

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
A More Glorious Obedience – Part 3
Taught by Bruce Bickel
March 29, 2013

Gracious Heavenly Father, as we come into this season of rejoicing in your resurrection, remind us that every day is an Easter for us who are in Christ. Every day is a resurrection Day. Father, as we ponder the next couple of days, this being Good Friday, and the Resurrection Day on Sunday, may we just be reminded of the one simple truth, that the cross is enough. May it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen

Last week, we touched on the subject of abiding. We got on the subject about that. Ted suggested we try to unpack this a little bit, so we're going to do that today and see what we can discuss a little bit about the practicality of what it means to abide. I'm going to invite you to turn in your Bibles to the text we looked at last week, and that would be John 15, specifically verses 4-9 will be our introduction. I'll be reading from the New American Standard version, "4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5I 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. 6If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love." May God be pleased to open our eyes that we might behold wonderful things from his Word.

The word abide is the Greek word "mano." Literally, it has many different meanings. Sometimes when we look at the classical Greek use of a word and studying the etymology of a word, it's very helpful to us to understand how it's used in the New Testament or the Old Testament Scriptures. Some of the classical Greek uses of the word "mano" are very interesting because it really sets the tone for how it's translated for us and why the Holy Spirit was pleased to use this particular word to describe something that Jesus had said by using the word "abide."

In classical Greek, one of the best meanings of the word is "to dwell in one's own house." To dwell in one's own house. When you abide, you dwell in one's own house. It's used that way in the classical Greek. In the New Testament, it really comes to mean "pitching your tent and feeling at home with." Pitching your tent and feeling at home with. It was the term that was used to describe the nomadic herdsmen who were looking for a place for their flock. They would find a place by a river or a stream or a mountain valley and they would pitch their tent and they would feel at home and they would stay there and they would remain there for a while.

That's why sometimes the more modern translations we use the word "remain" as opposed to the word "abide." Personally, I like the word abide because it's a bigger picture than the word remain. The concept is you find a place and there's a degree of comfort where you pitch your tent and you feel at home. That means that Jesus is telling us to abide in Him. There's got to be some degree of comfort that you and I feel and a sense of security when you are abiding and you are resting in your own home. One of the things that we always find is at the end of the day, when you go to your house into your home, there's a degree of comfort and safety and security.

Now let me have a little confession time here. Last week, the Lord was pleased to do something that I had no idea what he was going to do. I'll tell you, I was just wiped out before I got here last Friday. I was studying Thursday night to prepare for this, and I just hit a wall. I just said "I've had it. I'm just so worn out, so tired." It had been a very busy week. I had the melanoma removed from my head. I was facing eye surgery for my cataracts, and I was going to do this. The whole thing was just sort of coming around me at once. I basically just said, "Lord, I just have no idea what I'm going to do tomorrow. I'm going to go to sleep tonight and I just hope that in your grace you'll be pleased to give me something to say because I have no notes, I'm taking no outline. I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm just going to drive in the car and I'll just trust that you're going to do something."

I came in here last week just totally wiped out. I had no resources. If I were an eight-cylinder person, I was probably operating on one or two. Now I wear a good mask, and you didn't see that. I had no idea what was going to happen last Friday. I was driving here and I got to realizing the situation. I said, "Those brothers are so faithful. I owe them at least something. I haven't even prepared to do anything. How can I let them down because they're so faithful in coming? Lord, you're just going to have to do something because I have no idea what to do today. I guess I'm just going to have to remain in you and just trust you." All of a sudden, the Word abide hit my mind. I just need to abide in your grace. That's all I can do. I don't have any resources of my own strength right now. I'm just really zapped out and wiped out. I'm just going to have to abide in you. That's when I was driving, coming up the highway, just as I got off at Mt. Nebo Road, I thought, "Just abide in Me." That's what we talked about last week. I had nothing else to talk about, other than the idea of abiding. I thought, "Well, why don't we just look at John 15."

There's something there that I learned about word abiding. You see, the concept of abiding, there's a great definition when we say pitch your tent and feel at home with. There's a degree of abiding which really has the overriding implication that you just feel comfortable abiding in your relationship with Christ, realizing this; that's it's really not up to you, it's really up to him. You're abiding in what he's accomplished. That's why I said the cross is enough. You don't need to add anything to the cross. The cross is enough.

