

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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IN
CHRIST

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Living Stream Ministry
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ABIDING IN CHRIST

[John 15](#) is possibly the deepest chapter in the New Testament. In it, God the Father is revealed as the husbandman, the source, the originator, the founder, and planter of a husbandry; God the Son is revealed as the vine, the center of a universal vineyard; the Spirit is revealed as the realization, the reality of all that God the Father is in the Son; and the Body of Christ, the church, is revealed as the branches, the body of the vine. God the Father as the source is embodied in God the Son as the center who is now realized as God the Spirit as the reality. All that the Spirit has is expressed in us, that is, in the branches, the church, through the fruit-bearing. Furthermore, the fruit-bearing comes about as the branches abide in the vine and let the vine abide in the branches.

TO ABIDE, TO REMAIN, IN THE SON

If we are to abide in the vine, we must see the fact that we are the branches in the vine ([v. 5](#)). Our abiding in Christ depends upon a clear vision that we are branches in the vine. If we see that

we are already in Him, then we shall be able to abide in Him. We will not want to stay away from Him.

Once we see the fact that we are branches in the vine, we need to maintain the fellowship between us and the vine. Any insulation will separate us from the rich supply of the vine tree. A little disobedience, a sin, or even a sinful thought can be the insulation that separates us from the riches of the vine. If we do not condemn such things but hold on to them, they will insulate us from the rich supply of the vine tree. First, we must see that we are branches. Then, we need to maintain the fellowship between us and the Lord. Nothing should be between Him and us. There is a hymn in our hymnal that opens with the words, “Nothing between, Lord, nothing between.” From experience we know that even a small thing can insulate us from the rich supply of the vine tree. We need to pray to the Lord, “Lord, let there be nothing between You and me separating me from Your rich supply.”

TO LET THE SON ABIDE IN US

We need to let the Son abide in us (vv. 4-5). This is very meaningful. We abide in Him and He abides in us. But many times we do not give

Him the ground, the space, to abide in us. The Lord desires to spread His abiding within us. However, we like to narrow down His abiding. We restrict Him. There is constantly a gentle struggle between the abiding Christ and us. While Christ's abiding is gradually spreading within us, there is something within that restricts this abiding Christ. The abiding Christ wants to gain more ground gradually, even inch by inch. But sometimes there is a struggle over His gaining even one inch. Christ wants to gain another inch, but we restrict Him from doing so. As a result, we bargain with Him. If you do not bargain with the Lord, you must be a Christian in the third heaven. Probably even today many of us have bargained with Him. Although we have shouted, "We have been ruined by Him," still within us we may say, "Lord Jesus, I will just give You this much. I can't afford to give You more space. Lord, have mercy on me. Be patient until I am ready to give You another half an inch. Until then, Lord, stay where You are." Although we may not say this audibly, many times we have this thought deep within us. The Lord may say, "I would like to take another five inches." Then you begin to bargain with Him once more. After this, He remains silent, turning His face aside.

He refuses to talk to you anymore, and you lose His presence. Although you gained the ground, the five inches that the Lord wanted, you lost His presence. Oh, how we need to keep our fellowship with Him and be willing to allow Him to take more ground and to expand within. May we allow the Lord to spread Himself within us, taking as much ground as He wants. If we do this, we shall have the real growth of life. We shall see the growth of life within.

APART FROM THE SON WE CAN DO NOTHING

Apart from the Son we can do nothing (v. 5). A branch of a vine cannot live by itself, for it will wither and die apart from the vine. The relationship between the branches and the vine pictures the relationship between us and the Lord. We are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing apart from Him. What we are, what we have, and what we do must only be in the Lord and by the Lord in us. It is very important for us to abide in the Lord and for the Lord to abide in us. Otherwise, we shall be finished and be nothing. Apart from Him, we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. Since we are the branches to

the Lord and the Lord is the vine to us, we must abide in Him and let Him abide in us.

TO LET THE SON'S INSTANT WORDS ABIDE IN US

As we abide in the Lord, we must allow His words to abide in us ([v. 7](#)). The word translated “words” is *rhema* in Greek, meaning the instant and present spoken word. To let the Lord’s instant words abide in us is quite demanding. The Son desires to spread His abiding in us. As He abides in us, He is always speaking. This speaking is the *rhema*, the instant word. He mainly speaks one word to us—no. However, at times His speaking is a requirement or a demand. How we need to love Him and keep His instant words! When He speaks the instant *rhema*, we must listen to it and keep it. If we do not keep this instant word, we shall immediately be cut off from the fellowship. But if we do keep it, we shall absorb all of the riches of His fullness, of His life, and have an overflow of life for fruit-bearing.

