

ABIDING

Hang in there in His love. Stick around whatever the difficulty, in His life. Reside under His grace, continuing in Christ. Stay focussed. Why should we abide? It is the essential bridge between pruning (John 15 : 2) and the faith that produces the fruit of answered prayers (John 15 : 7). The enemy will relentlessly attack the abiding, which is our perfect state between the “yes” of our prayers and their concrete manifestation or “amen”. We abide in the true vine, because a branch cannot bear fruit of itself. The enemy seeks to entice us out of our position to receive God’s blessing. He will bombard our mind with fear, worry, regret, self-condemnation, and countless things so that the peace of God seems a distant memory. Remember the grace of abiding falls upon those who are open to God’s pruning knife. Jesus was flayed open like a fish by whips and nails, and looks for the disciple who will be opened up in true repentance. He looks for the contrite heart that trembles at His word. Believers who refuse the knife of pruning, fail to become disciples.

Pruning

Hebrews 11 : 24 – 27 is the glory of true discipleship because we glimpse at what pruning meant for Moses. He had to refuse the pleasures of sin to identify with the reproach of Christ. Strong quality decision to separate himself from the world, the flesh and the devil ultimately made him the meekest man on earth, dependant, and face to face with God. We can be used of God if we are meek. God loves you but is not satisfied with you. The challenge of fruit, more fruit and much fruit lies before you. So you come into a season of shaking and disturbing and changing. We must give God permission to prune us. If we refuse the knife we will always tend to fall away and backslide. Neutrality and losing momentum is an insidious curse when we fail to fight for what we believe in. **Hebrews 6 : 12** challenges us all :

***“that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those
who through faith and patience
inherit the promises.”***

To imitate is to act skilfully the part. Did you see Dirk Bogarde as Mahler in “Death in Venice”? He lived on one piece of broiled fish per day for a month to lose weight and act convincingly an older man near to death. Pruning for the believer may include a long partial fast from food or TV or sleep or anything else we see as legitimate. Or God will initiate a pruning season when He shakes those unfruitful things off of our lives.

Abiding

Fruit comes to those who reside in Christ and know that the Word of God has found a home in their hearts. **John 15 : 7-8** is a key principle in Christian living,

***“Abide in Me and My words abide in you,
you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit,***

So that you will be My disciples.”

Notice the two conditions for answered prayer,

- (a) unclouded fellowship with Jesus
- (b) the implanted seed of God’s word in our heart. The richest place in town is the graveyard because it contains all the unfulfilled dreams of sinner (because they know not the inheritance) and the saint (because they have missed the inheritance by disobedience or casualness.) Spurgeon said “Lord make me a big receiver”. Without that heart-cry we can never get to the place of abiding where much fruit exists. The great men of God knew how to abide before they received the Kingdom wealth. To abide in the Son, the disciple must hear and take in deeply the Word of God. Faith awakens when we hear the anointed Word of God. **1 John 2 : 24** states :

“Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides IN you, you will also abide in the Son and the Father.”

Those who are governed by God’s Word in their actions and thoughts will be disciples who living by faith abide in the Son and the Father. Believers are not governed by God’s Word. Disciples ARE! The resolute guide of the Scripture is our source of prudent advice. When the Holy Spirit anoints that counsel, it will stay with the hearer. That counsel of the world, outside the will of God, will deflect and distract the mind bringing pressure not peace, confusion not comfort. The old paths of ancient wisdom must instruct each new generation to abide. Despite his pain and his worthless physicians, Job could abide because he knew his integrity. Read Job 12: 13 to Job 13 : 19 and marvel at the high standard of abiding when everything around Job was going so wrong. The pruning was very severe, but the reward glorious!

Abiding is not resting in soulish inactivity but SOWING seeds of love, counsel, finance, mercy, wisdom, helps. The disciples, except Judas, sowed and gave, as they resided for three plus years in the Jesus mobile bible college.

Sowing

Read Galatians 6 : 6 – 10 and check out the law of compensation. What you sow you will inevitably reap, either to the flesh or to the Spirit. IF WE FAINT NOT, a harvest will manifest in God’s appointed season. What are the causes of fainting?

