

John 15:7-11 – “The Privileges of Abiding”

(Pew Bible Page: 901-902)

Intro: This portion of the discourse of Jesus that we are studying gives us insight into a tremendous privilege every believer in Christ has been granted: living union with the Savior. We draw our life from Him; we become fruitful because of our union with Him; our eternal destiny is settled because we are in union with God’s Son. In the verses preceding those we are focusing on tonight, Jesus insisted that His followers must “abide” or “remain” in this relationship of living union with the Master. How is that to be done? Are there any blessings in this life we’ll receive by abiding, or is our reward only in the coming kingdom? Let’s dive into tonight’s lesson and learn that...

Proposition: Believers are granted living union with Christ and by abiding in this union we receive many precious gifts this side of eternity.

Tonight, our thoughts will be gathered around four blessings believers now receive through our union with Christ: (v.7) Answered Prayer; (v.8) Abundant Fruit; (vv.9-10) Abiding Love; (v.11) Abounding Joy.

(v.7) Answered Prayer – Our union with Jesus is the sole source of every blessing we receive. In this verse, Jesus tells us how we abide, and promises the blessing of answered prayer to all who abide: **John 15:7 - 7** *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.* It is reasonable for us to ask, “How can I abide in Christ? What is the means I am given to practice the abiding Jesus speaks of?” This verse gives us the answer to those questions and then goes on to promise the blessing of answered prayer because we abide. First of all, how do we practice the abiding Jesus urges upon us?

How we Abide – The secret to abiding isn’t complex. Here’s a simple explanation from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary: *“The connection is maintained by obedience and prayer. To remain in Christ and to allow his words to remain in oneself means, a conscious acceptance of the authority of his word and a constant contact with him by prayer.”* I love the simplicity of this principle! Abiding requires a *“conscious acceptance of the authority of his word.”* In other words, our Bibles become consumingly precious to us. We arrive at the point of confessing to ourselves, not just others, that God has spoken to us authoritatively in His word and that because we believe, we soak our minds and hearts with His revelation. One commentator points to **Colossians 3:16** as another statement of this same principle: **16** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* Abiding in His words, recognizing them as our “final authority for life and practice,” is our first duty for enjoying our union with Christ. Secondly, *“a constant contact with him by prayer,”* is the next crucial practice for abiding. Filling our minds and hearts with His words should lead inevitably to turning to Him in prayer. When we converse with friends, it is normal and expected that we should reply to their words in appropriate ways. We might agree, dispute, correct or affirm, but making some response is a natural part of friendly

John 15:7-11 – “The Privileges of Abiding”

(Pew Bible Page: 901-902)

relations. As we listen to God speak through His word, it ought to be just as natural for us to respond appropriately to the things we hear Him saying. Prayer is the breathing mechanism of the human spirit. Abiding believers take deep breaths often! And there is a blessing that comes from this.

The Promise of Answered Prayer – Jesus delights to affirm our union with Him by answering our prayers. *“Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you,”* He said. This breath-taking promise is understood to mean, not that we will certainly receive anything we happen to ask for, but that as we are taught by His word to ask for the things leading to fruitfulness, we can rest assured of His perfect willingness to answer our prayers for those things. And as He answers our prayers, we receive an added bonus: not only do we receive the gifts we need for fruitfulness, but we also receive *“the witness of the Spirit”* to the fact of our salvation. A living union with the Vine results in a powerful witness to our reality as we’ll see in the next verse.

(v.8) Abundant Fruit – The next blessing resulting from our union with Jesus is that all who are in union with Christ will bear abundant fruit for God’s glory. **John 15:8 - 8** *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.* Jesus had already made it clear that fruit bearing is the natural result of being in union with Him when He said, **John 15:5 - 5** *Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* The secret, then, is to abide in union with Him, and the natural result of abiding is fruitfulness. What kind of fruit is expected from those who are in union with Him? There are two aspects of fruitfulness in view here:

Inner Fruitfulness – Through the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life, a gradual change of heart is being produced that is best described in **Galatians 5:22–23 - 22** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* These are inner values; characteristics of the heart that the Spirit aims to grow to maturity in every believer’s life. As the Word and the Spirit work in our lives we discover a change taking place. Our “old man” is being left behind as the “new man” of Christ-like character is being formed in our souls. This is the first work of fruitfulness God is seeking for His kingdom.