Legalism basically says, "The cross isn't enough. I've got to add something to what Christ has done." But when you understand the concept of abiding, there's a degree of comfortable, a degree of comfort there. Not sloppiness and being lazy, but there's a degree of being comfortable. It's not being convenient; it's being comfortable. Do you understand the difference? That's the idea of abiding.

When Jesus says, "When you abide in me," there's has to be a degree of comfort that you and I experience in our relationship to the Lord. One of the best ways that the wordsmiths of the study of the Scripture uses the word abide defines it this way, "Holding and maintaining unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ." That's a pretty good definition. Holding and maintaining unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ. There's degree, brothers, where I learned a great lesson about what it means to abide.

John just tells us in John 15 that, "If you abide in me, you will bear fruit." What is fruit? We'll get into that in a moment. Let's just basically say the fruit of the Spirit. Turn with me to Galatians 5. There are many definitions of fruit, which we'll get into in a moment, but let's just start with the most basic in Galatians 5:22. Jesus told us in John 15 that "If you abide in me," in other words, you find a comfort level with me where you pitch your tent and you feel comfortable with me, I abide in you, and he

abides in us. We abide him. There's this degree of being surrounded by this comfortable maintaining relationship with the Lord Jesus.

I don't want to override this idea of being comfortable, but you've got to feel that's what he's really talking about. In some of the difficult situations of life there has to be some degree of comfort. Just like I was very uncomfortable last week because I was absolutely unprepared to do anything that was going to have any spiritual significance. All I could really do was, "Ahhh. I've just got to abide. I've just got to feel comfortable that Lord you're going to do something, even though I'm totally unprepared."

Let's take a look at the fruit of the Spirit. What I'm suggesting, brothers, is the degree of maintaining a consistent relationship with the Lord Jesus through fellowship, that these are the implications of that, "22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Now that's the fruit of the Spirit. What I'm suggesting is the first indication of our abiding is how well do I really feel comfortable with those words. Do I feel comfortable in situations that I lose control and I'm governed by trepidation and fear, but I realize there's a sense of joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and those other words? You see, that's the realm of what we abide in the realm in which we feel comfortable. That means you just have to pitch your tent, have a degree of comfortableness with the person and work of Christ, and just let the fruit of the Spirit exude out of you because you feel comfortable in those character qualities.

The fruit of the Spirit really is the character development of our life. That's one of the reasons that Tom wanted to create this little reminder of transformational thinking, rather than feeling, acting and thinking, we think-act-feel. One leads to holiness and the other one leads to habits. What I'm suggesting is, as we unpack this idea of abiding, that we learn just to have a sense of comfort in the fruit of the Spirit. That means, in a difficult situation, you might have to say, "Lord, I don't have the love that I need to have right now. I'm going to have to abide in your love because you're abiding in me and I know that when I abide in you, I'm going to have enough love to love whatever I need to love at the moment I don't feel like loving." That's abiding. You feel comfortable in that.

The same thing with joy. I didn't feel real joyful last week just because I was so wiped out. But you see, when you abide, you've got to realize that there's just this overriding fruit of the comfortableness of being in Christ that joy is going to permeate the situations where you feel un-joyful, and you feel a degree of comfort and you just trust that. Do you see what I'm trying to say?

For me, it was a great learning experience because I was so wiped out, had no resources of my own, totally unprepared. It was a great lesson for me just to feel comfortable in my nothingness. Do you understand that?

***Ted:** I think this is so important what you're teaching. I think a lot of us were struck last week that this was one of the most heavy teachings that we have heard. I mean, it really struck us profoundly. Tom, I don't mean to embarrass you, but after the meeting, I said, Tom has been coming here [UNCLEAR] times, and I said, "Tom what did you think?" Tom said to me, it just blew him away. It really is not about you.*

It isn't. {LAUGHTER}

Ted: You said, I mean, it's the truth. I mean this is so important. You said, "I was unprepared," but the thing is, God was prepared. You may say, "Well, now I've got to abide in him," but he's abiding in you. So the precedence for everything is him. It's not us. I get very nervous when I begin to hear a lot of talk about all our obligations and responsibilities. Even if I do them as well as I can, it's still so far short of what it needs to be. When Bruce Bickel comes before us and has so little to give, God has greater things to give.

