Abiding in Jesus

The unbounded fruitfulness of staying true to our Lord …

- **Unbounded … having or appearing to have no limits …**

PART ONE

STAYING THE COURSE FOR UNBOUNDED JOY ...

Staying the course is an idiom that means to continue with a plan or effort, even when it is difficult or there are obstacles. It emphasizes perseverance and not giving up. The phrase originates from a nautical context, referring to a ship maintaining a set direction despite storms or rough seas.

- And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, *fixing our eyes on Jesus* (Hebrews 12:1b–2a NIV).

1. Jesus sets the scene to eliminate confusion and enable us to see the very clear distinctions between the two types of branches, 15:1-3.

- (John 15:1–3 ESV) 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 does bear fruit** he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

A. Participants: true vine, vinedresser and branches.

B. Branches that do not bear fruit the Father removes.

C. Branches that bear fruit the Father prunes so that they will bear more fruit.

D. The fruit-bearing branches are clean because they believed the word that was spoken to them.

E. Fruit or no fruit identifies the branch.

2. Jesus commands us to abide, 15:4-10.

- (John 15:4–10 ESV) **Abide in me, and I in you**. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. **Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit**, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 **If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers**; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 **If you abide in me, and my words abide in you**, **ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you**. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I 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.

A. Obeying the command to abide in Jesus results in the corresponding, effective action that he abides in us and bears fruit in our lives.

B. Abiding in Jesus is staying the course—meaning that Jesus is our only plan for life.

And no wonder. What other plan could there be than staying true to the one who holds the entire universe together. Where else would we go?

- (Colossians 1:15–17 ESV) **He is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation. 16 **For by him all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—**all things were created through him and for him**. 17 And he is before all things, **and in him all things hold together**.

C. Abiding connects, develops and reveals a person's relationship with Jesus the vine and the Father.

D. Obeying the command to abide in Jesus affirms the authenticity of our relationship with him.

E. Abiding in Jesus is a non-negotiable standard of a true, saving relationship with him.

F. The branch who abides in Jesus bears much fruit in contrast to the branch who does not abide and does nothing.

G. The branch that does not abide has no part in Jesus and is thrown into the fire and burned.

H. Jesus answers the prayers of those who obey his command and abide in him.

Those who obey Jesus and abide in him will be in accord with the work and the character of God in Christ. These are prayers that are shaped and formed in the heart of the one who abides in Jesus and Jesus' words abide in him–the person who now knows the truth. God answers prayers that align with his purpose as we do the works of Christ.

- (John 14:12–14 ESV) Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do**; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 **Whatever you ask in my name**, **this I will do**, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 I**f you ask me anything in my name**, **I will do it**.

- (John 8:31–32 ESV) So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "**If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples**, 32 **and you will know the truth**, and the truth will set you free."

I. Bearing much fruit brings glory to the Father and proves [shows a person has become] a true follower of Jesus.

The question here … proves to whom?

The best answer seems that this is speaking of an authentication and affirmation process that happens within the person by the witness of the Spirit to our spirit as we live in the truth of God and do the will of God. This is blessed affirmation of the highest degree.

Living by the Spirit we become and live as the courageous people of God – no longer fearful slaves.

- (Romans 8:14–16 ESV) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 **For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear**, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 **The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God**.

J. Conversely: A non-fruit bearing branch does not bring glory to the Father and is void of the inner witness of the Spirit as a Jesus follower.

K. The command to abide in Jesus' love speaks to the necessity of abiding in "as the Father has loved Jesus" love.

i. The love in which we are to abide is the divine, mutual love of the Father and the Son.

ii. We will abide in that love if we keep his commandments.

iii. It is the same powerful principle by which Jesus keeps the Father's commandments and abides in his love.

3. Jesus states that his purpose in speaking these things is to complete our joy, 15:11.

- (John 15:11 ESV) These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

A. Jesus speaks these things to us so that his joy may be in us and that our joy may be full.

B. We were chosen, created, called and crafted to love God and bring him glory.

- (Ephesians 1:4–5 ESV) **Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
- (Isaiah 43:6–7 NLT) I will say to the north and south, "Bring my sons and daughters back to Israel from the distant corners of the earth. 7 Bring all who claim me as their God, **for I have made them for my glory**. **It was I who created them**."
- (Ephesians 4:1–2 ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, **urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called**, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.
- (Ephesians 2:10 ESV) **For we are his workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, **that we should walk in them**.

C. Jesus' words tell us how that happens—how we walk worthy of the manner with which we have been called.

D. This is full joy.

PART TWO

STAYING THE COURSE FOR UNBOUNDED LOVE …

1. Jesus commands us to love as he has loved us, 15:12.

- (John 15:12 ESV) This is **my commandment**, **that you love one another as I have loved you**.

2. Jesus further describes this love as one who lays down his life for his friends, 15:13.

- (John 15:13 ESV) Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

3. Jesus gives us the qualification for friendship with him, 15:14

- (John 15:14 ESV) **You are my friends if you do what I command you**.

4. Jesus gives us powerful insight as to what it means to be a friend of God, 15:15.

- (John 15:15 ESV) No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

What does it mean to be a friend of Jesus?

A. We do what Jesus commands us to do (15:14).

B. We know what God is doing because Jesus gives us inside knowledge into the mind of God.

C. We believe God as did Abraham.

- (James 2:23 ESV) And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God.

D. We are not friends with the world.

- (James 4:4 ESV) You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

E. The world hates us.

- (John 15:18–19 ESV) If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

5. Jesus further develops our relationship to him by directing our attention to the beginning where he chose and appointed us, 15:16.

- (John 15:16 ESV) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

A. We did not choose Jesus.

B. Jesus chose us to go and bear fruit that lasts.

C. We are to go and teach others to observe (keep) all that he has commanded us.

- (Matthew 28:18–20 ESV) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

D. We are to go and bear fruit, not produce fruit.

i. We go in the authority of Jesus with the intent of making true Jesus followers.

ii. We make true Jesus followers by teaching them to *observe* all he has commanded us.

Observe is our familiar word ***keep*** (*τηρέω - tay·reh·o)* – to guard; to observe with the intent of obedience; to conform one's action or practice to. No surprise then that he commands us to go and teach them exactly what he has been teaching us.

- (John 14:15 ESV) If you love me, you will ***keep*** my commandments.
- (1 John 2:3–4 ESV) And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we ***keep*** his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not ***keep*** his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

E. We go with the confidence and assurance that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age.

6. Jesus' states his reason in commanding us in these things, 15:17.

- (John 15:17 ESV) These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

A. Jesus makes it very clear how we are able to love one another as he commands us to.

B. We keep his commandments.

C. Jesus' teaching method — he commands, we obey, we learn to love as he loves.

D. Keeping his commands builds the foundation upon which we learn his love.

E. The person who does not obey Jesus in these things does not know his love and does not know Jesus.

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