

# Abide / Remain / Continue

Sunday, 4/29 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 4/30 at 7 PM

Fifth Sunday of Easter – 2018

Join us on Ascension Day – 5/10: Meal at 6 PM; Service at 7 PM

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today's focus is on the word "abide," which appears *seven times* in today's Gospel reading. What does it mean to abide? In today's context, to abide means to *remain* or *continue* in Christ! The Holy Spirit, *through Holy Baptism*, clothed us in Christ; now, *He is continuing to work through Word and Sacrament to keep us in Christ!* When, *by God's grace*, we abide / remain / continue in Christ, ♣we are saved, ♣we bear fruit, ♣God grants what we pray, and ♣God is glorified in our lives!

As we turn to John 15, it's late on Holy Thursday and Jesus has just left the upper room with His disciples. Jesus will identify Himself as the vine – *the source of our nourishment*, and us as the branches – *the ones who desperately need to abide / remain / continue in Him!* Since we were dead in our sins ([Eph. 2:1](#)), God did EVERYTHING necessary to make us spiritually alive. Now that we are alive, *God has given us the ability to cooperate with the Holy Spirit who dwells within us!*

1. **Summary Statement:** <sup>1</sup> "I [*Jesus*] **am the true vine, and my Father [*in heaven*] is the vinedresser.** <sup>2</sup> **Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he [*my Father in heaven*] takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.** // In a sense we could say that *God, the Father* planted *His Son, the vine* in this world; everyone who believes in Him is ♣united

to Him,  $\blacktriangleright$ benefitting from Him, and  $\blacktriangleright$ nourished by Him. As a grape farmer wants each vine to bear the most fruit, *so God the Father wants the same; therefore, He is looking for fruit!* Where there is none, *He removes those branches;* where there is some, *He prunes!* On the topic of pruning, consider this passage: <sup>NAS</sup> **Heb. 12:1** “...let us...lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...” As pruning removes the suckers that hinder growth, *so the Father prunes us to remove whatever is hindering us from producing His fruit in our lives!*

2. **Salvation Clarification:** Jesus said to His disciples:  
<sup>3</sup> **Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you.”** // In other words, you are *clean, forgiven* – not because you bore fruit, *but because the Spirit worked through the Word to  $\blacktriangleright$ convict you of your sins and  $\blacktriangleright$ enable you to believe in me and the work I will soon complete!* Being clean, God sees us to be saints, but, *at the same time,* we still have our sin nature, so we still sin. However, going forward, *it is very important to continue in Christ!*
3. **Abiding Is Necessary for Fruit:** Jesus continued...
  - a. <sup>4</sup> **“As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.** // Jesus’ statement is easily understood: If a branch on a fruit-bearing tree becomes severed from that tree; *then it is impossible for that branch to bear fruit.* As the tree works through the branch to bear the fruit,

so Jesus works through us to bear spiritual fruit!  
Therefore, it is essential for us to abide in Him!

- b. <sup>5</sup> **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.** // So we—the braches, must remain united to Jesus—the vine, our source of spiritual life, in order to bear spiritual fruit, thus, *the fruit of the Spirit*, which is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23 NAS). Lenski noted: “A branch may have but little of such fruit, but as long as it draws life from the vine [that is, from Jesus], some of the fruit will be found” (1030).

4. **Those Who Do Not Abide Are Dead**: Then Jesus gave His disciples a *serious warning*: <sup>6</sup> **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.** // The burning is a picture of *eternal punishment*, which we certainly want to avoid for ourselves and do not desire for anyone – even our greatest enemies!

- a. But what happens with some, possibly many?  
Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “There may be some Christian show and [appearance], but the reality of Christian virtue [benefit] is lost” (494) (Rev. 3:1).
- b. Dr. Luther wrote these pertinent words: “...if [you would] give up the doctrine of faith or [undermine] it and, leaving Christ, depend upon [your] own [holiness], or publicly live in sin and shame, and yet glory in the Gospel and in the

Christian name: then [you shall] know that [you] are a false branch and [have] no part in the Vine” (Luther’s Work, 8, 516). See 2 Corinthians 13:5.

5. **Those Who Abide Pray in Harmony With God’s Will:**

<sup>7</sup> **If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. //**

Think about Jesus’ statement: For our prayers to be granted, *two factors are necessary*: (1) To be in a saving relationship with Jesus **and** (2) to continue in His Word, thus to **◆**know it, **◆**hold it as very important, and **◆**seek proper application. For all such people, they are **†**close to Jesus, **†**in tune with God’s will, and **†**pray in ways that agree with God’s will. *May all such things be true in our lives now and always!*

6. **Those Who Bear Much Fruit Show They Are Abiding:**

<sup>8</sup> **By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” //** According to our new nature, *we desire to glorify our Father*. He is glorified when we – *as His holy children* – do His will and show forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. *Such things also identify us as Jesus’ disciples!*

**LET US PRAY:** Dear Father, TY for sending Your Son; dear Jesus, TY for Your finished work; dear Holy Spirit, TY for giving us faith in Jesus, please help us to ever abide / remain / continue in Him and bear much fruit! In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; Amen!

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