



9/18/25

Every day we face things that are scary and painful, and every day, we have a God who says, "Come to Me if you're thirsty. I'll quench your thirst. Come to Me if you're weary and burdened. I'll give you rest. Come to Me and I'll fill you with joy." We never have to face any of it alone. He's right here with us. The God who spoke the world into existence cares about every detail of your life. I pray that will fill you with hope today as you come to Him.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

John 15:1-11

In the beginning, God created. Why? Why did He create light and water and land? He, the light, who fills my heart with living water and sets my feet upon a rock... created with purpose. I will see soon that He created man in His image. And knowing that's true, what does He want ME to do with that information? How does the Almighty, wise, loving God want me to respond? Abide in Him... dwell with Him... be in relationship with Him. This is what Jesus explained to the disciples in John 15 as they walked with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane on the night He was arrested, the night before He died.

How amazing and powerful is my God? Death could not keep Him from relationship with me! He wouldn't allow it. His death conquered death, and now He lives. This God wants a relationship with me. That doesn't make sense! I'm nobody! But not to Him. Lord, You want to abide in me... so that Your JOY can overflow in me as I will see in this passage! Please teach me to abide in You.

Vs. 1-2 ~ Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser." I'm sure Jesus and His disciples were walking by a grapevine as He said this. "You see this grapevine? See the root? That's Me. Everything comes from Me. My Father cultivates this grapevine so that it can thrive and produce luscious grapes."

But what happens when a branch of the vine isn't producing luscious grapes? "He takes it away." Why? Because branches that aren't producing grapes will suck the nourishment from the

branches that are.

This can be confusing. Is Jesus saying we can lose our salvation if we're not producing fruit? No... He was speaking to Jews, the "chosen" people of God. They, in essence, were "in Him" by their bloodline, but as Paul would make clear later... the true chosen people of God need to be in Him by faith. The first Christians were mostly Jews. They were the people who came to understand that their ethnicity did not save them. Faith in Jesus did. The Gentile, which is everyone who's not Jewish, was never in the vine to start with. Those who respond to Jesus in faith are grafted into the vine. This is something the disciples would not have understood yet. But they did understand that they were the chosen people of God, and God was saying, "Your bloodline doesn't save you. MY blood does."

Jesus then said, "Every branch in Me that does bear fruit, He prunes, that it may be more fruit." Well... I'm not a good gardener at all... but I understand that plants need to be pruned in order for the plants to thrive. But pruning means cutting... that means pain. So... when I as a believer in Christ am feeling pain, God is not punishing me... He's pruning me so that I can thrive.

O Lord, I believe this... and yet when I feel the pain of Your pruning, my first response is to think You're mad at me or punishing me. I'm so sorry for thinking that. Your word says in Psalm 103:10, "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities." And 1 John 2:1 says, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but even if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation (the mercy seat, the replacement payment) for our sins." And when suffering comes apart from my sin, You are the God of all comfort who comforts and strengthens me even as You abide with me through the pain. Father, You are a tenderhearted, gentle Vinedresser. Jesus, You are the vine who feels every ounce of my pain because I am IN YOU. You understand. You help me. Praise Your name.

Vs. 3-6 ~ Jesus looked at the disciples and said, "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you." The disciples understood that their relationship with Jesus was deeper than the blood that ran through their veins. Jesus made them clean by His word. They did not make themselves clean, just as I cannot make myself clean. His word makes me clean.

Here's where the command comes... "Abide in Me, and I in you." This is so beautiful!!! God wants so much more than for me to use His word as a rule book to follow. He wants mutual relationship with me! Following Jesus by rules is not mutual. It's just me trying to do. Abiding in Jesus is mutual. It is US in relationship with each other... not knowing exactly where one ends and the other begins. This is what God pursues with me! That's amazing.

Abiding in Jesus IS mutual, but it is not equal. Jesus is the source of life. He can survive without me, but I can't survive without Him. I certainly can't bear fruit without Him. I can do nothing of any value without Him. But with Him, I can bear (not make) a ton of fruit... all that is good and right and true.

Branches that don't abide in the branch are thrown away and burned. They are kindling for a fire. These are unbelievers who refuse to have a relationship with Jesus. They think they can thrive apart from Him. It's not true... and it's not what God wants. If He wanted nothing but kindling for the fire, He would have hidden Himself from us. Jesus would never have come to the earth to die. He WANTS to be in relationship with all who are IN HIM.

Vs. 7-8 ~ God doesn't just want me to abide in Him; He wants His word to abide in me. His word makes me clean. His word makes my mind pure so that I ask for things that align with Him... things that are good and right and true.