In [verses 4 and 5](#) the Lord tells us that He abides in us, but in [verse 7](#) He changes the wording a little to say that His words abide in us. Instead of Christ Himself abiding in us, now it is His words abiding in us. Why did the Lord

change, “Abide in Me and I in you” to “Abide in Me and My words abide in you”? It is because the Lord’s abiding by itself is too mysterious and too objective. Just to say that the Lord abides in us is something that is too far beyond us. For example, when the Lord told the Jewish people that He was the food and the bread of life and that people can eat and feed on Him as the living food and the living bread, the Jews were astonished and surprised, being unable to understand ([John 6:35, 57, 60](#)). They asked themselves what it meant to eat and feed on Him. Then the Lord Jesus told them that His flesh was the real meat and His blood was the real drink ([John 6:55](#)). The Lord simply meant that He had to die, for His blood had to be separated from His flesh. He had to die so that He could impart Himself to us through death and resurrection. The Lord said all of this in view of the background of the Jewish Passover. During the Passover the Jews always slew the lamb, sprinkled its blood on the doorpost, and fed upon its flesh. Knowing that the Jews had such a background, the Lord intended that they should understand what He said. Hence, the Lord said that His flesh is eatable and His blood drinkable. Nevertheless, they could not understand and asked one another

how this man could give them His flesh to eat. Then the Lord pointed out to them that the flesh profits nothing, that it is the Spirit who gives life ([John 6:63](#)). The Lord even said that the words that He speaks are spirit and life.

By this we can see where the Lord is and what He is. You may say that the Lord is in the heavens and that He is the Spirit and life. You are right, but even this is too spiritual, mysterious, and objective. The problem is how to make this real to us, how to make it subjective and available to us. It needs to be substantial instead of spiritual, available instead of mysterious, and profitable instead of doctrinal. Yes, we know that the Lord is the vine, that we are the branches, that if we abide in Him He will certainly abide in us. But the problem is where and what the Lord is today. In other words, how can He practically be available to us?

In order for the Lord to abide in us, it is necessary to let His words abide in us. The only possible way for the Lord to be practical to us is by His words. By what means did we hear the gospel and receive the Lord as our Savior? It was by His words. When we received His word, we actually received the Lord Himself because the Lord is in His word and He Himself is the Word.

According to the same principle, if we want to allow the Lord to abide in us, we must let His words abide in us. Now, since we have in our hands the Scriptures which are full of the Lord's words, we should not say that the Lord is far from us, that He is still mysterious, or that He is still so spiritual instead of being substantial. Praise the Lord that we have something very substantial, available, and practical in our hands. We have the Word. We can read the Word and receive it with our heart and our spirit. We can contact the word of the Lord in our spirit day by day and even moment by moment. As long as we are contacting the Lord's word, we are contacting the Lord Himself.

As we have already pointed out, in [John 15:7](#) the term “words” in the Greek language is *rhema*, not *logos*. *Logos* is the written word, but *rhema* is the present word, the word that is spoken to you by the Lord for a particular purpose at this very moment. According to our experience, if we keep ourselves in the fellowship of the Lord, we have *rhema* within from the Lord all of the time. *Logos* is the outward word as a message spoken or written; *rhema* is the present, inward word. We have *logos* in our hands, but we have *rhema* in our spirit. *Logos* is the written word as the expression of

the living Christ; *rhema* is the word spoken within us by the Spirit of Christ just at the time we need it. For example, perhaps while you are fellowshipping with another brother something within tells you to stop talking. This is *rhema*. Perhaps you are thinking about a certain matter that you want to do today, but again something within you tells you not to do it. This also is *rhema*.

We should not vaguely say that we abide in Christ and that Christ abides in us. We must be more precise and realize that we must deal with two kinds of words—the outward word and the inward word, the word in the Scriptures that is outside of us and the word in the spirit that is within us. If we say that we are going to abide in Christ and let Christ abide in us, certainly we must deal with both kinds of words. If we fail to understand these two different words, it will be impossible to keep ourselves in contact with the Lord, and it will be absolutely impossible for us to abide in the Lord and for the Lord to abide in us. Therefore, we must deal with the written word without and the living word within, because by the written word without we have the explanation, definition, and expression of the mysterious Lord and by the living word within we have

the experience of the abiding Christ and the presence of the practical Lord.

