

* These notes are provided for personal devotional and study purposes only. They may not be published, distributed, or disseminated to others without the permission of the author.

The Glory of Abiding

John 15.8-11

Series: Signs of Life

August 22, 2021

Rev. Andrew Hawkins, Senior Pastor

I. Introduction

- A. I was in college in the early 70's
 - 1. It was the heyday of what has come to be known as the Jesus Movement
 - 2. The Jesus Movement flowed out of the counterculture movement of the 1960's
 - a. It reflected a Christianity that in many ways bore some characteristics of counterculture movement
 - b. It tended to eschew institutional forms of religious engagement
 - c. And instead tended toward greater informality in Christian expression
 - 3. While today we may wonder about the benefits of such an approach to Christianity, there were many positive dimensions as well
- B. One of them was the explosion of young people coming to faith in Jesus in those days
 - 1. One of the most notable examples of the youthful enthusiasm generated in those days was Explo 72
 - 2. Sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ and held at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, it attracted 80,000 young people
 - a. The two Bills were key leaders of Explo 72 – Bill Bright and Billy Graham
 - 3. The development of a number of new denominations and parachurch organizations also grew out of the movement
- C. And the Jesus movement had its effect on college campuses around the country
 - 1. Including the one I attended
 - a. We had a Christian Fellowship organization which was not associated with any organization or denomination
 - b. But was a grass-roots, enthusiastic, student-led movement which attracted between 300 and 400 students each week
 - c. And involved hundreds in Bible studies
- D. So when I went to college, coming out of a small town mainline denominational church, the enthusiastic Christian activism on campus was a bit of shock to the system
 - 1. Nevertheless, it was a lifeline for a young Christian seeking to find his way in the context of a secular university
 - 2. The Christian atmosphere, even on a secular campus, in those days was a veritable hothouse of spiritual growth for me

- a. And yes, I managed to get to class occasionally as well
- E. In that kind of movement context there was a lot of experimentation
 - 1. One of the things that I had never seen before was the visible expression that some students wanted to exhibit
 - 2. Students didn't want to hide their religious expression
 - a. Like those in the counterculture who produced all manner of T-shirts with messages proclaiming their particular form of cultural rebellion
 - b. Christians began to come out with their own expressions
 - 3. T-shirts proclaiming love for Jesus
 - a. Scripture verses on T-shirts
 - b. Buttons saying things like "Jesus Freak" or "I love Jesus" were common
 - c. Bumper stickers with "Honk if you love Jesus" – things like that
- F. Being the cautious, conservative person that I am...
 - 1. I steered clear of those kinds of expressions
 - a. I didn't wear any buttons
 - b. I didn't have bumper stickers on my car
 - c. (Of course I didn't have a car to put one on anyway for most of the time I was in college)
 - d. I didn't have any T-shirts proclaiming my love for Jesus
 - 2. I certainly didn't want people to think of me as a "Jesus freak"
- G. But I thought, if people want to know if I'm a Christian, they ought to be able to find out, not by a button or a T-shirt or a bumper sticker
 - 1. But they ought to be able to tell if I'm a Christian by my life
 - a. That there ought to be some aspect of my life that would distinguish me as a believer in Jesus
 - 2. I was convinced that you could wear the button or the T-shirt and act pretty much like the pagans around you
 - a. (And many did!)
 - 3. But there ought to be a quality of life that indicated that you were, in fact, committed to Jesus
 - 4. I was challenged by the statement at the time, "If you were accused in a court of law for being a Christian, would there be any evidence to convict you?"
 - a. Yet I scrambled to figure out what that evidence might be
- H. As time has gone on I've come to believe that the key to producing such evidence is what we have been studying in the Gospel of John for last two weeks: abiding in Christ

II. **The Abiding Principle**

- A. We've been exploring this wonderful 15th Chapter of the Gospel of John in our series Signs of Life
 - 1. It is the chapter that **Jesus proclaims himself to be the true vine**
 - a. **His Father is** said to be **the vinedresser**

