **to improve** the **quality** of **future fruit**

The one thing the Vine-dresser **NEVER** does

is **ask the branch** what **it thinks** would **be best** for it

The **branch's job** is **ABIDE** in the Vine

& to allow the **Vine Dresser** to Prune “**As Necessary**” – **Amen?**

Now – continuing **in Jn 15 - V.3**

Jesus **makes it clear** - He's **not talking about** salvation

Remember - **Judas** has left the group by now . . . (Ch 13)

John 15:3 - ESV

3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

THAT – is their **Salvation**

But now Jesus continues (in **V.4**) – with their **Sanctification**

Vs's 4 & 5 are our **KEY** Vs's

John 15:4 - ESV

4 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.

John 15:4 - AMP

4 Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.

DEF of ABIDING – “a continuous **Living in Union with Christ**”

The AMP BIBLE says it is – “**being Vitally United to Christ**”

& Guys - **The KEY** to our lives actually being **TRANSFORMED** -
is for us to be - **VITALLY UNITED TO CHRIST**

VITAL means – ***Essential, Critical, Crucial, Central***

& the **KEY** to our lives being **TRANSFORMED** is for us to be
Essentially, Critically, Crucially, Centrally UNITED TO CHRIST !!

THAT – is **ABIDING** in Christ - - - **Amen?**

Being **VITALLY UNITED** to Christ
Is living in **Communion** (Oneness) with Christ

& **THAT** is - the **CONDUIT** *thru which* God **pours**
His **Transformation** & His **Power** into our lives

Let me just **say that again**

Being **VITALLY UNITED** to Christ - is the **CONDUIT** *thru which*
God **pours** His **Transformation** - & His **Power** - into our lives

Learning to **ABIDE** in Christ (*being Vitally United to Christ*)
does not **EARN** you – **The TRANSFORMED Life**

Learning to **ABIDE** in Christ . . .

is The **CONDUIT** – The **CHANNEL** - *thru which*
God **POURS** **the Transformed Life** – **INTO** your life

Let's take the **"Peace of God"** for example

In his book **"Peace By Believing"** – **Charles Spurgeon says this:**
"I must take care above all that I cultivate communion with Christ,
for though that can never be the basis of my peace – mark that –
yet it will be the channel of it."

Spurgeon wants to be very clear - Learning to
Cultivate Communion with Christ (*being Vitally United to Him*)

is **NOT** the **BASIS** of our peace
(meaning it doesn't **earn** us **Peace** or **create** **Peace** for us)

But - it is the **CHANNEL** – the **CONDUIT**
of the *Peace of God* being **poured** into our Lives

We see this well in Phil 4:6-7 - ESV

6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The “**STATE**” (Condition) of your life - described in **V.6**
THAT is **ABIDING in Christ**

It's Living in that **VITAL UNION** with Him
where you **LEARN** how to **NOT be anxious** about anything

It's Living in that **VITAL UNION** with Him – where you **LEARN**

to **instead** - by *Prayer & Supplication* – with *Thanksgiving*
Roll your burdens over – to God

& as you **GROW** (mature) in doing that . . .

Then the *Peace of God* with surpasses all understanding
will **guard** your **hearts & minds** in Christ Jesus . . . ***Do you see it?***

It is **GROWING** in your **Vital Union** (*Abiding*) in Christ
that will ultimately **BRING** the *Peace of God* – into your life

This is **SO CRITICAL** to **understand** !!

Alright – **Back in Jn 15**

Let's Look at the **other side** of that **same truth** – **in the Next 2 Vs's**

Jn 15:5 – ESV

5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me (has Vital Union) and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit (THRIVES), for apart from me (cut off from vital union with Me- AMP) you can do nothing (meaning not Thrive – but Die).

Have you ever been in that difficult place where you just don't feel The LIFE of GOD ?

Where All the **Peace** - All the **Joy** - All the **Strength** just seems **GONE** – Seems **Non-Existent** ??

Let's see if we can find one possible reason here at the end if V.5 apart from Me (cut off from Vital Union with Me) you can do nothing.