Amen. That's when I'm abiding. That's the lesson I learned. There comes a point in your nothingness, in your not having the resources to do what you need to do to bear fruit, there has to be a degree of being comfortable just realizing that Christ is abiding in me. It's really about him and not about me. I'm just going to abide in that. I'm just going to feel comfortable in my inability to do anything correctly today. That doesn't mean that you become sloppy. It doesn't mean that you don't prepare. It just means there's a degree of an environment you realize this; that he's dwelling in me. We're going to unpack this in a moment to help us understand how we abide.

My point is this—the definition of pitching your tent and feeling at home with. We just need to feel at home with Christ in our inabilities, when we don't have anything, any resources to give, feel comfortable in the fact that you know this. He's abiding in me. He's pitched his tent and feel comfortable with me. I need to feel equally comfortable with him in this situation.

Bill: Can you [UNCLEAR] for us that tension that Ted had talked about, I mean, how do we balance the command for obedience where we are called to be obedient, but put on the coats of righteousness that Paul says, and this concept of just relaxing in this comfortable nature of abiding in Christ?

The way I would say...

Bill: [UNCLEAR] that's part of the ongoing tension I see that one has as they walk through life.

Yeah, you just have to let be a tension. There's no answer to it. Just let it be a tension. There's going to be a tension. I need to feel comfortable. I need to be obedient. I need to feel comfortable. I need to be obedient. We're going to unpack this a little bit to help us understand where obedience comes from. It all comes from the fact that Christ is abiding in you. He's the source of your obedience. I need to recognize, for me to be obedient, I need to understand that Christ is abiding in me, and therefore, my desire has changed to be obedient. It's because I've now got a different disposition. It's not my trying to earn something. It's my desire to express something. The difference is my trying to earn merit versus my trying to express gratitude, love and appreciation for the fact that he's abiding in me.

I think you have to let the tension be a tension. If it's not a tension, you're going to become legalistic on one side and sloppy on the other. We need to be balanced. It's not an either/or; it's a both/and.

Ted: To me it's not an equal both/and because Christ always takes precedence. His abiding power is so much greater than my ability to abide. I think of it a lot like my wife. I love my wife. I desire to please her. Sometimes I please her because it scores points, but I have a natural desire because I love her. That's what the believer's given at regeneration. He's given the desire to please the Lord.

We need to understand that obedience is a love response. John 14 says this, "If you love me, you're going to be obedient." Now there's your motivation for the tension on the other side is, "Alright, Lord..." Let me go back to myself last Friday, "I have no idea what I'm going to do. I've just got to abide in you. I

just want to, as I'm abiding in you, I just want to demonstrate my love for you by being an aggressive responder to whatever is going to happen to me."

Part of our obedience is being an aggressive responder to what we see the Lord doing around us. As I began to sense last week what the Lord was doing, in spite of me, my response had to be one of obedience. That was to be an aggressive responder to what I saw the Lord doing around me. It wasn't something I created; it was something I was just discerning. I think one of the real issues for us is discernment. To realize what's the Lord doing around us and being an aggressive responder. That's how we have the desire to be obedient.

Audience Member: *I tend to look at that more as a sheep listening to the voice of the shepherd. When you're talking about discernment, like I hear his voice, and that tends to lead toward obedience and life. I'm a sheep looking for life. The shepherd's leading me toward my life. I don't have to worry about whether I'm being obedient. I'm looking for life, which is being part of the vine.*

Amen.

Audience Member: *It's a relationship.*

It is.

Audience Member: *I'm not worried about the rules. I'm trying to live.*

The issue here is, what we're trying to do is just maintain the integrity of this tension that exists between realizing this—that even my best efforts of obedience are going to be tainted. Everything I do is tainted. That's why Christ makes up the difference.

Now I'm not suggesting at all, please understand, I'm not saying let go and let God. I am not saying that at all. I'm saying that you take an aggressive response to be an aggressive responder to see what the Lord is doing in your life. We need to understand this—that when we abide, feel comfortable at home and pitching our tent, we need to understand the other side of the coin, and that is this—that such a relationship of abiding must mean that there's going to be suffering in a world that is wrongly constituted.

If you really understand the concept of abiding, you have to understand what it means to suffer. That's the other side of the coin. This is just not Pollyannaish, Mary Poppins stuff of, "Oh, I'm just going to sit back and let go and let God." No, it's going to be a real struggle. It's going to be a fight. The world is wrongly constituted and you and I are abiding in Christ; we're not part of this world and the world's not going to respond to that too positively. We need to understand the other side of the coin of this comfort that we're talking about, the other side of the coin is this—suffering. You're going to suffer if you abide because the world loves its own, and we are not part of the world. Those who are abiding, do not belong to the world. Their outlook is not the outlook of the world. Their inspiration is not the inspiration of this world. The world holy loves and lives in the realm of its own materialism. We don't. If you're going to abide, you've to realize the other side of the coin is you're going to suffer. Because you're anti world. You're against the system of this world. That's why we wanted to give you this think-act-feel, to remind us. One of the ways in which we're going to abide is to think correctly. That's transformational leadership. It's transformational thinking.