- b. And **we are the branches**
- B. He tells us that we must **“Abide in Me” (John 15.4)** – abide in Christ as a branch must abide in the vine in order to bear fruit
 - 1. He teaches us the necessity of abiding in Him
 - a. **John 15:4–5** (NASB95) — 4 “... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”
 - 2. He teaches us that the Father, the Vinedresser, cares for, lifts up, and prunes the branches so they bear more fruit (**John 15.2**)
 - 3. He also promises that He will answer our prayers as we abide in Him (**John 15.7**)
 - 4. And He warns that branches that fail to abide are subject to being cast aside, thrown away (**John 15.6**)
- C. Abiding means that we remain in Him
 - 1. Remaining in His word (**John 15.3**)
 - a. Spending time with Him in His word, in studying the Word of God
 - b. In meditating on the Word of God
 - c. Engaging with the Word on our own as well as with others in small groups
 - d. In addition to regular attendance at worship where the Word of God is proclaimed
 - 2. It also means spending time with Jesus in prayer
 - a. Maintaining the kind of personal connection and communication that prayer entails
 - b. Again – by ourselves in our “secret closet” of prayer as Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew
 - c. But also in corporate settings like we have on Wednesday night
 - d. Or in small group prayer times
 - 3. So both through the Word and prayer we learned that we engage in both with frequency and consistency if we want to truly abide with Christ
 - a. I introduced the **FITT principle** – drawn from my experience in exercise science
 - b. Frequency – regular engagement in reading, studying the word and prayer
 - c. Intensity – engaged with the kind of energy and abandonment in our time with Jesus; nothing half-hearted
 - d. Time – spending enough time in the Word and prayer to truly abide in Jesus; an hour once a week is not what Jesus had in mind
 - e. Type – need to do the right kind of activities to enhance communication with Jesus
- D. That’s what it means to abide, or remain, in Jesus
- E. Text
 - 1. **John 15:8–11** (NASB95) —

- a. 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.
 - b. 9 “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 11 “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”
2. It is v. 8 that captures my attention in relation to what it takes to act in a way that identifies oneself as a Christian, a genuine believer in Jesus
 3. **John 15:8** (NASB95) — 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, **and so prove to be My disciples.**”
 - a. “Prove to be My disciples”
 4. If you abide in Christ, bear much fruit
 - a. God is glorified
 - b. And so the evidence is apparent
 - c. You will “prove to be My disciples”

III. **The Glory Principle**

- A. But what is it that makes abiding in Christ so powerful as the definitive stamp of Christianity on the believer?
 1. What is it that bursts through the cloak of humanity that gets the attention of a world that so desperately needs to see what biblical Christianity looks like?
 2. I believe its right in the text as well
 - a. **John 15:8** (NASB95) — 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”
 3. It is the glory of the Father that shines forth through the ordinary human appearances
 - a. No bumper sticker could act as a substitute
 - b. No pin on a lapel
 - c. No slogan on a T-shirt would suffice
 4. Only the glory of God shines in a way to tell a watching world – “Oh my, this is a real Christian, a true believer in Jesus!”
- B. And shining is not an inappropriate metaphor for what we are seeking
 1. The first image that comes to mind from the OT for what constitutes the glory of God is the shekinah glory
 - a. The overwhelming visual display of light emanating from the Being of God – revealing His presence
 2. It comes first as the burning bush – the fire that both attracts and induces fear in Moses as it pervades but does not consume the bush
 3. Then it appears as the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire leading the people of Israel through the wilderness toward the Promised Land
 4. Then it is reflected in the face of Moses as he has met with God on the mountain of God

5. So in those days, God literally shone forth in His glory
- C. But it is important to point out that such glory of God is not only manifested by fire and light
 1. It is integral to His nature and character
 - a. And when we say we seek to glorify God we mean that we are to be a visual display of His nature and character
 2. Remember Moses request to God to show Him His glory (**Exodus 33.18**)
 - a. God told Him that Moses would not be able to stand the full display of His glory
 - b. That God would put Him in the cleft of the rock and have His glory pass by
 - c. And Moses would see only the backside of His glory
 3. And God promised Moses that in doing so what Moses would see was His character and nature
 - a. **Exodus 33:19** (NASB95) — 19 And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.”
 - b. God’s goodness would be displayed
 - c. The name of the LORD would be displayed – the name of God, Yahweh – which represents His freedom and sovereignty
 - d. And the sovereign demonstration of His grace and compassion will also be shown Moses
 4. Then when God actually does appear, it is God’s nature that is seen
 - a. **Exodus 34:6–7** (NASB95) — 6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”
 5. So the glory of God is the visible display of His nature and character
- D. So what happens when we abide in Christ?
 1. When we abide in Christ, we bear much fruit, prove to be His disciples
 - a. And so display the nature and character of God!
 2. “My Father is glorified by this...” (**John 15.8**)
- E. There is a sense that as you live abiding in Christ you display the nature and character of God
 1. And the world says, “Whoa! What’s that?”
 2. **2 Corinthians 4:6** (NASB95) — 6 For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”
- F. So how does that manifestation of the glory of God happen in the life of the

believer?