The Lord is very mysterious. For this reason, we can never understand Him by our imagination. Rather, we must read the sixty-six books of the Bible. We must read these sixty-six books word by word because all of the words express, explain, and define our mysterious Lord. If we want to know Him, we must know the Word and how to deal with the Word. But, on the other hand, the Spirit is within us, giving us some living words at the right time to meet our needs. At the very hour of our need, the Spirit within us gives us a timely word for our particular case. The inner *rhema* always corresponds with the outer *logos*. The Spirit speaking the *rhema* within never speaks differently from the written *logos*. The outer *logos* and the inner *rhema* always correspond with each other, and many times the inner *rhema* interprets the outer *logos*. Perhaps you read the written *logos* this morning but failed to understand it or to apply it to yourself in a living way. While you are working, the Spirit anoints you from within with the word, giving you the right meaning and even the right emphasis. You sense the living *rhema* with its living emphasis by the Spirit. As a result, you not only understand it

in your mind but also apprehend it in your spirit. Now the outward, written word becomes the living word within your spirit. You can experience it and apply it in your life. In this way the *logos* becomes the *rhema*; the outer word becomes the inner word. We need to attend to the living *rhema* within, allowing it to have its full way within us. In order to allow the living word to have its free way within us, we must go along with it. In other words, we must be very submissive and obedient to the living *rhema* that is speaking now within us. Concentrating on the inner *rhema* will make the living Lord so real to us in our spirit. It will make Christ so available and practical. We shall sense the moving and the working of the Lord who energizes us inwardly.

TO PRAY FOR MUCH FRUIT-BEARING

While the Lord is moving, acting, motivating, and energizing within us, what shall we do? Should we keep our mouths closed? No, we shall certainly feel impelled to utter something. We shall surely express what we feel within. This is spiritual prayer, prayer in the spirit. The spiritual prayer expresses the moving of Christ within us. Christ in, through, and as the Word is moving, acting, motivating, and energizing within

us. When this happens, we cannot be silent. I believe that we all have experienced this. Sometimes I could not sleep at night but had to rise up because something was moving and energizing me. I had to rise up and say, “Lord, I am here. I praise You.” Is this kind of prayer simply an expression of our opinion, idea, thought, feeling, or imagination? No, we are expressing that which the Lord moves and energizes within. We become the mouthpiece for the Lord to utter what is within us at that very moment.

In [verse 7](#) the Lord said, “If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall come to pass to you.” When we abide in the Lord and let His words abide in us, we are actually one with Him, and He is working within us. Then, whatever we ask, it is not only we who are praying but also He who is praying in our praying. This kind of prayer is related to fruit-bearing ([v. 8](#)) and surely it will be fulfilled. We cannot have this kind of prayer on our own. This prayer in the spirit comes from the indwelling Christ, through the Spirit, and by His word. If we abide in the Lord, keep ourselves always in contact and in fellowship with the Lord, and let the Lord with His word live, move, motivate, and energize within us, we would be unable to keep

our mouths shut. We will have to utter something. What we speak will be a real prayer in the spirit. This is the expression of the indwelling Christ speaking as the Spirit with His words.

When the Lord's words abide in us, His communication and expression will abide in us. Therefore, we may "ask whatsoever you will." We shall express by praying what we have received of the Lord, and it shall be done to us. This prayer is not the human, natural prayer; it is the divine prayer, the expression of the divine communication. While the Lord is abiding in us, expressing His thoughts, desires, intentions, and will, we then take His word and put it into expression by means of prayer. This kind of prayer is very divine, for it is the utterance and expression of the will, desire, and mind of the One who is abiding in us and communicating Himself to us.

Verse 8 says, "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and you shall become My disciples." The prayer in verse 7 is related to the fruit-bearing and the glorification of the Father mentioned in verse 8. We need to pray for much fruit-bearing that the Father may be glorified, that is, expressed, in the Son. In fruit-bearing the Father's divine life is expressed and so He is glorified. Only when the Father is

expressed is He glorified. Electricity illustrates what it means to be glorified. Electricity that is not expressed is electricity that is not glorified. Only when electricity is expressed is it glorified. The electricity in a lamp is glorified because it is expressed. Likewise, when the Father's divine life is expressed in the fruit-bearing of the organism of the vine and the branches, He is glorified.

Real prayers must be followed by our life and walk. Our life, walk, and activity always follow our prayers. We must act, live, and work according to the way we pray. This is very profound. While the Lord abides in us He expresses Himself, His thought, His desire, and His intention to us. When we utter this in prayer and act, live, and walk according to what we pray, God is expressed and glorified.

TO KEEP THE SON'S COMMANDMENT

We need to keep the Son's commandments by obeying His instant words that we may abide in His love ([vv. 10-11](#)). Firstly, we abide in Him and He abides in us. Then His word will abide in us, and we shall abide in His love. We abide in Him and then we abide in His love. On the one hand, we must abide in the Lord Himself; on the other hand, we must abide in His love.