Audience Member: *I wanted to go back to a couple of weeks ago you said that prayer is preparation for the next event. In this situation, you were praying to prepare for abiding was your prayer before you came last week and you didn't have any subject. So prayer is a factor in that, too, that we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us abide.*

Yes. See, prayer is an act of obedience, isn't it? In that act of obedience, you're abiding. You're abiding by that act of obedience. One supports the other. It's not an either/or; it's a both/and. We need to understand there are some implications of abiding. You see, the brother's referring to a statement we made a couple of weeks ago when we talked about prayer is preparation for the next response. Prayer is preparation for the proper response to the next event. That's abiding. We're going to see one of the ways in which you abide, which you tend to feel at home with, is through your prayer life.

Let's try to unpack this a little bit. Open your Bibles. I'm going to ask you to look up some verses. I want to give you some things to write down. I don't have an outline for you. Here are a couple of things that will help us understand the concept of how is it that you and I work at our abiding. How do we maintain an unbroken fellowship with the Lord? That's the definition we're using. Remember it's holding and maintaining unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ, by pitching your tent and feeling at home.

We've talked about the comfort side of it, where we can relax a little bit because we know that Christ is dwelling in us. There's also the side of some of the things that we need to be doing, if you would, under God's grace, as an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to maintain the integrity of our unbroken relationship and communion with Christ. Abiding in Christ depends upon holding to his teaching. Would somebody read 1 John 2:24, and then somebody look up John 8:31, then 2 Thessalonians 2:15, and then 2 John 9, and 3 John 3-4.

Let's go to 1 John 2:24. We're talking about what are our responsibilities in maintaining this unbroken fellowship. We have certain responsibilities that we do while we're developing a comfortable relationship with Christ. 1 John 2:24, "As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father." What's he referring to? He's referring to the original doctrine that he heard that lead you to Christ; in other words, referring to the Scripture. It's that tradition which you heard of the Gospel of Christ. You'll notice in 1 John, what we have heard from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our own hands concerning the Word of Life." That's what he's referring to in verse 24 of 1 John 2. Again, "As for you, let that abide in you."

Now what is it that he's saying abide in you. It's the doctrines of grace that brought you to Christ in the first place. You've got to think about those things. You've got to abide. You've got to feel comfortable in those doctrines, the things that brought you to Christ. You see, that's what he's saying. That's one of the ways in which we have a responsibility, not to look out for the latest gimmick, but go back to that which was really the root of my salvation, and that's understanding this. It's by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, revealed in the Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone. That's what's he's referring to. It's the basic doctrines of grace that brought you to saving faith anyway. Remind yourself. Abide in that. Feed those. Develop that. Encourage that. Expand them. Don't go looking for the next gimmick. That which brought you to saving faith is what you abide in. That means let that feel comfortable in you and it feels comfortable in you itself, and all of a sudden, you begin to feel

comfortable in your maintaining your relationship to Christ. John has some very strong instructions about abiding in Christ depends upon our holding to his teaching.

Let's go to 2 John 9.

Audience Member: *"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son."*

Look at that—2 John 9. Don't go too far away. Stick to the basics. Stick to the doctrines of grace, if you would. That's where you're going to understand. Now read that again. Look at that, 2 John 9, "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teachings of Christ does not have God. The one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

Where is it you and I need to feel comfortable? In the Scriptures. In the Scriptures. That's how we abide. That's part of our responsibility, part of our duty, if you would. There's nothing wrong with the word duty. You and I have a duty to keep our nose in the Book. That's why Tom wanted you to have this little reminder to think-act-feel. You've got to think right. How do we think right? We think right biblically. That's a responsibility we have.

How about 3 John 3-4, the third letter of John, "3For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, *that is*, how you are walking in truth. 4I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." The word walking means the direction of your life. How is that you and I abide? We abide by walking in the truth. Where is the truth found? It's found in the Scripture. Guys, you see, that's what we do. That's why we're here every Friday, so that we can learn to abide in the Scripture. You're not just developing theological knowledge. You're developing a saving relationship to the author of the Book. You see, you're developing a relationship.