1. It happens in four ways

IV. **Glory in Fruitbearing**

- A. First is happens in fruitbearing
 1. **John 15:8** (NASB95) — 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit...”
 2. We were introduced to this in the past two messages
 - a. The fruit Jesus is talking about is the fruit of the Spirit
 - b. That is – evidence in the life of the believer that we are filled, motivated, controlled by the Spirit of God
 - c. No wonder God is glorified when we bear fruit
- B. The list of fruit is most commonly referred to in Galatians 5
 1. **Galatians 5:22–23** (NASB95) — 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control...
 2. These things are fruit *of the Spirit* – the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God
 - a. In other words, they are aspects of the nature and character of God
 - b. So when we exhibit them, we are showing a dimension of God to the world
- C. There are two additional things that I’d like to point out this week about the fruit of the Spirit
 1. First, this list is contrasted with another list
 2. To give you an idea of how integral this list is to Christian character, just set it next to the list that precedes it in Galatians 5
 - a. The fruit of the Spirit is contrasted with **the deeds of the flesh**
 - b. The flesh – the sinful nature of the human being apart from the grace and influence of God
 3. **Galatians 5:19–21** (NASB95) —
 - a. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
 - b. 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,
 - c. 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these...
 4. Then comes that great word of contrast: “But...”
 5. **Galatians 5:22–23** (NASB95) — 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control...
 6. If you exhibit one list – you are simply displaying to everyone around you that you are an unredeemed human being
 - a. But if you exhibit the other list – that which emanates from the Spirit of God acting on you as you abide in Christ
 - b. You are displaying the nature and character of God
 - c. And you thus glorify God
 7. God shines forth in that list!

- D. The second thing to notice is how strange is the grammar of the text in Galatians 5.22-23
1. The *fruit* of the Spirit is...
 - a. Than nine things are listed
 - b. Love, joy, peace
 - c. Patience, kindness, goodness
 - d. Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control
 2. Why does it say “fruit”?
 - a. Why doesn’t it say, “fruits”?
 - b. Why isn’t it plural?
 3. If I was back in my days as a university professor and I was editing dissertation, and I saw a sentence like that
 - a. I would send the student back to the drawing board
 - b. I would say, “Make the subject of the sentence agree with the object”
 - c. If the object is plural, the subject ought to be plural!
 4. But God knows better
 - a. God means that the list of nine emanates from One and only One influence or principle operating in the believer
 - b. The nine come from the One – the Spirit of God
 - c. And they are all His fruit
 5. It’s not like the academic curriculum
 - a. When first year you take Love 101, and then Joy 101, then Peace 101
 - b. Then in the second year you take Patience 102, then Kindness 102, then Goodness 102 and so forth
 - c. So that when you say something unkind, and someone says to you, “What wasn’t very kind of you”... you would say, “I haven’t had that course yet! I take that one next year”
 - d. “I’m only supposed to be loving and joyful; those are the only courses I’ve had so far”
 6. No!
 - a. You have the Spirit of God
 - b. You’re abiding in Christ
 - c. You have everything you need to exhibit it all
 - d. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control
 - e. Because the nine are in fact one – they all come from the One Spirit
 7. And as Paul says
 - a. **Romans 8:9** (NASB95) — 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.
 8. You belong to Him
 - a. You have the Spirit of Christ
 - b. So as you abide in Christ – you bear much fruit

- c. And so exhibit the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4.6)