I'm **not shaking my finger** at any of **US**
I'm not saying we **Oughta** - - **Better** - - **Should**

I'm **simply saying** – **God's Word** says

If we are Living in this Vital Union with Christ then we can GET THRU absolutely ANYTHING

& not just SURVIVE – But THRIVE even in the midst of the most difficult circumstances

It is our VITAL UNION to Christ (our Abiding) that:

- Brings **True Transformation** into our lives
- Gives us the **Strength** we need daily
- Gives us the **Peace of God** that passes understanding
- Gives us the **JOY** we're gonna see in a minute

It is being **VITALLY UNITED** with Christ that **does that**

We want it to be a **Simple Salvation Prayer** that does all that

But it is our **ABIDING** – our **VITAL UNION** with Christ

that is the **CONDUIT** for God to **POUR** these things
INTO our lives - & **THRU** our Lives

***The only way for us to THRIVE as Christians
is to ABIDE in Christ***

***The only way we can live in the Victory, the Peace,
& the Joy of Christ – is to be VITALLY UNITED to Him***

& if we are **MISSING** the **FRUIT** of the **Life of Christ** in our lives

One Reason **MAY BE** that we are **NOT** - **VITALLY UNITED** to Him

VITALLY meaning - ***Essentially, Critically, Crucially, Centrally***
UNITED TO CHRIST !!

& This is just **AS TRUE** for *me* – **as it is** for any of *you* !

SO – As the Branch **ABIDES** (is *Vitally United*) to the **Vine**
It has **LIFE !!**

The branch **doesn't EVER have** - its own "*life*"
the **Branch LIVES** because the **Life of the Vine** is flowing **THRU** it

& when the branch is **SEPARATED** from the vine - it **DIES**

& **V.6** gives us **AMPLE WARNING** of this concern

John 15:6 – ESV → →

John 15:6 - ESV

6 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.

Remember - this illustration is **NOT about Salvation**

It's about the **Life & Fruit** of being a **Disciple**

& so we **can't use it** to say that a person can **lose** their salvation

To Abide in Christ - does **not** mean to **keep yourself saved**

It means to be **Vitally United** to Christ

& to have the **Life of Christ** flowing through you

& so - **what we have** here in **v.6** is - **A WARNING !!**

There are a number of **possible explanations**

for **specifically WHAT V.6** means

But **I beg you** today - **don't exert** your effort trying to **figuring out**
exactly **what** the price is - for **NOT Abiding in Christ**

Exert your effort to figure out

WHAT Abiding in Christ MEANS - &

HOW to go about **DOING IT**

Which is **EXACTLY** what we're going To Do

FOR THE NEXT THREE WEEKS (*Neh will have to wait*)

For the **Next THREE WEEKS**
As our **New Year's KICK OFF**

We're **going to look** at the *Practical* - **HOW TO**

HOW TO - **ABIDE** in Christ

HOW TO - be **VITALLY UNITED** to Christ

& we're going to **focus** on **THREE General Areas**
that you & I can **GROW IN**

In order to **see** the **Life of Christ** - & the **Power of Christ**
Transform our lives – From the **Inside** – **OUT**

Does that sound like a **Good Way** to Kick off the **New Year** ?

Now - **because** I've **mentioned** it a number of times
I want to just skip down to **V.11**

John 15:11 - ESV

***11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be full.***

Let me just **read a few Excerpts** from
"The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery"

***Joy is a by-product of life with God. Joy is not found by seeking it
as an end in itself. It must be given by God***

***In the OT, joy comes with God's presence, in the NT that presence
is identified as the Holy Spirit.***

→ →

The Bible describes the “deep power of joy” by demonstrating it to be more powerful, more constant and more enduring than adverse circumstances.

Joy is the believer’s strength in the midst of affliction.

**& here in Jn 15 – Jesus says - that JOY comes – from us being
in Constant Communion with Him
Abiding in Him
Being Vitally United to Him**

Which is the **greatest way** to live this life !!

Let’s Pray