Outer Fruitfulness – The inner transformation we are experiencing should naturally result in an outward transformation of life, as described in **Titus 2:2–6 - 2** *Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own*

John 15:7-11 – “The Privileges of Abiding”

(Pew Bible Page: 901-902)

husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

Inner transformation is to produce outer confirmation, as the last phrase of verse eight assures us: “Bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” This evidence of a changed life will bring assurance to the believer’s heart; it will draw the attention of a skeptical world to the good news about Jesus; and it will fulfil the purpose of God in granting us salvation, as is made clear in **Titus 2:14** where we are told that Jesus **14 gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.** The reason we are saved is because God is seeking this fruit for His eternal kingdom: transformed lives that can reflect His glory forever and ever.

(vv.9-10) Abiding Love – Jesus shared with us a remarkable truth in these two verses: Our union with Him is proof that we are loved by Jesus with the same kind of love that the Father has for His Son. **John 15:9–10 - 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.* How much love do you think God the Father has for God the Son? Is there anything that could make the Father abandon the Son? Could the Father ever feel jealous of the Son? Could He ever be disappointed with Jesus? These thoughts are unthinkable, aren’t they? Here Jesus tells us that these same things are true of His love for us. His love for us is unconditional. His sacrifice on Calvary has cleared away every impediment, every separating thing between us. Now all He says to us is simply, “abide.” “Remain.” “Stay put in my love.” And verse 10 gives us the secret of remaining in His love: obedience. **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.* The equation is not difficult to understand: Those who obey are those who truly abide in His love. Those who refuse to obey have yet to enter into His love. When we know His love, the thought of disobedience becomes abhorrent to the believing heart.

(v.11) Abounding Joy – Jesus concluded this movement of the passage with a revelation of His purpose: Abiding in His love will inevitably lead those abiding into a life of true, fulfilling joy. **John 15:11 - 11** *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.* His desire for us; what He wants most for us out of our union with Him is joy. Unending; satisfying; heart singing joy. C. S. Lewis once said that, “Joy is the serious business of heaven,” and Lewis was right! When it has all been said and done, life on earth is going to be about just one thing: God being glorified by His redeemed and transformed people rejoicing in His presence forever.

Union with Christ brings believers every one of these blessings in the *Now*, and in the *Not Yet* of eternity. What should we say about these things?

John 15:7-11 – “The Privileges of Abiding”

(Pew Bible Page: 901-902)

[APPLICATION] I can think of three applications for the truths we’ve seen tonight.

We should marvel at the generosity of God – Be honest for a moment. Do you deserve this? Who are we that we should become the children of God? Why should we be favored with union with Christ? Why are we offered this gift in the first place? The Bible only gives us one answer to these questions: “*Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.*” It is inexplicable generosity on God’s part that He should put us in union with His dear Son. Gratitude is called for and joy will be the result.

We should commit ourselves afresh to the Word of God and Prayer – Abiding means a steadfast commitment to the authority of God’s Word and a relentless practice of devotion through prayer. Everyone *knows* this. The question is, will we give ourselves to *living this out* in our lives. If we really believe this is true, it makes no sense at all to neglect these precious means of grace. The world around us works very hard to distract us from these basic disciplines. Don’t let it win the battle! Commit yourself afresh to God’s Word and Prayer and enjoy the blessing of answered prayer that follows that commitment.

We should strive anew for transformed lives that bring God glory - Though our union with Christ is the source of all these blessings, receiving those gifts doesn’t happen automatically. If we want to experience the blessing of answered prayer, we must be those who pray. If we want the blessing of assurance of our salvation, we must be those who wear the marks of inner and outer fruitfulness. If we want to abide in His love, we must stir ourselves up to know and obey His commands. You can be saved without diligence in these things, but, Oh! What a poverty-stricken existence! It’s like having millions in the bank but continuing to live in a hovel. What sense could it possibly make? No. Live up to your privileges. “*The Spirit help us in our weakness,*” says Romans 8:17, but this doesn’t mean that we don’t have to participate. He HELPS us with these endeavors; He doesn’t REPLACE us in their being carried out. Strive for a transformed life that gives God the glory.

Conclusion: As believers we have a tremendous privilege: we have been granted, as an act of sheer grace, living union with Jesus. Don’t neglect your privileges! Live for His glory and enjoy His love.