Remember the definition? Maintaining an uninterrupted fellowship of intimacy with the Lord. How do you do that? You do that with the Scripture. How you apply that in your life is the real issue. That means what do I do in my devotional life? What do I do in my quiet time? What type of music do I listen to? What are the things that feed my mind? You see, all those things are critical, as one of our responsibilities to maintain the integrity of our abiding. The more we do that, the more we're going to feel comfortable, if you would, in the fruits of the Spirit as they're manifested in us because we abide in the truth.

One of the things we have to realize in unpacking this is one of the ways in which we abide is by holding on to the truth. Now, secondly, another way of unpacking this is abiding depends upon our obedience to him. Abiding depends upon our obedience to him. Look at John 15:10. Notice this—here's your balance—"If you keep My commandments," that's obedience, "you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." You see, obedience is part of our abiding. Where do you get the commandments? You get them in the Scripture. That's why you see it's the fruit of the Spirit. I need to feel comfortable in the fruit of that Spirit.

Carl: *Bruce, it was a while back when you said that also abide meant to be at home with.*

Correct.

Carl: *To be at home with Christ and to be at home with the Word of God, and as we are walking this thing out, we are to be at home with him or to submit ourselves totally to him, so that when we're walking this out, and we're at home with him, he's at home with us, because Jesus is at home with the Father.*

Amen. You have to realize that one of the ways in which we are abiding is by being obedient to the commandments. Now why is it you have that desire to be obedient to the commandments? It's because of the gracious work of the Holy Spirit that gives you a new desire, a new disposition to want to please God. I think it was John Calvin who said, "The law was given for three major reasons. First of all, to describe and help us reveal the righteousness and holiness of God. Secondly was to create a culture that had some civility to it because it had some standards that never changed. Under the magistrates and the officials, it was to organize a culture that had some degree of civility. And the third thing was to teach the redeemed of God to know how to please the Father."

One of the ways in which you and I know how to please the Faith is to...what are the commandments? I obey those. That's pleasing to the Father. That's one of the things ways in which we are abiding.

Audience Member: *One time [UNCLEAR] J. Vernon McGee and he was saying that he had fruit trees on his property out in California. He was talking about all the different fruit trees he had and he said one night he looked outside at the moonlight and he looked at the fruit trees and he noticed something real interesting. He noticed the branches were still on the tree. It sounded funny when he said it, [UNCLEAR], and he said, [UNCLEAR], "I noticed the branches were still on the tree. They weren't running around on their own. {LAUGHTER}" A lot of believers, when nobody's looking, jump off the [UNCLEAR]. It was a real powerful point.*

They're not running around; they're connected to the vine. "I am the vine, you are the branches." Don't run around looking for the latest gimmick. Did you ever notice how some Christian people live their life like kids on the playground. They go to the swing, and after a while, they get tired, then they go to teeter totter, then the next thing they go to is the merry-go-round, and then they go to run the bases. They're always looking for the next exciting thing. We have to be careful about that.

Now you notice, some people live their Christian lives like that. They go to the latest conference, the latest book, the latest CD, whatever it is, the latest thing that comes down the pike. You see, when we're understanding abiding, it's different. You're connected to the vine. You're not running around for the latest thing, looking for the latest new experience. What we're seeing in the Scripture is you want to be obedient as an expression of your love to the Father because you know that he abides in you and you want to express that. One of the ways in which we do that is through our obedience.

Audience Member: *[UNCLEAR]...I don't know if you're focused on it, but it's caught my eye, and it started with your discussion of John McCain explaining about, talking himself down during a landing [UNCLEAR] environment will start to control you. What I started to see, and forgive me if this is indelicate, because I've been trying to string this together, but I see this pattern of why are those people running around. I think inherently they know that they're not abiding by what they should be. If I back up, there's a phrase about stress management that says, "If you want to stop being stressed, stop screwing up." It's flip, but when you think about it, a lot of the things that we can control that cause us stress, we've done, and there are things that we're not doing that we know we should be doing. I think deep down at the core of this, if we understand the Scriptures as he's explained it, and that's a hard*

thing to do, that's a big gift, but I think deep down we know the places we're screwing up, so we start looking for these other places to do things to make us feel as though we're doing the right thing, when deep down we know we screwed up. We just want to feel better by doing this new theology.

