

Abide In Christ

by Andrew Murray

Note: The original book is a 31-day devotional ... this is the devotion for Day 5

As You Came To Him, By Faith (Fifth Day)

“As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him; rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

Col. 2:6-7

In these words the apostle teaches us the weighty lesson that it is not only by faith that we first come to Christ and are united to Him, but that it is by faith that we are to be rooted and established in our union with Christ. No less essential than it is for the commencement is faith for the progress of the spiritual life. Abiding in Jesus can only be by faith.

There are earnest Christians who do not understand this; or, if they admit it in theory, the fail to realize its application in practice. They are very zealous for a free gospel with our first acceptance of Christ, and justification by faith alone. But after this, they think everything depends on our diligence and faithfulness. While they firmly grasp the truth “The sinner shall be justified by faith,” they have hardly found a place in their scheme for the larger truth “The just shall *live* by faith.” They have never understood what a perfect Savior Jesus is, and how He will *each day* do for the sinner just as much as He did the first day when he or she came to Him. They do not know that the life of grace is always and only a life of faith and that in the relationship to Jesus the one daily and unceasing duty of the disciple is to *believe*, because believing is the one channel through which divine grace and strength flow out into the heart of man. The old nature of the believer remains evil and sinful to the last; it is only as he daily comes, all empty and helpless, to his Savior to receive of His life and strength that he can bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God. Therefore, it is “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye *in Him*; rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, abounding therein.” As you came to Jesus, so abide in Him, by faith.

And if you would know how faith is to be exercised in thus abiding in Jesus, to be rooted more deeply and firmly in Him, you have only to look back to the time when first you received Him. You remember well what obstacles at that time there appeared to be in the way of your believing. There was first your vileness and guilt: it appeared impossible that the promise of pardon and love could be for such a sinner. Then there was the sense of weakness and death: you felt not the power for the surrender and the trust to which you were called. And then there was the future: you dared not undertake to be a disciple of Jesus while you felt so sure that you could not remain standing, but would speedily again be unfaithful and fall. These difficulties were like mountains in your way. And how

were they removed? Simply by the promise of God. That word, as it were, compelled you to believe that, notwithstanding guilt in the past and weakness in the present and unfaithfulness in the future, the promise was sure that Jesus would accept and save you. On that word, you ventured to come, and were not deceived: you found that Jesus did indeed accept and save.

Apply this, your experience in coming to Jesus, to the abiding in Him. Now as then, the temptations to keep you from believing are many. When you think of your sins since you became a disciple, your heart is cast down with shame and it looks as if it were too much to expect that Jesus should indeed receive you into perfect intimacy and the full enjoyment of His holy love. When you think how utterly, in times past, you have failed in keeping the most sacred vows, the consciousness of present weakness makes you tremble at the very idea of answering the Savior's command with the promise, "Lord, from henceforth I will abide in Thee." And when you set before yourself the life of love and joy, of holiness and fruitfulness, which in the future are to flow from abiding in Him, it is as if it only serves to make you still more hopeless; you, at least, can never attain to it. You know yourself too well. It is no use expecting it, only to be disappointed; a life fully and wholly abiding in Jesus is not for you.

Oh that you would learn a lesson from the time of your first coming to the Savior! Remember, dear soul, how you then were led, contrary to all that your experience and your feelings and even your sober judgment said, to take Jesus at His word, and how you were not disappointed. He did receive you and pardon you; He did love you and save you – you know it. And if He did this for you when you were an enemy and a stranger, why do you think, now that you are His own, He will not much more fulfill His promise? Oh that you would come and begin simply to listen to His word, and to ask only the one question: Does He really mean that I should abide in Him? The answer His word gives so simple and so sure: By His almighty grace you are in Him, and that same almighty grace will indeed enable you to abide in Him. By faith you become partakers of the initial grace; by that same faith you can enjoy the continuous grace of abiding in Him.

And if you ask what exactly it is that you now have to believe that you may abide in Him, the answer is not difficult. Believe, first of all what He says: "I am the Vine." The safety and the fruitfulness of the branches depend upon the strength of the vine. Think not so much of yourself as a branch, nor of abiding as your duty, until you have first had your soul filled with the faith of what Christ as the Vine is. He really will be to you all that a vine can be – holding you fast, nourishing you, and making Himself every moment responsible for your growth and your fruit. Take time to know, set yourself heartily to believe: *My Vine*, on whom I can depend for all I need, is Christ. A large, strong vine bears the feeble branch, and holds it more than the branch holds the vine. Ask the Father by the holy Spirit to reveal to you what a glorious, loving, mighty Christ this is, in whom you have your place and your life; it is the faith in what Christ is, more than anything else, that will keep you abiding in Him. A soul filled with large thoughts of the Vine will be a

strong branch, and will abide confidently in Him. Be much occupied with Jesus, and believe much in Him as the True Vine.

And then, when Faith can well say, "He is *my Vine*," let it further say, "I am *His branch*, I am in Him." I speak to those who say they are Christ's disciples, and on them I cannot too earnestly press the importance of exercising their faith by saying, "I am in Him" – it makes the abiding so simple. If, as I meditate, I realize clearly *Now I am in Him*, I see at once that there is nothing wanting but just my consent to be what He has made me – to remain where He has placed me. I am in Christ: this simple thought, carefully, prayerfully, believably uttered, removes all difficulty as if there were some great attainment to be reached. No, I am in Christ, my blessed Savior. His love has prepared a home for me with Himself, when He says, "Abide in my love" and His power has undertaken to watch the door and to keep me in, if I will but consent. I am in Christ: I have now but to say, "Savior, I bless Thee for this wondrous grace. I consent; I yield myself to Thy gracious keeping; I do abide in Thee."

It is astonishing how such a faith will work out all that is further implied in abiding in Christ. There is in the Christian life great need of watchfulness and of prayer, of self-denial and of striving, of obedience and of diligence. But "all things are possible to him that believeth." "This is the victory that overcometh – even our faith." It is the faith that continually closes its eyes to the weakness of the creature and finds its joy in the sufficiency of an Almighty Savior that makes the soul strong and glad. It gives itself up to be led by the Holy Spirit into an ever-deeper appreciation of what wonderful Savior whom God has given us – the Infinite Emmanuel. It follows the leading of the Spirit from page to page of the blessed Word, with the one desire to take each revelation of what Jesus is and what He promises as its nourishment and its life. In accordance with the promise "If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father," it lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. And so it makes the soul strong with the strength of God, to be and do all that is needed for abiding in Christ.

Believer, do you desire to abide in Christ? Only believe. Believe always; believe now. Bow even *now* before your Lord, and say to Him in childlike faith that because He is *your Vine* and you are *His branch*, you will this day abide in Him.