Just as we must let the word of the Lord abide in us in order for the Lord to continue His abiding in us, so, in the same principle, we must abide in the love of the Lord in order to abide in the Lord continually. If you do not sense the freshness, sweetness, and tenderness of the Lord's love, I fear that even if you tried to continue abiding in Him you would fall short. The matter of continual abiding in the Lord is a matter of love. We must feel and sense that His love is so fresh, sweet, and new. We must abide in His love so that we can maintain our abiding in Him. For example, if two brothers do not have the feeling of love toward each other, how could they maintain an intimate fellowship? Likewise, we must abide in the Lord's love and sense His love so that we can abide in fellowship with Him. As you read this perhaps you are saying, "Brother, I do not sense His love." If this is your situation, you should pray like this: "Lord, be merciful to me. Why is it that I do not sense Your love in these days? O Lord, why?" If you pray in this way, I believe that you will experience the fresh love of the Lord. His love will be so refreshing to you. Then you will abide in the love of the Lord. This will keep you abiding in the Lord Himself.

If we are to abide in the Lord's love, we must

keep His commandments. When we abide in the Lord, He will speak His instant words within us. These words are His commandments to us. If we keep them, it means that we love Him. Thus we shall abide in His love. Firstly, the Lord abides in us. Then His word abides in us. Firstly, He deals with us by Himself. Then, He deals with us by His word and by His love. This is very meaningful. Firstly, He abides in us and then His word abides in us. Firstly, we abide in Him and then we abide in His love. Take the example of two friends. In such a friendship, the one friend must care for the word of the other. It is no longer only a matter of the friend himself but also of his word. If the one friend does not care for the other's word, he will lose his friendship. But, if he cares for his friend's word, he will gradually find himself in his friend's love. This will deepen the friendship, making it more intimate and intensified. But if the one does not care for the other's word, he will not be in the other's love in such an intimate way, and eventually the friendship will be damaged.

At the beginning, we abide in the Lord and He abides in us. In His abiding, He speaks His instant word to us. We need to keep this word. When we keep His word, it means that we allow

His word to abide in us. Then not only does He Himself abide in us, but His word abides in us. When we keep His word and let it abide in us, we immediately come into His love and abide in His love. We not only abide in Him but also in His love. This abiding becomes more intimate, deep, and intensified. If we do not abide in Him in such an intimate way, we may gradually slip out of the abiding altogether. The Lord is always speaking. If you will let Him abide in you, He will continually speak to you. When He speaks, you must say, "Amen Lord, I love You." When you say amen and keep His words, you get into His love, having the sweet sensation that He is so dear, precious, and lovely to you. At this point, you not only abide in Him but also in His love.

If we abide in the Lord by abiding in His love, and if the Lord abides in us by His word abiding in us, then we shall have some intimate fellowship with the Lord. Out of this fellowship we shall have some prayer in the spirit which will be the expression of the living Lord dwelling within us. By praying in this manner we shall know that the Father will be expressed and glorified. We always talk about glorifying God, but how do we glorify God? It is by abiding in the love of the Lord and by letting the word of the Lord abide

in us. Then God the Father will be expressed through us and will be glorified in the Son. Out of this intimate, intense abiding, clusters of fruit will be produced because we have been filled with all of the Lord's riches of life. The overflow of the abundance of this life will be so prevailing that it will bear fruit, and God the Father in the Son will be expressed and glorified.

WITH FULL JOY

If we abide in the Lord and keep abiding in Him by abiding in His love so that we may bear much fruit to express the riches of His life for the glorification of the Father, we shall be filled with joy. Our joy always comes from our abiding in the Lord, from our abiding in His love, from our fruit-bearing in His rich life, and from the expression and glorification of the Father. It is in this kind of life that we are full of joy.

We have seen the abiding in John 15. Romans 8 is a continuation of John 15. Without Romans 8, it would be difficult for us to maintain the abiding in the Lord continually. The way to maintain the abiding in the Lord constantly is to set our mind upon the spirit (Rom. 8:6).

To set the mind on the spirit in Romans 8 is a development of the abiding in the Lord in

John 15. If we only have John 15 without Romans 8, we still do not have the way to abide in the Lord continually. In Romans 8 we have Christ as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2) and as the indwelling Spirit in our spirit with life. The way to keep abiding in the Lord is to have our mind, the main part of our soul, set on our spirit that we may experience the Lord who is the life-giving Spirit indwelling our spirit.

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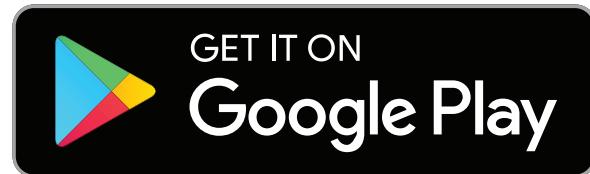
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