

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: Abide  
February 11, 2024

### Are You Abiding?

1 John 2:1-15

**“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.**

**I am writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.**

**Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.”**

Harris Creek, how're we doing? [*Congregation cheers.*] You guys are awesome. I need y'all. Those of you sitting there every week--I see you. Let's go! So fun! Oh, man. Well, people think that I am not very athletic. They've said that about me. I've taken the high road and I've let those rumors circulate around. Here's the truth: I went to school, from kindergarten to eighth grade, at a small Catholic school in a small town. In fifth grade, I was introduced--track and field--to long jump. All right? I've always been tall for my age--I almost said, "I've always been tall for my height." [*Laughter.*] I've always been tall for my age and so I started doing long jump. They say, "Run; there's a board--just jump off that board. See how far you can go. It's a sandbox." I dominated, all right? I mean, it turns out I am a prodigy at long jump. I'm like, "I found my thing. This is amazing because my whole life is now set. Colleges are going to be calling and saying, 'Hey, come here.' I found my thing: long jump." We would go to these neighboring track meets of small Catholic schools and they would have these small track meets. I would go and just collect blue ribbons. I was always a foot taller than everybody else so I would just get first place ribbons; I started a collection. It was amazing. I had got my thing. Here's the problem with that: in the eighth grade, they said, "Hey, we're going to give you an option to do athletics at the

public school. We'll take the old 'church band over to Cuero Junior High and you can actually compete in the track meets there. And I'm thinking, "This is going to be incredible because I've got my blue ribbon collection. I'm going to go and show them the prodigy that I am at long jump." I go to that first practice and I go over to those long jump pits, which were a little nicer than what I was used to. It turns out I'm unbelievably mediocre at long jump. Those uncoordinated Catholic boys weren't much competition, but when you get out there in the real world and many people come from all over, it turned out I'm not that good. One minute I'm collecting blue ribbons and the next minute I'm not even qualifying. I couldn't even compete.

I start there to make the point that I think, as we talk about the subject of abiding, we have to ask, "How am I doing? What do I measure myself up against? What grade would I give myself? Am I getting a 90, a 95, a 62? What's par? How do we know how we're doing right now in the topic of abiding?" I think often we're comparing ourselves to the wrong subject. We think, "Well, I'm doing better than them. They call themselves a Christian but I don't do the things that they do, so maybe I'm doing pretty good." What if that's not reality? What if you came into church this morning and you could stand before Jesus and he would say, "Hey, this is how you're doing at abiding" and you would know? What shifts would we make?

So, as we wrap up this series, 'Abide,' we're going to be in another chapter that uses this exact same word, *abide*: 1 John 2. I'm going to read to you a verse from there. This is what it says; this is straight from the Scripture: "**This is how we know we are in Him. Whoever claims to abide must...**" This is the apostle John--not John the Baptist, but the John that Jesus loved, the one that spent a lot of time with Jesus. He's going to tell us, "If you claim to abide, you must." He's going to give us some things that we need to make sure that we're doing so that we know we're abiding. And that's the message today: how to know if we're abiding. I'm going to give you a lot; we're going to move through a chunk of Scripture fast. This is a note-taker sermon, so if you have a pen and something to write on, you're going to want to grab that. If you don't, you're welcome to take notes on your phone, but you're going to want to stay with me because the slides are going to be moving fast and be changing a little faster than normal.

By way of recap, week one, we were in chapter 15 of John. This is the "abiding" chapter. This is where Jesus says, "I am the vine. You are the branches. My father is the gardener. He prunes. He prunes fruitful branches. Your job is to produce fruit as you remain in me and as I remain in you." And then week two, we talked about how we are being transformed to love. God is taking us and He's making us into something altogether different than what we were. That this is the essence as we abide. I gave you this little illustration here. [Brings out clear containers within one another, on which are written "Christ," then "You," then "Christ," then "God."] I just said, Hey, if this is you, right? God finds you and He finds you with sin in you; He finds you in sin. You're stuck in the world; you're in sin; sin is in you. As God begins to make you something new, the first thing that He does, as Dale told us last week, is He puts Christ in you. Now you have the spirit of Christ in you. You have a new compass to go by. That would be enough because that makes you a new creation already with Christ in you. But He says, "Wait, not just that. I'm actually going to take you with Christ in you, and I'm going to put you together in Christ." You've got Christ in you and you are in Christ. No longer is it the sin in you; it's not that you're in sin. You've got Christ--the Spirit of God--in you and you are in Christ. That would be enough. We would be an altogether new creation if that was it. But he says, "You with Christ in

you and you in Christ--that you in Christ are together hidden with Christ in God.” He takes that and He seals that up for eternity. That is the new creation; this is what you are now. This is the best way that I can show you what it looks like to abide.