V. **Glory in Love**

- A. Second, we display the glory of God as we abide in Christ because we display the love of God
 - 1. **John 15:9** (NASB95) — 9 “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.”
- B. When we abide in Christ we abide in the love of God
- C. How has God loved us?
 - 1. First, **He chose us in love**; He elected us in love
 - a. His choice of us had nothing to do with our love for Him
 - b. Or our goodness
 - c. Or our righteousness
 - 2. **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** (NASB95) — 7 “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
 - a. Did you get that?
 - b. Did you understand the logic?
 - c. This is divine logic
 - d. The Lord loves you – because loves you!
 - 3. “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples...
 - a. “But because the LORD loved you...”
 - 4. That is the most humbling thought imaginable
 - a. God loves you – not because of anything in you, or because of you
 - b. But God loves you – because He loves you
 - 5. **1 John 4.10** “... not that we loved God, but that He loved us...”
- D. Second, **God sent us Jesus** as the incarnate Son of God in love
 - 1. Jesus took upon Himself our nature
 - a. He became like us so that He could redeem us
 - 2. **John 3.16** “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should have eternal life”
- E. And most importantly, **Jesus loved us by dying for us**
 - 1. **John 15:13** (NASB95) — 13 “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”
 - 2. **Romans 5:8** (NASB95) — 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 - a. “While we were yet sinners”!
- F. When we abide in Christ, we abide in His love
 - 1. And the love of Jesus is beyond anything we can imagine
 - 2. **John 15:9** (NASB95) — 9 “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also

- loved you; abide in My love.”
 - 3. The love of Jesus for us is as that Father loves the Son
 - a. Can you even begin to fathom what that must be like?
- G. When you abide in Christ you wake up every morning saying, “I can’t believe I’m so blessed, so loved, by the Triune God
 - 1. By Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - 2. And you bask in His love
 - a. And your face is radiant with a glow that others look at you and say, “What’s up with so and so?”
 - 3. There’s just something about you
 - a. The world can’t put their finger on it
- H. But when you abide in Christ, you exude the love of God
 - 1. And so glorify the Father

VI. **Glory in Obedience**

- A. **John 15:10** (NASB95) — 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.”
- B. We’ve seen this before, haven’t we
 - 1. That if we abide in Christ, if we truly love Christ, we will obey His commandments
 - 2. **1 John 5:3** (NASB95) — 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments;
 - a. and His commandments are not burdensome.
- C. Really? His commandments are not burdensome?
 - 1. **Matthew 11:29–30** (NASB95) — 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
 - 2. Really!
- D. How so?
 - 1. It’s light when we abide in Christ
- E. If it were all about rules and regulations that we must follow in our own strength – forget it!
 - 1. Nothing would be more burdensome than that
- F. But its by abiding in Christ
 - 1. Remaining in Him
 - a. Remaining in His word
 - b. Connecting with Him in prayer
 - c. Being filled with His Spirit
 - 2. By abiding in Christ – the burden is light
 - a. And we obey His commandments – out of love
 - b. Taking pleasure in obedience
 - 3. Obeying the Savior of our souls
 - a. Hard to imagine anything more satisfying, more gratifying, than obeying the One who laid down His life for us

- G. And when we obey His commands, we glorify the Father
 - 1. Because that's what Jesus did – perfectly

VII. **Glory in Joy**

- A. **John 15:11** (NASB95) — 11 “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”
- B. There is no one on earth happier than the believer who is abiding in Jesus
- C. This is joy – which is happiness on steroids
 - 1. Happiness which transcends difficulty
 - a. Transcends affliction
 - b. Transcends persecution
 - c. Transcends uncertainty
 - 2. Joy which makes people wonder about you
- D. And such joy glorifies God because God is joyful
 - 1. Do you realize God is joyful?
 - a. Or do you envision God is this cantankerous curmudgeon who is looking to see who He can make miserable?
 - 2. No! There is no Being in the universe who is more joyful than God!
 - 3. **Psalms 16:11** (NASB95) — 11 ... In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
- E. And He takes pleasure in you!
 - 1. **Psalms 149:4** (NASB95) — 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation.
- F. When you abide in Christ, you exude joy
 - 1. A joy beyond your compatriots
 - 2. A joy that displays the joy of God
 - a. And so glorifies the Father

VIII. Conclusion

- A. What sets apart the Christian from the world?
 - 1. How do we know if we show ourselves to be truly His disciples?
- B. We do it by abiding in Christ
 - 1. And thus prove to be His disciples
 - 2. Glorifying the Father
 - a. By bearing fruit
 - b. By displaying the Father's love
 - c. By obeying His commandments
 - d. And by exuding the joy of God