

Day Seven

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical! It's an Abiding Thing

Jesus is beginning to give the disciples His final instructions. These are His last moments with them alone. He is about to face betrayal, arrest, a kangaroo court and death on the Cross. So, it would be safe to say He is not wasting any time or shooting the breeze. He is giving the disciples the very key to be successful in their lives and their ministries. Just earlier in the week, He used the fig tree as a vivid illustration and now He emphasizes how fruit is produced in God's Kingdom.

Notice that ten times in ten verses, Jesus talks about abiding. **John 15:4-10 (NKJV)** *"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**. 5 "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. 6 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. 7 **If you abide in Me**, and **My words abide in you**, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. 9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; **abide in My love**. 10 If you keep My commandments, **you will abide in My love**, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and **abide in His love**." Do you think Jesus is trying to tell them something? He is about to leave the disciples and He is giving them final instructions. It is clear, absolutely clear, that abiding in Christ is the key; the key to sustain our spiritual journey and to produce fruit for God's Kingdom. Abiding in Christ also enables us to live a life of more than conquerors.*

Abiding does not mean I lock myself somewhere in a monastery, away from the world, and act all pious and religious (although most of us are in lockdown right now). It also does not mean that all I do with my time is to sit at home, read the Bible non-stop, and pray all day long. **Abiding simply means: Living my everyday life with the constant awareness of God's Presence in my life. Understanding my privilege as a child of God and my responsibility as a servant of God!**

If you lean too much in either of these two positions, you will get lopsided in your faith. The only thing some people want to talk about is their inheritance. The fact that they are an heir, their spiritual birth right, the blessing that belongs to them, and what they can and will receive. That is great, but it is only one part of it. We also have responsibilities as servants of God. Abiding means to remain, continue, stay, to have your abode, dwell, reside, to continue in a particular condition, attitude or relationship; to put up with, tolerate, stand, to endure or sustain.

Fruitfulness is not optional in God's Kingdom; it is a necessity. If we claim that we belong to Him and He lives in us, then there is an expectation from God's side, and that is, that we produce fruit. According to Jesus, fruit is a natural outflow of a supernatural relationship! If I confess that I abide, then Jesus said, if you are "in Me," then something has to come out of you. "What comes out of you should benefit others and My Kingdom!"

Jesus makes it clear that an abiding relationship means that the Father is always involved in the process.:**1-17(NKJV)** *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 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."* Jesus is the Vine, the Father is the Vinedresser, and Jesus said true abiding produces fruit; even if it is not a lot, it is something!

John 15:2 *"And **every branch that bears fruit** He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."* Whether you are bearing fruit or not bearing fruit, the Father is actively involved in our lives. One of the greatest principles of living an abiding life, is that our Father calls the shots. He is involved in every part of our lives. If you bear fruit or you do not bear fruit, the Father notices and He responds. The result of living a fruitless life is removal, and the result of living a fruitful life is discipline! When you live an abiding life, you press into the things of God. When you press into this relationship, there are blessings, but there is also discipline. Let me let you in on a secret. Discipline is actually a blessing. Yes, you read that right. Because discipline is an indication of great love!

Hebrews 12:6-11(CEV) *"The Lord corrects the people he loves and disciplines those he calls his own. 7 **Be patient when you are being corrected! This is how God treats his children.** Don't all parents correct their children? 8 God corrects all of his children, and if he doesn't correct you, then you don't really belong to him. 9 Our earthly fathers correct us, and we still respect them. Isn't it even better to be given true life by letting our spiritual Father correct us? 10 Our human fathers correct us for a short time, and they do it as they think best. **But God corrects us for our own good, because he wants us to be holy, as he is. 11 It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace.**"*

Our Heavenly Father, our Heavenly Vinedresser, asks us to abide in the Vine (Jesus). Abiding in Jesus means we look like and act like Jesus. We are the branches and the branches take on the same character as the vine that they are connected to. So, the vinedresser comes and inspects the branches. The more connected to the vine, the greater the fruitfulness. When the branches are connected, the sap flows from the vine

and the result is fruit. The less the connection, the drier the branches, the greater the need for pruning.

When you are being pruned (disciplined), count yourself blessed because God's discipline is a proof of His love, the same way a parent's discipline is a proof of their love! The fact that we are being disciplined should produce great comfort because it means we belong to our Father. It is a proof of our relationship. God disciplines His own, the same way we don't discipline someone else's kids (I have been tempted). We only discipline our own. The writer of Hebrews echoes the words of Jesus. Discipline (pruning) will take place as the Father (Vinedresser) sees the need. But discipline is no reason for alarm, just the opposite. We need to practice patience when we are being disciplined. Why? Because when the Father corrects us, it is to bless us and produce in us the character of Jesus (The Vine).

The ultimate goal of discipline is to produce obedience that produces peace. So, instead of getting impatient with what is going on around us, maybe, just maybe, we need to press into abiding a little more. Ask the Father to do the discipline in us. We know it's not fun, but we know we all need it. We all want and desire peace. But peace belongs to those who abide in the Father's presence and allows Him to discipline them where needed. Maybe at the end of this season that we find ourselves in, we will abide a little deeper, a little longer, a little stronger and become more like Jesus.

Prayer:

- **Ask the Holy Spirit to build and awareness in you for His Presence.**
- **Pray for an abiding heart and pray that the Lord will help you remove distractions.**
- **Ask the Father for the patience to endure His discipline and repent of any wrong.**
- **Thank the Lord for His discipline that produces fruit and ultimately His peace.**
- **Pray for the Body of Christ that we would all learn the lesson the Father is teaching us.**