Then Nate, in week three, talked about sitting at the feet of Jesus with the story of Mary and Martha. Then, as I said, last week Dale talked about the work in our lives that the Spirit of God does. That we now access to God. That God is with us and in us and He's communicating to us what He wants from us. And these are ideas that you probably are not like, “Whoa, that's earth shattering.” There's a lot of people that know that, but don't live that. Candidly, I think that's the biggest challenge that we face this morning, coming into church; you've probably been in a church before, and you're going to hear things that you've probably heard before. For some of us, we're going to go back to our normal lives. I pray that today would be the day that that happens for no one; that we would not just go back to our normal lives but that something would happen in the next few minutes that we have that would be a shift for rest of you. That's a little intimidating. It's a little scary, but I pray that it would be true.

I'll start in verse one: 1 John 2. We're going look at five things to know if we're abiding. He says, **“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father-- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”** **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** He says, “Hey, I write these things to you so that you don't sin, but if you do sin, remember that we've got a mediator, a go-between, an advocate to go on our behalf.” He says, “Remember,” so my first point is:

1. *Apprehend the gospel.*

How do you know if you're abiding? For starters, you apprehend the gospel. Let me tell you why I chose that word “apprehend.” I was talking to Finley this week, our 15-year-old daughter, and she says, “Dad, I don't apprehend what you're saying.” To which I said, “You mean comprehend?” To which she said, “No, I mean apprehend.” I said, “Apprehend means ‘to arrest or take custody of.’” She said, “No, it means ‘to have a deep understanding of.’” I said, “Look, I'm not going to argue with a 15-year-old. Okay? I'm an adult. I went to college a little bit. This is what it means.” It turns out she was right. So, to honor her, I made it a point. “Apprehend the gospel”; to take hold of, at such a deep understanding that it is within you, you apprehend the gospel.

From the text, here's how you know if you apprehend the gospel; the text gives you two things, plain as day. First, you don't sin. You do everything you can to eradicate sin from your life. You know that it costs someone their life and you renew your mind around that reality that your sin killed someone. Most of you today here have never killed anyone. You're like, “I've got lines. I'm not going to cross that one, man. I've never killed somebody.” No, your sin, it cost God His life. It cost Jesus His life, and we know that. But at some point in our journey, we've been inoculated to that reality so that it no longer has an impact on our emotions, and our being, and who we are. Someone had to die. We avoid sin if we apprehend the gospel.

The second is like it: if you apprehend the gospel, you avoid shame. As you avoid sin, if you *do* sin, then you avoid shame. Now, listen, when you sin, it may have hurt you. It may have harmed someone around you. It may have hurt them and you have work to do in the midst of that. That work that you have to do, that's not shame. That is you doing what you need to do to be reconciled with those around you and to take ownership of the damage that your sin caused. But you don't walk around hanging your head because you spiritually damaged your relationship with God. In the spiritual realm, that sin has been paid for on the cross. You are reconciled to God. You are in partnership with God in relationship with God. There's nothing that you're going to do that's going to change that. So, if you do sin, the thing that you're trying to avoid, you lift your head up. You put your chest out. You say, "You see that right there? I did that. That was me." You don't hide it. You don't sweep it under the rug. You say, "Yep, that was me. I was prideful. I acted a fool. I was angry. I gave full vent to my anger. Gossip. I bought something I didn't need. I said something I shouldn't have. I lied. I cheated. I stole. That was me."

My other daughter turned 16, and so she's of driving age and has her driver's license. She and I went halvesies on a 2006 Jeep Liberty. She got a car. When we began to talk about the car, I gave her two instructions, all right? There were two things that happened when she got that car. The first thing: I said, "Don't get in a wreck." Then we talked about all the things that she needs to do to avoid the wreck, right? As you're trying to eradicate sin from your life, it's not just like, "Okay, pastor, don't sin. Got it." No, you remove the things that trip you up. Get rid of your phone. Get rid of your laptop. Change jobs. Move if you need to. Change your number. Get a new cell phone. Right? It's not a big deal. Sin is a big deal. Doing whatever you need to do to make sure that you don't sin again is not a big deal. Don't go to the mall. Don't go to that place. Don't go to that community. Don't go to the bar. Whatever you need is not a big deal.

