

John 6:35-59 Those Who Come to Jesus (part 3 – A Foundational Sermon on Abiding)

Those Who Come to Jesus Abide in Him. This is our big truth. Our text does not give us all the details of what this means except that those who come to Jesus abide in him and He in them (See John 15). I get this from v. 56: “**Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.**” We have already seen that “to eat his flesh” and “drink his blood” is not literal, but is a picture of faith in Jesus. It is a picture of those who “*come to him*,” those who “*believe*” in Him. So, those who come to him abide in Him and He in them. So, what does this mean? The word (Greek *meno*) can have different meanings. It’s most basic meaning is to “*remain in a place*.” This week, I am delivering a car to KC for Abby. But, Kristen will “*remain*” at home. It can also mean to “*dwell*.” For example, in John 1:38 the disciples asked Jesus, “**Where do you live** (dwell)?” And He says, “**Come and you will see.**” It can mean to “*last*” like televisions and appliances built in the 60s and 70s. In the NT, this word is most often translated as “remain” or “abide” or “stay” depending on the context. With this in mind, I want to explore John’s meaning of “abide” by considering 3 contexts that will help us understand: 1) God, 2) Jesus, and 3) John. By doing this, I hope we can give some kind meaning and apply what it means to “abide in Christ” to our lives.

1. God. The Bible describes God as the ONE who endures. Ps. 135:13 says, “**Your name, O LORD, endures forever, your renown, O LORD, throughout all ages.**” Mal. 3:6 says: “**For I the LORD do not change.**” God is immutable! James calls him “*the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change*” (James 1:17). In other words, God does not change, nor can he change. If He could change, He would not be God. He is not “fickle” like us, often changing with the circumstances. This means his commands, his words, his decrees, his righteousness, etc. cannot change. His love, His judgments, His wisdom, etc. cannot change. In this way, GOD is the ONE who ABIDES. GOD is the ONE who REMAINS. GOD is the ONE who STAYS “in place.” God is the ETERNAL “ABIDING” ONE. There is no great picture because ONLY God truly embodies this truth. But, I think about the compass. It always points to the north. Why? If my compass is working correctly and I am trying to go north, I must follow the hand of the compass. In this way, North is Fixed. Well, in an eternal way, God is fixed. He cannot change. He remains. He is the unmoved mover. As Paul says in Rom. 11:36: “**For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.**” So, when we compare God with his creation the Psalmist says: “**The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever**” (Is. 40:8). In this way He is set apart from all his creation. Theologians like to use the term “transcendence.” God is “transcendent.” In this regard there are none like him!

2. Jesus. When we come to the NT we find Jesus, the carpenter’s son from Nazareth. This fact is the subject of conflict between Jesus and the Jews from Nazareth. Jesus feeds the five thousand and then uses this event to teach that as God gave manna to God’s people in the desert that they may live, so NOW God has given HIM as the TRUE BREAD from heaven. And if anyone is to find LIFE, they must come to HIM. Jesus says to them in vv. 55-57: “**For my flesh is true food,**

and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.” These words cause the greatest of conflicts, which will continue, and will ultimately put Jesus on the cross, condemned as a blasphemous enemy to God. To those Jews, this teaching was absurd. Let me give somewhat of an example. What if Joe the high school coach goes to the national conference on high school coaches and he says, “I am the greatest of high school coaches . . . EVER.” “*If you take my teachings and my ways and if any school hires me they will never lose a game*” what kind of reception would Joe get? Well, Jesus’ claims are not even in the same category of high school coaching. Jesus was saying, “***As you have come to God to find life, so NOW come to me?***” “I am not even in the same league as Moses.” “**I have come from the Father Himself.**” As v. 57 says, “**As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father.**” Those Jews did not mistake his meaning. He was saying, “*the VERY same LIFE that the Father possesses, so is the LIFE I possess.*” Now, let’s put this together from our first truth about God. This means that as God “REMAINS,” As God “ABIDES” as God is “IMMOVABLE” as God “CANNOT CHANGE” so is the Son. As God is eternal, so is the Son. This means that the SAME power of God is the SAME power of the Son. As God “abides” so does the Son. So, when Jesus says to the world and to us “**Come to me, all you who labor and heavy with burdens, I will give you rest**” (Matt. 11:28) his AUTHORITY, his ABILITY to make this happen comes with the same fullness of the abiding power of God.