That's right. Looking for the latest gimmick. We need to be careful not to be running around, looking for the latest thing. How about James 1:25 to help us understand that it depends upon our obedience to him, "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." There again you see the position of the law in the life of the believer is, that is the standard by which we try to have a desire to please the Father. When we abide in that, obedience is part of our abiding. That's one of the things that we have a responsibility to do. But we do it under the grace of God.

Remember this—you're in grace by grace. You're not in grace by works. You're in grace by grace. Romans 5 tells it—you stand in grace. You're not moving in and out of it. You're not in grace today and out the next day. You're not in and out. You're in grace by grace. It is by grace that you have the desire to be obedient. Your disposition changes and you have a different desire to want to do that, and it's in abiding that we begin to become aggressive responders and fulfill those requirements.

There's another way in which we can understand, to unpack abiding. It requires that we live like Christ. In other words, that we walk like Christ. How about 1 John 2:6, "the one who says he abides in Him, meaning Christ, "ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." In other words, there's got to be some evidence in your life. What the evidence? Go back to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. Start with that. Is that the evidence in your life? That's the evidence of abiding, because if you abide, you're going to bear fruit.

The fruit is not something that you and I generate or cause to happen. The fruit is the consequence of a saving relationship where the Holy Spirit produces the fruit that comes from heaven, and it's described in those character qualities. There has to be some evidence of the character of our life that takes on those characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, long-suffering and so forth that we saw in Galatians 5:22. There's got to be some evidence of that.

That doesn't mean that you and I are living sinlessly perfect lives. It doesn't mean that at all. John tells us, "If you say you have no sin, you're a liar and there's no truth in you." That's not what we're talking about. We're just saying that increasingly there's more of the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in your life because you're abiding. There's more evidence. There's got to be some degree of our walking like that.

How about 1 John 3:24. This is back to our obedience. Here's another one. 1 John 3:24, "The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into all truth. There's a perfect balance between our being comfortable and trusting and our being obedient.

Audience Member: *That means that our feelings aren't what should guide us. If we're trying to generate the right feeling, we're going the wrong direction.*

Pull out your card, guys. Feel-act-think, think-act-feel. Romans 12. That's from Romans 12:2. There's nothing with our feelings. You need to understand this card here, guys. There's nothing wrong with your feelings. They're neutral. They're neither positive nor negative. The real issue is do I know that this

is what I'm feeling? Do I know myself well enough to know that I've got to manage that feeling? The way I manage it is by thinking correctly. What we're saying is you think...in abiding, you're thinking correctly, Scripturally. So you change the way that you think, and therefore you change the way that you act, and all of a sudden, the feelings become result of not the cause of.

Bill: *[UNCLEAR] comment that we had stopped on about talking yourself down a couple of moments ago is modeled consistently throughout the Psalms where David [UNCLEAR] feeling something before him, starts once again by talking himself through the situation by going back to what he knows. He knows the sovereign God.*

I think it's Psalm 34 where he says, "Why am I downcast O my soul? Put my trust in God." He's talking to himself. John McCain was one of my flight instructors in Pensacola. One of the things he taught me about landing on a carrier was talk yourself down. In other words, go through your checklist and say it out loud. Just don't say it, committed to memory, but think about it, because when you think about it, you're going to act on it. There was a great lesson he taught me about aviation and about flying, but it applies to the Christian life because that's exactly what David did in Psalm 34, "Why am I downcast, O my soul? Put my hope in God." You see, he's talking to himself. Sometimes, guys, you and I have got to talk ourselves back to where we are. We've got to act like we want to become and become like we act because you do that by thinking correctly. That's why Tom wanted you to have this little card just as a reminder. Sometimes you've got to talk yourself into being what you want to be, and that's because of grace of God. Remember, it's the grace of God that helps you do that.

Audience Member: *And that is the process of abiding. God has given us that [UNCLEAR].*

Absolutely. That's abiding. That one of the ways in which we abide. That's part of our abiding. You see, abiding is something we work at. It's something that we do in God's grace. It's not something that you just absorb. There's something we are doing. We're trying to unpack this a little bit to help us understand what it is we need to be doing.

Bill: *A couple of weeks ago, we talked about people trying to keep the law. It's offensive to God. It's legalism. In Galatians, the fruit, it doesn't say anything about trying to keep the law. In fact, it says, "Against these things there is no such law." Can you unpack that a little bit?*

We have been for the last 20 minutes. {LAUGHTER} Let's go on.