She gets a car and she can drive. I said, "Hey, listen, these are the things that you need to do to make sure that you don't get in a wreck: stay off your phone. Don't change the radio station while you're driving. Under no circumstances text and drive. 10 and 2. Continue to pay attention." Don't wreck, don't wreck, don't wreck. The second thing we did is we got insurance just in case. A couple weeks ago, I get the call nobody wants to get: "Dad, I just got in a wreck." "What? Everybody okay? Are you okay? Are they okay?" "Everybody's okay, Dad. Car's not okay. Everybody's okay." "Okay. Alright, so you sure everything's okay?" "Yeah, yeah. Okay. But Dad, the car is not okay." "Well, that's alright. We've got insurance. They're going to take care of that." She was like, "It's not my fault." Of course, you're always a little bit skeptical if a 16-year-old tells you that. It turns out she was right; it wasn't her fault. The car is totaled, but that's okay: insurance.

As you sit there, you need to know two realities: sin is a big deal. It costs someone His life, and I need to do everything I can to avoid it. You need to plan not to sin. *And*, if you do sin, you don't need to hide it or you don't need to make light of it. You say, "Look at that, I did that." You confess it, you receive prayer, and you move on. You avoid shame. That's what it means to apprehend the Gospel.

1 John 2:3: **"We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, 'I know him [Jesus],' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not**

**in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."**

"Claims to live in Him." That "in Him" is *meno*, the same word for "abide." This is where the series came from. It's the same Greek word that you see in John 15. In fact, here's the way the ESV says it in 1 John 2:6: **"Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."** My second point is, as we abide:

## 2. *We behave like Jesus.*

This is what it looks like to abide. It's that bracelet from the 90s, "WWJD." We do what Jesus would do. I've heard this my whole Christian life: "What does it mean to abide? Well, you read the Bible. That's what it means to abide. You read the Bible. You spend time in God's Word." Those are the spiritual disciplines. Discipline yourself for godliness. If you are abiding, you certainly do those things, but doing those things in and of themselves are not abiding. Someone who is not abiding can do that. Someone here could know lots of Scripture and spent lots of time in God's Word and never in their entire life abide in Jesus. Ever. It is possible. They're different things with a lot of overlap. The way that I would explain it: As He says, **"I am the vine and you're the branches and the father's the gardener. And if you remain in me and I remain in you, you will produce fruit."**

Two weeks ago, Monica and I were in Napa for a wedding. I got to do a wedding there. Both the bride and the groom work at vineyards. I mean, we had John 15 all around us. There are vines and branches and fruit all around us. It's just coming alive, that chapter. What else is there is what they call a trellis. It's a cable or a wooden structure. It kind of looks like a fence at times. And this supports the vine and allows it to grow. I think we've got a picture of a trellis [*shows picture of trellis*]. The wood there is supporting the vine and the fruit and the growth and whatnot. That's what the disciplines do. That's what reading the Bible does. That's what praying does. That's what your spiritual disciplines do; they support the branch so that the fruit can grow on it, and those things support the idea of abiding, but they in and of themselves are not abiding. They're the activity of abiding--or they can be, I should say. But true abiding is you following Jesus. Now, to follow Jesus, you need to know His Word. His voice needs to be familiar to you, but that is abiding: you following Jesus.

Here's what this is saying. I want you to know, as you follow Jesus, that He's never, ever, not one time in your entire life has Jesus led you to sin. If you find yourself in sin, you didn't follow him there. If you're looking at something on the internet you shouldn't, you're clicking a hashtag, you're buying something you don't need, you're saying something--Jesus would never be like, "Hey, come over here to these people and let's talk about someone who's not here. Let's gossip about them." No, no, Jesus never did that! He's never led you into sin. And so, you're like, "Oh, but I'm a Jesus-follower." No, how are you a Jesus-follower? You're not following Jesus! You didn't follow Jesus right there! How can we be like, "Oh man, did you see her? And I can't believe she, and oh yeah, I heard that, that's crazy. I'm a Jesus-follower." What? When did we just start turning the other way and saying, "Oh yeah, yeah, sure, they're a Jesus-follower because they were at Harris Creek on Sunday, so they must be." That is crazy. "Are you telling

