
Meditation
on “*We Abide in Christ*”
• “*How Shall We Live*” worship series •

::: ZERO :::

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*“Grace to you and PEACE from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1 Co 1:3. (NRSV)

::: Amen.

::: ONE :::

Remember the All-Age Activity during the opening part of our service.

What was your favourite place of abiding?
And what made it so special?

When I thought about my places, my moments of abiding, I could not really identify this one special place.

But I think I made a discovery that really struck me.

::: TWO :::

I have learned something about myself over the last... say 50 years.

I have learned that I am always thrilled by trying new things:

Sometimes fascinating new computer tools – beautiful pieces of software. And I want to try out the new possibilities in using them.

It is needless to say, that this can be a huge challenge for people working with me.

Oh no, he's coming up with something new already—I can read this often in people's faces... And I am sorry.

Same thing with trying new musical equipment. Same thing with ideas for events... and so on.

I am kind of an expert in reaching out for something new.

::: THREE :::

The flipside of the coin is, that I am not really an expert in what it means to abide.

And as I let my thoughts wander around on this passage of 1 John 3 I made an interesting discovery.

I seem to have understood that abiding always had something to do with being in a common presence—like in a resonance with someone.

I have learned that it is not so much about places, beautiful or overwhelming sceneries.

No, it is about being somewhere **WITH** someone... in a sort of unison with a friend, a partner—in **CONNECTION** with my counterpart.

This is when I do not wish to leave, when I wish to stay, when I wish to abide.

::: FOUR :::

^{24!} All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we

know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

²³! And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.¹

1 John 3:24 and 23 (NRSV)

Reading this, I think John's words lead us in a similar direction.

We abide in Christ when we love HIM AND AN-OTHER.

To think that we abide in Christ when we are in relationship with him and our faith is ok when we just worship enough, and the right way, *is not* abiding in him.

It is one part of it, but the second part needs to go with it: to love one another.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement wrote in 1739:

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 1 Jn 3:23.

“The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.

“Faith working by love” is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.“

This commandment have we from Christ, that he who loveth God love his brother also;” and that we manifest our love “by doing good unto all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith.”

And in truth, whosoever loveth his brethren not in word only, but as Christ loved him, cannot but be “zealous of good works.”

He feels in his soul a burning, restless desire, of spending and being spent for them.

“My father,” will he say, “worketh hitherto, and I work.”

And at all possible opportunities he is, like his Master, “going about doing good.”ⁱ

::: FIVE :::

In 1. John we read:

¹⁶ We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

¹⁷ How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸ Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

1 Jn 3:15-18.

A question is asked: How does God's love abide in us... when we see our counterpart in need—and literally “shut of our innermost part” from them.

There is no way to abide, when we are cut off from our neighbour, our counterpart in need.

Christ has laid down his life for us. He has lived his life to meet the people and set the free from suffering and captivity.

He has ultimately given his life so that the human being, that we are assured of God's forgiving and restoring grace.

As Jesus has done this so that we can abide in God and God in us, it is our call to lay down our life to help those in need before us.

Not only in words, but in support, in giving, in sharing what we have.

::: SIX :::

We may hear this as a sort of order which we have to obey.

No wonder if when we read of commandments.

But let me close the circle here by going back to the beginning:

A place to abide is where you feel a resonance a unison, a harmony with your counterpart.

Caring for a person in need, your neighbour in need is an act of establishing a link between you and this person.

It is an act of respect, of taking responsibility and making a connection to God's love which has first touched you and is now touching your counterpart through you.

∴ SEVEN ∴

Living love in this way will set a place to abide for all who are connected in this.

Let us hear John's words again according to "The Message":

Christ sacrificed his life for us.

This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves.

If you see some brother or sister in need and have the means to do something about it but turn a cold shoulder and do nothing, what happens to God's love?

It disappears. And you made it disappear.

1 Jn 3:16-17

Again, this is God's command: to believe in his personally named Son, Jesus Christ.

He told us to love each other, in line with the original command. As we keep his commands, we live deeply and surely in him, and he lives in us.

And this is how we experience his deep and abiding presence in us: by the Spirit he gave us.

1 Jn 3:23-24.

::: Amen.

ⁱ John Wesley, quoted in *Hymns and Poems (1739)*, Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, ed. Randy L. Maddox, with assistance from Aileen F. Maddox, December 22, 2020.