Audience Member: *Along that same line, when you use the term "pitch your tent," to me, it strikes the image of you're running around trying to be a good Christian. Just stop. Pitch your tent. Rest. Be at home in the grace of God. It's not you, it's him this that's going to work.*

That's essentially what Bill is saying. That's the tension that exists. You see, when the fruit of the Spirit... there's no law against that because...what it means by there's no law against that, we are free from the law as of a means of achieving our salvation. There's freedom from that. That's in grace. When the Scripture says you're free from the law, it doesn't mean the law does not have any impact upon your life. That's not what it's saying. It means you're free from having it be a system by which you earn your salvation. Your salvation is by grace, and now you have the disposition and the motivation through the work of the Holy Spirit to want to keep the law, which you didn't have before because you tried to earn your way there. You're free from the law as a means of earning your salvation. That's what he means. Now we just rest in that.

Bill: [UNCLEAR]...I think we talked about it lightly, but this whole aspect of abiding. Don't take it as passive, [UNCLEAR] the command to "be still and know that I am Lord." That's not a passive command. [UNCLEAR] concept of being still in the Lord. There's an [UNCLEAR] for us. You go through this life of resting and abiding in the Lord, [UNCLEAR] continually remind ourselves it is an active aspect, not [UNCLEAR] running around [UNCLEAR], but a mental process of understanding and trusting who God is and what he's doing in our lives and what has for us as the mental activity [UNCLEAR].

Abiding is something that we are, and therefore, it is something that we do. We've got to understand, first of all, abiding is something that we are. He is abiding in us. That is our condition. Our condition is that I'm abiding in Christ and he's abiding in me by the Holy Spirit.

Let's go to some verses to help us understand what are some of the aids to our abiding. First of all, one is the Spirit's anointing. The Spirit's anointing. Let's go to 1 John 2:27, "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you." That's the anointing of the Holy Spirit at your conversion, "and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

How is it that you and I abide? You and I abide not because of our outward duties. It's because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who is given to us as the source of new life. It is the Holy Spirit that creates within us the desire to want to be obedient and to be obedient, and he is the source behind it. You can't take credit for being abiding. You can't take credit for it. It is the Holy Spirit who energizes you to do that, and you and I are trusting him to work through us and to do that. You really can't take credit and say, "I need to abide." Yes, you do need to abide. But when you do abide, you can't take credit for it. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. You see, that's the new resources that you have in Christ that we didn't have beforehand.

Go to 1 John 2:24, "The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." How do you know you're abiding? It's not because of your doing; it's because of your being. You are under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That's how you know you abide. When you are doing the things we're talking about, you know it's not of you; it's the Holy Spirit that is causing you to do that. He's the source of the new life to help us do that. The only way we can abide is through the inspiration and motivation of the Holy Spirit. That's the aid to our abiding. You can't take credit for your abiding. You have to say, "Lord, thank you for the fact that you gave me your Spirit to dwell in me and me in him and he's the source of my abiding."

How about Romans 8:9. How are we doing with this? Is this making any sense? Romans 8:9, "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." What makes it possible for you to abide? The Spirit of God. The Spirit of God.

One of the aids to our abiding is by faith. Faith means you rely upon, trust upon, depend upon or adhere to. Look at Ephesians 3:14-19, "¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and

to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

You see, part of our abiding is the responsibility to believe, to trust. The word believe means to depend upon, adhere to, rely upon and trust in. You put all of this stuff together. Abiding is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. It is the generating force behind our being responsible and abiding. Abiding is something we do, but we do it under the gracious aspects of the Holy Spirit. It’s not something that you and I accomplish; it’s something that you and I are. It’s our being. As we unpacked this a little bit today, I trust this has been somewhat helpful. We’ll pick it up next week. Any other questions before we go?

Audience Member: *How about the rotten branches?*

The rotten branches. We’ll talk about them. Are you a rotten branch? {LAUGHTER} We’ll talk about that next week. Let’s pray.

Father, we thank you for the job description of your Holy Spirit is to be our teacher. Father, we thank you that you’ve given us the resources in your Spirit and in your Word and in our faith that is saving, that commits us to be in a condition of abiding. Help us realize that it is a condition that we are in and something that we need to generate, something that we need to cultivate and something we need to maintain. We maintain the abiding that you have created within us. May it be so for Jesus’ sake. All the Brave Men said...Amen!!!