me I'm not a believer?" I'm telling you that you didn't follow Jesus into sin. There's all kinds of things that could be happening there, but I don't want to normalize that in the church. "Okay, I can be a Jesus follower and never follow Him." No, no, no. This does not make you a Jesus follower. When you go through those doors, as you follow Jesus, *that* makes you a Jesus-follower. You following Jesus, you trusting in Him--point one, apprehending the gospel--and then behaving like Jesus. Doing the things that Jesus did, right? This is what we are to do.

If you're falling into sin, you're not following Him. Galatians 5 says it like this: **"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."** Did you just see what the Bible says? "You are not to do whatever you want." That means you have wants and desires that you are not to do. You are to do whatever Jesus wants. That's abiding, that you remain in Him and He remains in you and you do anything and everything He asks you to do. That you behave from Jesus. Not for Jesus. No, you have Jesus. So, you behave from Jesus.

He says in verse seven: **"Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command [this is not new] but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; it's truth [underline truth] is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining."** Confusing. This is not new, but it is new. He's saying, "I want you to live out an old truth with a new heart." This truth that you're to follow God's law, that you're to love people, that you're to do the things that God wants you to do, that's always been there. But now, I'm going to give you a new way to follow it, a new heart. Ezekiel 36 says it like this, the prophet says it like this: **"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."** You live an old truth with a new heart.

I will illustrate this because it's helpful to me. In the Old Testament law, you had directions. "Follow these directions. Turn here. Go here. Look here. There's a stop sign. Go three miles. Directions." With the new heart, we have GPS. Now we have a relationship with God. God is leading us to the same destination. We're getting to the same places. We're taking the same turns. But now the voice within us, convicting of sin and illuminating the Scriptures that we are to follow like we have God with us. He goes on to say in verse nine: **"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother or sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them."** You have these two ideas here. You've got light and darkness, and then you've got love and hate, and then somewhere in there you have this idea of truth. There's a truth that we're to display. My third point is that, if we are abiding:

### 3. *We illuminate truth with love.*

The truth has always been here on the earth. God raises up His followers to show the world that truth, to illuminate that truth, to light the path. If you are abiding, there is absolutely no room, none whatsoever, no margin for you hating a follower of Jesus. You cannot, you are not allowed to, and in fact you won't, if you are abiding, despise a believer. It will not happen, right? And so, in this world, for followers of Jesus, truth and love go hand-in-hand. They are in lockstep. And so, you have people who are really good at love, but miserable at the truth. It's a counterfeit fruit. It's not a real fruit. It's a selfish, "Well, I feel better about myself and I want to do this. I don't want to do hard things, but I want to save the world." It's not real. It's not from the Holy Spirit. Then you have people that are, "I'm a prophet, hard-charging, finger-in-your-chest, 'let me tell you what to do.' I'll tell you that you want to know the truth. Here's the truth." And there's no love and it's not real. It's not of God. "Depart from me. I never knew you." Its ego-driven. It's like, "I'm not afraid of anybody. I'll tell you the truth. Hard-charging, the way I am, family of origin." That's void of love and not of God.

What *is* of God is when truth and love go hand in hand, and they display the Gospel to the world. You know this person--everybody knows this person--the person who is surrendered to the Holy Spirit. They walk with God and they love so well. They walk in a room and it's just brighter. You would describe their personality as "bright." Just seeing my wife right there. Because she's that. Right? She's that. I mean, it's crazy. Better than anyone I know. Just get to have the opportunity to live with her. If you know her, I can say this with a clear conscience and integrity because you're like, "Yeah, she is that." This isn't preacher-speak. I'm not like, "Yeah, smoking hot wife, Ricky Bobby Talladega Nights." No, I mean, she really is amazing at loving people and just finding someone and making them feel so loved. She also prays more than any human being I've ever met. Those things go hand-in-hand, right? They go hand-in-hand.

