

## ***“Abide in My Word”***

God’s love for you is revealed as Jesus the Christ exhorts you to “abide in my word.” ABIDE – remain, continue in – continue to hear and believe His Word.

Adam and Eve did not abide in His Word – they followed another word – the lying and deceiving word of the devil. You will not die, he said – but that was not true – God’s Word is TRUTH. Wandering from God’s Word – Adam brought sin and death into God’s “very good” creation – a death inherited by all his children, including all gathered here today.

Some 500 years ago (at the time of the Reformation) God’s children did not abide in His Word. Another word was being proclaimed – one that obscured the Gospel, leading away from Christ and His salvation.

Jesus was benched, sidelined. His “It is finished” Gospel was corrupted into – Jesus has done His part, now it’s up to you to finish the job – it’s up to you to merit God’s grace and secure your place in His house.

The Lord raised up Martin Luther and many others to boldly proclaim that in Jesus all the work of salvation has been accomplished – and that salvation is by God’s grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ alone, on account of the work of Christ alone.

Dr. Luther was frustrated by those who so quickly abandoned this “eternal gospel.” He warned that the Gospel is like a passing rain shower that is here today, but gone tomorrow. Christ will always proclaim His Gospel – but that doesn’t mean it will be preached in the midst of you. This Gospel is not to be taken for granted – it is to be treasured – it is to be continually heard and believed.

Dr. Luther was also frustrated with those who abused the freedom that the Gospel gives. It is abused when Christ’s forgiveness is turned into a license to sin – as if He has set us free to sin – free to ignore God’s work in the midst of us – free to NOT hear and abide in His Word.

Christ's exhortation to abide in His Word – Luther's warning of not taking the Gospel for granted, or abusing our freedom in Christ – remains today. We live in the midst of danger today as Christianity and God's Word is increasingly persecuted. There are many "other gospels" that are not THE GOSPEL – and they threaten to lead us astray – away from Christ and His salvation.

As God speaks His Words into your ears today – I want you to notice that Jesus speaks to those "who had (and continued up to that point in time) to believe in Him." That's you! You believe in Him. The question is, will you "abide in [His] word"?

"Of course Pastor, after all, we're here in church today, aren't we?" Yes, but are you hearing His Word? Will you abide in it? Do you hear God's Word and say, "this is most certainly true"?

Jesus is speaking to you. "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

TRUTH – what is truth? When Jesus says that you will be "set free" – that means that you are not free, that you need to be set free from something – that you are enslaved. We hear "slavery" and all kinds of horrible, despicable things come to mind – but do you deny that you are enslaved – or, confess it?

"Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin," Jesus says. Are you a slave? Do you commit sin? If not, you don't need Jesus, the Savior of sinners – you are not His disciple. The TRUTH is that we are all sinners. To deny this means that we remain enslaved by sin.

God, in His love for you, will not abandon you to a life of denial and slavery – so Jesus abides in speaking His truth into your ears. In the Epistle Reading He speaks of the Law for you to hear and believe.

God speaks His Law to all who are under the Law. He speaks His Law into our ears so that "every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God." Every mouth – including Pope Francis, President Biden, President Harrison, Coach Frost, Warren Buffet, Pastor Porath, and you.

“For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.” If you are like Joyce Meyer and others who teach that they have stopped sinning – then you are not justified in God’s sight.

To abide in Christ’s Word is to confess that we are slaves to sin, that we continue to sin – and therefore, we continue to need Christ and His forgiveness. That’s the truth – that we “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Dearly beloved, Christ is not done with you yet – He has more TRUTH to preach into your ears – to relieve your burdened heart, to release your shackled conscience, to set you free indeed! Yes, we all sin and fall short – but it is also true that you “are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Christ has shed His blood for you – paying the debt of all your sin – chasing away death and all that the Law demands of you. This is the Gospel of Jesus “for you.” Jesus, the Righteous One – is your righteousness. By faith in Him, you are justified in God’s sight – holy and righteous in His eyes – because you are covered in His blood, and His righteousness is counted as your righteousness. And by faith, you abide in His Word.

In Christ, you are free indeed! You are free to live – not only eternally with Him in heaven – but now, in these days. The “eternal gospel” sets you free to follow Jesus – to continue to receive His gift of grace – and to live for others.

Yes, our days are full of falling short – but the Gospel remains for you. By faith in Christ, you are not a slave – you are a son – and the son abides in God’s house forever. Dearly beloved, the Son has set you free – you are free indeed! Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.