

Abiding In God's Word

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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. 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. 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. If you 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 you will be My disciples" (John 15:1-8).

In John 15, Jesus used the picture of the vine and the branch to illustrate abiding. The vine has many branches and to abide means to be a branch of the vine. Its responsibility is to be a branch and its purpose is to bear fruit. To bear fruit, the branch must be patient and depend on the vine. The vine will provide nourishment for the branch to produce fruit at the right time. The branch need not worry or fret when the fruit season comes. Jesus is the vine and you are the branch. You need to abide in Him if you want to know how and when to bear fruit.

When God tells you to do something, not doing it at the right time can result in untold problems. If you cut a cocoon before it is time for it to emerge as a butterfly, you cripple it. It will never become a butterfly. Timing is of the utmost importance for stunt men. In some instances, if they are not precise in their timing, they can be killed. How can believers who have received a word, a vision, a dream or revelation from the Lord know when it is the right time to act in order to fulfill it? The secret to knowing God's timing is by abiding in Jesus. "Abide" in Greek is "meno" and there are many expressions of this word: epi-meno, kata-meno, parameno, hupo-meno and pros-meno. All these describe "abiding" as "dwelling", "continuing", "stay close", "to wait", "to submit", "patience", "endurance", "perseverance" and "cleave".

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, *"To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven"*. God has His purpose, plan and will for each one of you. God expects you to accomplish them in His timing. If you, like the branch, are continually and patiently abiding in the vine, you will bear fruit at the right time or season. Do you have a word or vision from the Lord and are doubting it will come to pass? You need to understand the importance of abiding and waiting for God's time. It does not matter how long ago God spoke to you. Wait for it because it will surely come just as God encouraged His prophet Habakkuk. *"For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry"* (Habakkuk 2:3). Many are frustrated, discouraged, and even backslide because they fail to abide. You need to stay, to continue, to wait, to cleave and to abide in Him.

Many do not abide because they are in a hurry – they are impatient. Patience is perseverance. Patience develops strength of character. When you do not see things happen as God has said, it is not because God lacks the power to do as He says but because He knows you are not capable of handling the blessings or the promises without first having the character to match them. The waiting is to allow you to become mature and equipped and it is for your own good. Remember the young man who came to his father and asked that he be given his inheritance immediately? What happened to him? He ended up in the pigs' pen because he did not have the maturity or the character to handle the blessings that were rightfully his.

As in the case of Queen Esther, God has a purpose for your life. *“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows if you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* (Esther 4:14) With these words, Mordecai, Queen Esther’s uncle confronted her with God’s plan for her life. When she submitted to God’s will or plan, He used her to rescue His people. The Bible says, *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord”* (Psalm 37:23). Abiding in Jesus will enable you to be and to do all that God has purposed for you in your life. Do you know what God wants you to be and to do? The answer will be found when you abide in Him.

When you abide in Christ, you will enjoy the following benefits:

1. You will walk like Jesus

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6).

2. You will have Christ’s love and be a conqueror

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Paul tells us that nothing can separate us from God’s love. *“Yet in these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

3. You will bear fruit (John 15:4)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). It will not be by your own strength but through your relationship with God.

4. You will overcome the world

“... and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:14).

5. You will walk in the light

“He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him” (1 John 2:10). When love fills your heart, you do not stumble. You stumble when you walk in darkness. You cannot make right decisions if you walk in darkness.

6. You will ask in the will of God and you will receive

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

7. God will be your Provider

“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” (John 15:5). When you abide in Him, everything you have and own comes from Him. There are people who have everything that will make anybody happy, yet they are not. Why? Because God is not the provider and therefore they can never be satisfied. On the other hand, you may not have much but you can be satisfied and content because what you have comes from God.

8. You will be able to overcome the seduction and attractions of the world

“My son, keep your father’s command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life, to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress” (Proverbs 6:20 - 24). Proverbs uses an evil woman to symbolise the seduction and attractions of the world. You can overcome evil by abiding in the Word.

You can fulfill God’s will and accomplish His plans for your life if you abide in Christ. You will not only be a matured believer but also live victoriously. Coming to Church will saturate you with the Word, expose you to the presence of God, encourage and strengthen your faith. Therefore, you cannot afford not to be part of the Church and its life.

(All Bible quotations are from the New King James Version)