When you understand who God is through the Spirit, you love people so well, and it's not a personality. It's not like, "Oh, that's sweet for them." It is foundational to being a follower of Jesus is that people, when they're around you, are like, "I felt so loved when I got time with them." If they don't do that, you need to go back to the Jesus things. Am I sure? Did I really get that right? Have I renewed my mind around that reality? Because it's a dark world. And in your neighborhoods, and in your schools and classrooms, and in your coffee shops and where you work, there are some really dark things happening. And God, His Holy Spirit in you has given you everything you need to illuminate the truth of the Gospel to them. You've got to know that. You're on mission there, and you've got to live out your mission there.

I'm a visual person and I like to feel. Can we feel that darkness? Just sit tight for a second. I just want you to feel the darkness of the world in there. Can you guys bring down the lights in here? [*Lights in room go dark.*] Yeah, it's dark. It's a dark world. And God has transformed you, He's made you new, and He's illuminated you so that others can see Christ in you. Can we see that? [*Light in clear boxes lights up.*] When people look at you now, what they see is a lot of God, a lot of Jesus. They see you behaving like Jesus, doing the things that Jesus did. They see that you belong to God, that you have God, that you have God's Spirit in you. And so, they're looking at you, but they see God. This is His plan. This is His strategy. This is the way that He works. You're in a dark world full of brokenness, but He's illuminated something in you, truth and love. Bring the lights back up [*room brightens*].

**“I'm writing to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I'm writing to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning. I'm writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you know the father. I write to you fathers because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God lives in you and you have overcome the evil one.”** We could do an entire series on this section of Scripture right here, but I'm going to, because we're moving fast, I'm going to summarize this as “spiritual growth.” You see “children, fathers, young men, children, fathers, young men”—don't pay too much attention to the, the sex orientation there, the gender, if you will. He's talking about spiritual growth. He says “sins forgiven.” Know God, overcome evil. Know the Father. Know God—you are strong. The word of God lives in you. You have overcome evil. He's saying that, if you are abiding, you are growing. There's a spiritual growth that happens there. The way that I would say it:

#### 4. *Develop spiritually*

You're becoming something. You're planted in a healthy soil, connected to the vine, and there's growth. This is easy for you to measure, right? Do you love more today than you did 10 years ago? Do you love God more today than you did 10 years ago? Do you love others more than you did 10 years ago? Do you know God more than you did 10 years ago? Is there a spiritual growth that everybody around you would be like, “Totally affirm that man; you are altogether different, like you've sprouted.” There's a growth that's happening there. That comes from somebody. You can't abide and not grow, not develop spiritually. We're trying to help you with this. We did equipping nights this past week. We're going to continue to do those. If you're like, “I really want to know God. I really want to grow in these ways. I want to make disciples in the home. I want a more Christ-centered marriage.” Come up for those equipping nights. Sign up for them. Over a hundred of you did so this week and you grew. You're like, “Wow, what am I supposed to do? Take seminary?” No, just come to church. We'll help you.

I did a celebration of life yesterday. A memorial service; you might call it a funeral. A baby girl was born to a couple we know and love. She lived 100 minutes and woke up in glory. I've got no issue with that, by the way. If you ever struggled with, “Hey, do babies go to heaven,” let's talk because I have a strong conviction there. She woke up in glory, and I can't imagine. I don't even want to. The pain that was represented in the room as we're talking about this sweet little girl. There's death that should not be. We live in a broken world--Genesis 3. But I will tell you that you don't want to figure out who Jesus is in the midst of that. You can be in high school, junior high, you've been married 50 years. I don't know where you're at, but I will tell you that curveballs are coming. There are things coming your way that are going to catch you off guard. Curveballs—you never really anticipate them coming, you know? They're just like, “Whoa, didn't see that coming. And that was big. And it took a chunk of me. A part of me just died in this broken world. Like that was heavy.” Okay? And it's coming for all of us. And in that moment, what we don't want to do is be like, “Okay, in this moment, I just got hit with the curveball. What do I believe about God? I should figure that out right now.” Because Satan and the demonic realm, they're waiting for that moment. You get there and that curveball hits you, and they're like, “Alright, let's go boys.” They come around, “Hey, man, see? He's not good. He's not real. He doesn't love you. What if he loved you? This would've never happened.” And



all the theology, it gets all swirly and weird, and you're like, "Wow, maybe they're right." And you want to make sure that, in that moment, when you're sitting in church and you had gas in the car to get here, and there's central air and heat, and you're in a cushy chair, you say, "All right, what do I believe about God and how do I grow from that?" You do that so that when my marriage falls apart or my child doesn't come home or these things happen that I never thought would happen to me, you say, "I know who Jesus is and I'm going to hold fast to those truths right now. I've been growing in those truths." I've been growing in those truths. I've developed spiritually.

