

JUNE 2023

If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples... John 8:31.

Jesus wants us to abide in His Word in order that we would always be His disciples, ones who learn from Him. The word *abide*, however, may be a little uncommon to us which may cause us to gloss over it. Perhaps a better way to translate it is *remain*. *If you remain in my word...* gets the point across clearer. Even the KJV translation of *continue in my word...* can be a little more helpful with the result being that we understand that the disciples of Jesus (which includes us) remain and continue in His Word.

This means that even though summer is rightfully seen as vacation time it never means that we take a vacation from the Word of God. In fact, since we find time to pack so much more into summer days, let this summer be a time to include more of God's Word for you. Remain and continue in it by making time to read it and ponder it. Read through the Psalms. Work through the Gospels or some of Paul's letters. Write down questions you have about something you've read or share with your family a beautiful promise of our Lord which is new to you from His Word. Remain and continue in the Word of our Lord and see how He has wonderfully set you apart from the insanity that the world has to offer - which so very often runs contrary to what our Lord puts forth in His Word (for example, "pride" month in June).

As I watch many yards and fields being sprayed in this early time of summer, perhaps we can think of it like this: remaining in the Word of the Lord helps to eliminate the weeds that keep popping up. Without that drenching, the weeds will begin to take deep root and be more difficult to get rid of. Yet the spraying must continue to happen. There's no one-time treatment and then the yard is good to go forever. Rather, it's something that must be done again and again and again. No real vacation. And so it goes for the disciple of Jesus. Drenching ourselves, remaining and continuing in His Word, learning and hearing from Him so that nurtured by Christ the weed may not take root. Repentance brought about by our Lord's clear teaching acknowledges and identifies the weeds and a firm faith holds to the work of Christ crucified on the cross which lets the new life in Him grow. This is what our Lord wants for us.



Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide [remain, continue] in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides [remains, continues] in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 2 John 9.

Jesus wants us to remain in Him. He is found in His Word and in the gifts of His church handed out according to His Word. Why would we ever take a vacation from that? Remaining and continuing to be drenched in the revealed will of God will stave off the weeds and will bear fruit of the Spirit.

Enjoy summer but enjoy even more abiding in the Word.

In Christ,
Pastor Suggitt

LIFE QUOTE

We need campfires and cookouts and picnic lunches filled with laughter. Yet, as members of the household of God, we also need conversation and consolation and prayer. We need to gather, in person, at the Communion rail. Surrounded by our eternal family, we need to hear God's promises and rejoice in His forgiveness.

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What Do You Want?

One of the best-known and most-beloved psalms is Psalm 23, the “Shepherd Psalm.” There we learn that the Lord is our Shepherd. And since He is our Shepherd, we will not want. We will not suffer want because the Lord, our Shepherd, will lead us to green pastures and beside still waters. In other words, the Lord, our Shepherd, will provide for all that we need in both body and soul.

Yet, we live as though this is not the case. We live as though we *actually* suffer from want, that the Lord, our Shepherd, will not provide for all that we need. And thus, we live as though the Lord is not our Shepherd. And that means that we live as though we are not the Lord’s sheep.

When do we live as though the Lord is not our Shepherd? When we put anything else before Him and His provision for us. When we think that going to work is more important than receiving His gifts in church on Sunday (in violation of the First and Third Commandments). When we fail to give generously of the first fruits of what the Lord has provided for us because we don’t know what the future will bring (even though He has promised that He will lead us to green pastures and still waters).

We live as though we are not the Lord’s sheep when we think that the Lord is only in the business of helping those who will help themselves. We act this way because our minds are set on earthly, temporal things and not on heavenly, eternal things. We act this way because we have stopped hearing the call of our Shepherd, which comes through His Word.

Through the Word of God, the Shepherd calls us to Himself. Through the Word, the Holy Spirit gathers and enlightens us with His gifts. Through the Word, we are kept holy and nourished in the one true faith, the faith that follows our Shepherd wherever He leads us. He promises to lead us to our true home, to the land flowing with milk and honey, to a better country, not of this world, but a heavenly one.

And so, here’s the Good News: the Lord is your Shepherd, even and especially for wayward sheep. For Jesus seeks and saves those who are lost. He finds the lost sheep and carries them back to the fold. He is the Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. The Lord is your Shepherd. Let us live as His sheep.