3. John. Now, John had a number of years after Jesus’ death and resurrection to think through these truths. This is why the Book of John is SO amazing! Everything he says hinges on the “*abiding,*” “*remaining,*” “*eternal,*” “*unchangeable*” character of the Son. Think about some of the things he says starting in cp. 1:1-5 “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**” And in v. 14: “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father . . .**” In John we have no doubts about WHO HE IS!

Also, think about what He does to prove who HE is. John organizes his book around seven big signs. He turns water into wine (cp. 2). He heals the official’s son, snatching him from sure death (cp. 4). He heals the paralyzed man on the Sabbath, proving He is Lord of the Sabbath (cp. 5). He feeds five thousand men with their wives and children (cp. 6). He calms the storm and delivers his disciples to the other side of the Sea (cp. 6). He heals a man born blind, displaying that He is the Light of the world (cp. 9). And finally he raises Lazarus from the dead (cp. 11). In all these miracles, what is John communicating? First, he is saying this man has the SAME abiding power as God. Second, he is showing that Jesus has come to turn back the effects of sin and death and to bring newness of life. Why did he write this book? John 20:31: “**but these are**

written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

So, with this foundation set, let’s move back to our truth: **“Those who come to Jesus abide”** and ask, *“What does this mean for us?”* “How can we apply this truth?”

1. The most obvious truth is that those who come to Jesus have eternal life. Look at v. 57: **“As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.”** The same life that abides in the Father and the Son is the same life that is given to us. Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:17: **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”** Brothers and sisters, the **“wages of sin is death”** (Rom. 6:23) Since the fall of Adam, **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). As Paul says we are **“dead in our trespasses and sins”** (Eph. 2:1). If we will see God, we must have life given to us. This is why Jesus came. But, he can’t merely “come.” He must also lay down his life. We see this in v. 51 as Jesus says, **“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”** And then, after laying down his life on the cross, He must conquer death, which is what he does. After three days he rose from the dead, conquering death forever! So, if you are a Christian, the same power that rose Jesus from the dead is the same power that abides in you. If you are not a Christian, come to Jesus and you will find life!

2. There is no other way to gain eternal life than through the Son. In John 14:6 we read: “Jesus said to him, **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** After the resurrection Peter preaches to the rulers of the Jews saying, **“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”** (Acts 4:12).

3. Those who come to Jesus persevere to the end. So far in John 6 we don’t get all the details of this truth. But, it is clear! Think back through our progression with our truths. 1) Before the foundations of the world God gives a people to the Son. 2) He draws those people (v. 44). 3) These same people are taught by God (v. 45). 4) These also “abide.” They “remain.” And 5) as will see He will raise these same people from the dead (v. 44 again). Jesus will teach this truth further in John 10:27-30: **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”** If you have truly come to Jesus and his power abides in you, you will persevere to the very end. As Paul says in Phil. 1:6: **“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”** Brothers and sisters, God, in Christ, will KEEP His own to the end. He will hold you fast! Through all your sins, through all your doubts, through whatever comes in this life, He will keep you!

4. As a Christian you display the life of Jesus in this world of sin and death. Look with me to 2 Cor. 4:7-12: **“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.”** Have you ever thought that through your afflictions, through your aging, through the hardships of this life that you “remaining,” you “abiding,” your persistence to “press on” is given by the power of God so that Jesus is glorified. This truth is one of the means God uses to bring sinners to himself. When you go through the worsts of trials and you remain a follower of Jesus and you give him glory in spite of your trials, people can’t help but ask, “What is different about you than what I see in this world?” And you say, *“It is the power of God given to me through the Lord Jesus.”*

In closing, let me ask, “IS THERE ANYTHING MORE GLORIOUS than union with the resurrected Christ?”