- (a) People in the church who speak against you (Galatians 5 : 15, 1 Corinthians 11 : 29 – 30) ;
- (b) A brother or sister who prays unadvisedly for you. (i.e. not in God’s will) ;
- (c) Prolonged warfare against demon forces. God appoints seasons of non-involvement for the deliverance minister. (Mark 6 : 31) ;
- (d) Looking at the prosperity of the wicked (Psalm 73). Fretting because of it (Psalm 37 : 7) ;
- (e) Activity consciousness (Isaiah 40 : 29 – 31) ;
- (f) Jealousy, conspiracy, no trust, a climate of suspicion. (Song of Songs 8 : 6, Isaiah 54 : 17, Micah 7 : 5, 2 Samuel 15 – 17) ;
- (g) Sudden loss (1 Samuel 30 : 1 – 7)

The temptation of faint, to lose momentum, to go to bed on your faith is between the sowing and reaping. Remember the harvest God wants to give you is greater than your sowing. Life is a reflection of what we give out. Yet the God of all grace is abundant. What do you sow?

Mercy? Then you will receive mercy. Check out Psalm 41 : 1 – 3 and the great rewards of mercy if you consider the poor ;

Teaching? Then you will receive revelation and counsel in times of need ;

Songs in the Spirit? Then you will enter the river of the Spirit and find joy, security, and the seeds of greatness in your new creation life. God's gentleness made David great. Abraham was called to be great. (Genesis 12 : 2). That offends our religious mind, but it is true for the worshipper in spirit and in truth.

Finance? Do you tithe, and give gifts? The windows of heaven open for givers. **Proverbs 11 : 25** says,

***“The generous soul will be made rich,
and he who waters will also
be watered himself.”***

If we faint not, and hold faith, a financial breakthrough comes in God's perfect timing.

Love? Do you sow practical love by babysitting or mending a poor brother's car? Think about it, and ask the Father to show you ten practical ways of loving the brethren. You can love some people and only get trouble back, because there is a demon that repays evil for good. So ask for discernment, so you don't throw your love away. No one lives in a cocoon. If you love the brethren you have a right to receive love.

Remember HUNGER cannot produce HARVEST. Desire plus sowing plus obedience WILL every time produce the fruit of discipleship.

Reaping

We live between the yes and amen (let it be so) of our prayers. The obedient life is truly blessed and experiences the reaping of rewards. Here is a wonderful reward Scripture in **Matthew 10 : 41** :

***“He who receives a prophet in the
name of a prophet shall RECEIVE
a prophet's reward.”***

Bless the prophet, and we will prosper with the grace and truth he imparts to our spirit. If we say “yes” to prophetic ministry then the “let it be so” will manifest in our lives. The enemy, however, has driven inroads here, by releasing false prophecy, and words to accommodate the desires of individuals and congregations. The fruit, the more fruit and much fruit of John 15 is the reaping new creation realities.

2 Corinthians 9 : 6 – 11 reveals the grace of giving and reward of reaping. Verse 8 is the most comprehensive promise in all Scripture, and needs serious meditation. **Verse 10** says :

***“Now He who supplies seed to the sower
and bread for food, supply and multiply
the seed you have sown and increase the fruits
of your righteousness.”***

That is more than prosperity reaping! It's first application is surely evangelism! A wise man wins souls. God wants to make certain men into combine harvesters to reap multitudes to Christ Jesus. When you read their biographies always notice it began with pruning. On their wedding day Morris and Theresa Cerullo had a tin of cold baked beans! Moses went through 40 years of pruning, but got the spiritual rewards of the burning bush. The sanctifying, undying fire in the common bush of his life, made him a leader who talked to God face to face. He took 1 ½ million people to a burning mountain. TESTIMONY precedes MINISTRY. What is sown in our life can be sown in another's life.....that is the real reaping for us. The pleasure of seeing others live by the truths that set us free. ***Exodus 19 : 10*** tells us that the Israelites had to wash their clothes and prepare for two days. ***Verse 11*** says : ***“let them be ready for the third day.”*** We are moving into the third day, i.e. 2000AD to 3000AD. ***“For in the third day the Lord will come down, upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.”*** Then the reward will come to the obedient ones who have been washed with the water of the Word of God and become the remnant church, without spot or wrinkle. The Lord Jesus will do the reaping because He sowed every good thing into our lives. He reaped on the Cross all the flesh – sins of the world, despite having sowed grace, love and wisdom. At the end of the world He comes to inspect His bride :

***“And I looked and behold, a white cloud,
and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man,
having on his head a golden crown, and in His hand
a sharp sickle..... “Thrust in your sickle, and REAP
for the time has come for you to reap,
for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ”***

(Revelation 14 : 14 – 15)

Those who abide, sow and reap; those who have been pruned will not be disappointed. Jesus Christ our Lord has the right to REAP all the good works performed by grace. Grace empowers us to achieve the demands of truth. Through pruning, abiding, sowing and reaping our obedience will discover His eternal rewards.

Come Lord Jesus, and reap all that originated with God.

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