When I'm abiding in relationship with the Lord and His word is abiding in me, He says I can ask for whatever I wish and it will be done for me. Let me notice something here... It will be done FOR me. I don't know where the phrase, "The Lord helps those who help themselves" comes from, but it's not from the Bible. God does the work in me. But also let me notice that God is generous with me WHEN I'm abiding in Him. Why not just be a magic genie and give me what I want no matter what it is? When I'm not abiding Him, the things I want are not what's best for me. God does not give me what I want if what I want will hurt me or pull me farther from Him.

It would be pretty crazy for me to expect God to give me what I want when I don't even care about what He wants. It's pretty crazy of me to think I know what's best for me better than He does. God knows that the most satisfied I will ever be is when I'm doing what I was created to do... to glorify God and bear fruit for Him. Nothing else satisfies like that.

So when I pray, I need to be praying according to what God's word calls good, and the motivation of my prayer needs to be for God's glory, and for me to bear fruit for Him. Can I honestly say that the motivation of my prayer is God's glory and bearing fruit for Him? The more I abide in Him and let His word abide in me, the more His glory will be my motivation, and the more satisfied I'll be as I bear fruit for Him. The more I abide with the Lord, the more I'm thankful to be known as His disciple.

Vs. 9-10 ~ So... God wants me to abide in Him, to let His word abide in me, and He wants me to abide in His love. How cool is that! He wants me to abide in His LOVE. Jesus loves me as the Father loves Him... that's a lot of love, right? Ummm... how does the Father love Him?

These are things I've found in how the Father loves Jesus ~

- 1. He takes pleasure in Him (baptism) ~ Matthew 3:17*
- 2. He openly spoke of His love for Him (baptism and transfiguration) ~ Matthew 3:17, 17:5*
- 3. He sent His Spirit to dwell with Him (baptism) ~ Matthew 3:16*
- 4. He was pleased to have the fullness of His deity dwell in Him ~ Colossians 1:19*
- 5. He ministered to Him in His suffering (after the temptation, in the Garden of Gethsemane) ... and grieved over His death (at the cross) ~ Matthew 4:11, 27:45-51, Luke 22:43*

6. *He raised Him from the dead exactly when He said He would (on the third day) ~ Matthew 28:1-6*
7. *He glorified Him (gave Him the name above all names) ~ Philippians 2:10-11*

This is how Jesus loves me ~

1. *He takes pleasure in me ~ Ephesians 1:7-8, Romans 3:23-24*
2. *He openly speaks of His love for me ~ John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Romans 8:35-39*
3. *He sent His Spirit to dwell in me and pour His love into me ~ Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 5:5*
4. *He is pleased to make me like Him ~ 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29*
5. *He ministers to me in my suffering and grieves with me ~ Isaiah 63:9, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4*
6. *I have been crucified with Jesus AND raised to new life ~ 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:4*
7. *He glorifies me ~ Romans 8:30*

So... as I abide in His love, I will experience all these things in Him... and the evidence that I'm abiding in His love is that I will obey Him. How do I obey Him? Love God and love others ~

1. *Take pleasure in the Lord and let that spill out into caring for others.*
2. *Openly speak of my love for God and show that same love to others.*
3. *Let the love of the Spirit flow through me and let His love be my motivation in how I treat others.*
4. *Be pleased to let Him make me more and more like Jesus and treat others like Jesus would treat them.*
5. *Run to my God for comfort in my suffering and comfort others in their suffering.*
6. *Don't use my freedom as a coverup for sin but serve the Lord in gratitude... and serve those He calls me to serve.*
7. *Glorify Him and NOT others. I will never love others by glorifying THEM... I love them by lovingly pointing them to Jesus.*

Vs. 11 ~ Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." What was Jesus' purpose in talking to His disciples (and me) on the night that He was betrayed??? To give us JOY!!! The fact that He knew He was about to die for us and, instead of making it all about comforting Himself, He was offering us joy just blows me away. No circumstance Jesus was ever in, or that I am ever in, takes away His desire to give me joy. How do I get that joy??? Abide in Him, let His word abide in me, and abide in His love through obedience to Him. I can have as much joy apart from Him as a branch can have nourishment apart from its vine. None. But as I abide in Him, His free-flowing joy runs through

me so beautifully that not even sorrow can steal my joy.

Lord, You have the power to speak life into existence from nothing. You have the power to use Your blood to be my payment for sin. You have the power to fill me with joy. You don't ask me to do anything but be in relationship with You. I don't obey You out of fear. I obey You out of love and gratitude. Please help me to stay close to You every moment of the day... and celebrate that You want to be with me every moment of the day. Praise Your name!