



– K n o w i n g –

JESUS

A Worship Series for Saints & Sinners

Abiding in the Person of Jesus (4 of 6)

Sermon Series Focus

- *Knowing Jesus* means *experiencing* the person of Jesus as a disciple (learner) on the road to glorification
- This series looks at how “knowing Jesus and making him known” should be the heartbeat of every disciple
- The Father exalted the Son over all things, therefore we see that Christ is central and supreme, the first and last; there is no greater thing than knowing Jesus
- Since Jesus has been given this position of authority as the source of all Life, we will learn that everything hinges upon knowing Jesus and making him known

The Purpose of *Knowing Jesus*

- To invite saints and sinners to follow the Jesus of history and of faith (i.e. *experience* the Jesus of the NT)
- To make *this* Jesus central and supreme in our life
- To move us beyond a head knowledge of Jesus and our faith (e.g. belief, doctrine, thoughts, etc.), recognizing the difference between “about vs. abiding” in Jesus
- To discover practices that help us *abide* and deepen a relationship with Jesus that is both “personal” and corporate in nature; personal does *not* mean private
- To consider the radical call of Jesus to follow (know) him and share him—make disciples who make disciples

Knowing Jesus in Six Sermons

1. Nothing Greater Than Jesus
2. Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?
3. Making Jesus Your Lord & Friend
4. **Abiding in the Person of Jesus**
5. Experiencing Jesus in Missional Community
6. An Invitation to Follow Jesus

“Though most believers are comfortable speaking of a
“personal relationship with Jesus,” few concepts are so
greatly celebrated and little experienced.”

Wayne Jacobsen, *Tales of the Vine* (pg. 73)

abide (Gk: *meno*): to live, dwell, remain, continual connection and dependence

From *Dictionary of Jesus & the Gospels* (pgs.1-2):

“Abiding” is the Johannine way of speaking of believers’ need to live their lives in close communion with Christ.

Over half of the 118 NT occurrences of the word are found in John’s writings (40x in Gospel & 27x in epistles).

John speaks of remaining in Jesus’ teaching and of abiding in his love by remaining united with Jesus in and through the “other helping presence” (*parakletos*), the Holy Spirit, once Jesus has been exalted with God.

Jesus, Gospel of John 15:1-5 NRSV

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.
² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.
Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear
more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word
that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you.
Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it
abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in
me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who
abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart
from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide
in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such
branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

“The image of organic union works well for (and even goes beyond) the idea of intimate relationship. The Spirit abiding with them [disciples] would teach them, hence Jesus’ words would remain in them. As they continued in this union, they would know Jesus better and hence begin to reflect the “fruit” of his character.”

Craig Keener,
The Gospel of John: A Commentary (pg. 999)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Paul, Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

John 15:7-11 NRSV

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 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. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“While disciples might be accepted provisionally on a basic level of faith (such as signs of faith), it was those who were progressing to discipleship who would actualize their relationship.”

Craig Keener,
The Gospel of John: A Commentary (pg. 1000)

Spiritual Disciplines

Abiding in the Person of Jesus

How do you *actualize* a “personal relationship” with Jesus?

Scripture – encounter the Jesus of history and of faith

Prayer – talking and listening to the living person of Jesus

Fasting – affirm with Jesus that God’s word/Spirit is real Life

Worship – changed by adoring Christ; hearts made pliable

Ministry – flows out of knowing Jesus; making him known

Sabbath, Silence & Solitude – rest that centers us in God

Soul-Friendship – experiencing Jesus with other disciples

Communion – real taste & touch of Jesus, a visible reminder of his saving work, promises, and presence

Only Knowing *About* Jesus?

- If you're not regularly practicing *any* of the **spiritual disciplines** (i.e. Scripture reading, conversational prayer, worship, etc.), you're probably not abiding in Jesus
- As a result, you're not moving forward as a disciple and seeing the increase of the *fruit* of a functional relationship: personal & corporate transformation (Jn 15:8; Gal 5:22-23)
- Just knowing *about* Jesus and approaching matters of faith in an intellectual way, no matter the regularity, will not produce the fruit of a disciple or make for a healthy church
- Only knowing (abiding) Jesus on an intentionally relational level via the spiritual disciplines will bring about real LIFE

“...the call to discipleship must precede the call to service.”

Stephen Kaung, *Discipled to Christ* (pg. 17)

Moving From About to Abiding

- Everything that is good and holy, for you and our church, flows from knowing (abiding) Jesus as a personal disciple
- Learning about Jesus and biblical theology has its merits, but it will not on its own lead to life transformation
- The regular practice of spiritual disciplines is to the soul what good nutrition and physical exercise is to the body
- Knowing Jesus requires that the disciple make time for personal connection, involving other disciples as well
- If you're a "follower" of Jesus, ask yourself: "Am I following Jesus first & foremost in a personal relationship? Is my faith primarily about beliefs & ideas, or is it about *knowing* Jesus and interacting with him as a living person?"

Jesus, John 17:1-3 NLT

¹ After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. ² For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. ³ And this is the way to have eternal life—to *know* you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.



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Sermon audio & slides in PDF can be downloaded at:
www.christiansburgmennonite.org