Verse 15: **"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."** My fifth and final point is:

#### 5. *Eternally live.*

"Eternally live" is different than living eternally, because when you apprehended the gospel, you've trusted in Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins, meaning you don't have to pay for your sins in hell. You get to be with God forever in His kingdom and you are going to live eternally. But what I'm talking about when I say "eternally live" is about living today for eternity. Every single decision that you make today impacts your eternity. You and I have the opportunity to take things in this world and store them in eternity. We're going to be with God forever and ever and ever. And we could put stuff there for us to enjoy then. I'm not crazy, I'm not intoxicated, I'm not under the influence of anything other than the Holy Spirit saying that we actually, sincerely, deeply, at a conviction level, apprehend that and believe that. The reality of that impacts how we talk, how we live, how we buy, who we serve, how we love, the fights that we choose to get in or avoid, and all the things we do.

When we were considering the move to Waco--I feel like I talk about this all the time. I'm sorry. This hit me as I was thinking about this passage. We didn't plan on that. We'd just built a home that I really thought we were going to die in. Naively, I thought, "This is the house we'll always have. Our grandkids will...you know?" We loved our schools and our neighborhood and all the things. So, we began to write the list of why to stay and why to go. And on the list of why to stay was, "We have roots here." And we were processing this with the Treadways, who were also considering moving, and our Life Group there, and people that we invited to speak in that decision. There's the list of reasons to stay. And right there, it's like, "We've got roots here." And somebody goes, "Well, that's not good." I go, "What do you mean that's not good?" They go, "Well, this isn't your home. You don't put down roots in the world." You know, we're not trying to show our kids like, "Hey, we've got roots here. Like, this is where we go. And God's not going to call us anywhere else." We're agile. We're nomads. We're like, "God, where do you want me to go? And where do you want me to be on mission?" And sometimes that's Starbucks, but sometimes it's two hours away, and sometimes it's 2000 miles away. I don't know. But I know that is the life of the one who abides. "God, what would you have me do?" And in that moment, they say roots are not good. All of a sudden, the list of the reasons to stay became reasons to go. I

could summarize all of those things in one word: “comfort.” “But it's comfortable.” I said, “Oh, but we're not called to comfort. We're called to be on mission.” Little did we know the blessings that God would have for us here. It's been amazing. It's incredible.

Maybe you've done this. I don't know if you've moved or been called to another place or something, but maybe you've gone through this experience. When you're moving, even just homes or apartments, you've got two boxes: a box to keep and a box to give away. Have you ever done this? You've cleaned out your closets like, “Goodwill” and “He wears that same size; let's call him see if he wants that. He complemented that hat; let's give it to him. Keep. Keep. Give that away. Keep. Keep. Never wore that.” In the kingdom, those boxes get switched, right? Everything that you gave away in the name of Jesus comes back to you and you keep it forever. All of the things that you kept in the world because they were comfortable, those you lose forever. You don't have them forever and ever and ever. The boxes get switched. They said, **“Do not love the world or things in the world.”** You've got to love the poignancy, the clarity that the Holy Spirit speaks with. There's no room for confusion. There's no crazy Greek stuff happening there. “Do not love the world or things in the world.”

If I'm you, I'm thinking, “Yeah, but how many pair of Jordans do you have? Didn't you just build a house?” So, I don't want to play, I don't want to say stuff up here and be like, “Just turn your head.” Let's go do it. We've got to do it. Let's talk about it. To buy a hundred-dollar pair of shoes means that children today who need food and water will die. You could save their lives. That's the truth. It's the absolute truth. You can say, “Okay, do I want to give this there and save their lives? Do I want a new pair of shoes?” You have to wrestle with that. Let me say that again. You and I and we have to, must, don't have an option not to, wrestle with that. That's the application. You're going to build a house; how big of a house do you need? How are you going to use the house? What's not going to happen because of the house you built? You must wrestle with that. We do not have the luxury to not wrestle. We don't have the luxury to not get in the room and say, “Hey, I want you guys to speak into this. Let's whiteboard it. Let's talk. Let me give you full transparency of the cost; help me make these decisions.” Hey, you should ask those questions. “Where did those shoes come from?” Let's talk about it; there's nothing in my life that's private from you. Honestly, that really is a crazy statement, but I'm happy to have any of those conversations. You should be ready for them too in your own life because we don't have the luxury to not wrestle with them. The Scripture is saying, “Do not love the world or things in the world.” You can't look at that verse and say, “Oh, yeah, OK,” and then go out there and love the world and things in the world. You can't do it. It's not abiding. It's not abiding,

In summary, we apprehend the gospel, we behave like Jesus, we illuminate the truth, we develop spiritually, and we eternally live,

Apprehend the Gospel  
Behave like Jesus  
Illuminate truth with love  
Develop spiritually  
Eternally live

Apprehend, behave, illuminate, demonstrate, eternally live. You abide. That's what it means to abide. Apprehend. Behave. Illuminate. Develop spiritually. Eternally live. This is how you know you're abiding. Who do you measure yourself against?

If you go back to long jump with me for just a minute. When they took us to public school, I only placed one time that I remember. I think that's true. I only got first one time. I showed up and they said, "Everyone that is competing in this event is disqualified because they've prioritized other events. All you need to do is not scratch and you won." I remember I went up. You have to jump three times, so I went up to the board and made sure I didn't scratch. I jumped. I got first place. "The ribbon is yours." You've got two more jumps; you've got two more jumps. I backed up, I did what I always do, I ran, I did what I trained to do. We'd gone to practice. We practiced trying to jump further and further and further. We did exercises to make sure we could jump further. We strengthened our legs. We practiced timing, marking off our spots, all the things. We had practiced and trained. There I am. And so I ran as fast as I could, and I hit that board, and I jumped as far as I could. And it was so different. It's hard to go back and be in the mind of an 8th grader, but I can just tell you, to this day at 43, I remember there was something different. It's like, "Who am I competing against? Who am I competing against? Me. The ribbon's mine. I already won. Let's have fun. Let's do what I was made to do. Man, I got this. Let's go. Back it up. Let's do it again. Let's do it again." This is so difficult, right? That shift--that's abiding.

The good news is that you came in here this morning and you can actually grade yourself. I don't know if you've picked up on that, but you can take each of those five things and you can give them a 20-point numeric system. You grade each of them--each of them is worth 20 points--and you can say, "Alright, how am I doing, 1 to 20, at apprehending the gospel? How am I doing 1 to 20 at behaving like Jesus? How am I doing..." And then you can add it all up and it's going to give you a grade on a hundred-point scale. You'll know how you're doing. Understand where you're at. But all that needs to happen for you to move from where you're at right now to fully and completely abiding is understanding that Jesus won the prize on my behalf. I got an A. I got the blue ribbon. I got the spot reserved for me in eternity. I have His spirit and He's called me to do all of these things out of this world, to live different than the world does, to parent different than the world does, to go to school different than the world does, to compete different than the world does, to take a test different than the world does, to have alone time different than the world does, right? To work different than the world does, to spend different than the world, to talk different than the world does. It's all His. It's all His. It's all His. It's all interwoven. It's His. It's all in Him together. You belong to Him, He belongs to you, you remain in Him, He remains in you, and you leave altogether different. That truth, that reality, is available to you right now. You just say, "Do I believe it?" So let me pray. Do we believe it? We'll pray right now. We'll ask God. You ask God right now. Ask Him.

Hey, God, do I believe that? Do I believe that you resurrect dead marriages? Do I believe that you bring prodigals home? Do I believe that you can take someone who, like a dog to his vomit, returns to sin every day, every week, and you can stop it? You can change it. The person furthest from you in my life, you can save right now, effortlessly. Do I believe that? It all starts with, "Do I apprehend the gospel; do I really understand?" I've been told that you died for my sins. Has that impacted me recently at an emotional level, the way that it would if, on the way home today, I

was texting someone and I looked at my phone and I actually mowed through somebody? I killed somebody. “Gosh, what I did wrong just cost someone their life.” Has the gospel impacted me like that at that level? Have I understood it at that level that my sin you had to die for?

Ask Him. Ask Him if you have. And ask Him for help as you remain in Him and He remains in you.