

Walking the Way

Seated in the Heavenly Realms

Our purpose for this series: To be reminded of the vision, mission and discipleship process God has called our church to live out as we walk with Christ and each other. Using the lens of the book of Ephesians, we will find application for our walk with Christ in every sphere of life.

Overview of the series: The five spheres of discipleship found in the book of Ephesians.

1. Abiding in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-14, 2:1-10), The Church Sphere (Ephesians 3:1-4:32), The Home Sphere (Ephesians 5:21-6:4), The World Sphere (Ephesians 6:5-9), The Spiritual Realm (Ephesians 6:10-24).

Ephesians 1:1-14 (NLT) This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. ² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. ⁴ Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵ God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. ⁶ So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. ⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸ He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. ¹⁰ And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹ Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. ¹² God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. ¹³ And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴ The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Ephesians 2:1-6 (NLT) Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. ⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.

What is abiding?

- Greek word: *menō*; verb. Remain, stay (i.e. lodge) or dwell with. State of condition; to remain as one.
- To abide is simply to rest our whole weight, our load, ourselves, our future, everything upon the Lord. It is *spending time with Jesus*.
- Just before his death, Jesus gave his disciples a new command he knew was crucial to their future and to the future of the church: "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine" **(John 15:4)**.
- The metaphor of a vine and branch represents a relationship unlike any other. Though they are two separate entities, they are joined together. The branch relies on the vine for food and life—connection and sustenance. And the vine nourishes the branch so that it can bear fruit.
- Just as branches are connected to the tree, we should always be connected to Christ. He sustains us. He provides the nourishment we need. *We are grafted into Christ.*

The yoke of Christ

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT) ²⁸ Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

1. Abiding is relational.
 - i. Jesus invites us, “Come to me” Very similar to his invitation to the disciples back in **Matthew 4:19**.
 - ii. “Take my yoke upon you” invites us to action.
 - iii. Following Jesus takes action. It is first God’s work on our heart and mind, but also our work (our part) as we engage with Him daily. We must pick up our cross and follow Him, or we cannot be His disciples (**Luke 9:23**).
2. Abiding is restful.
 - i. While Jesus gives his disciples a heads up about labor, he ends with good news: “And you will find rest for your souls.”
 - ii. “My yolk is easy to bear”. Greek word for easy; *chrēstos*
 - a. Means our work won’t be too much to handle. We are working *with Christ*, not against Him.

Abiding seen in 1 John

- Abiding in Christ follows the Word of God abiding in us (2:14, 24).
- Abiding in Christ follows the anointing of the Holy Spirit (2:27).
- Abiding in Christ follows obedience to Christ (3:24).

1 John 3:24 (ESV) ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

- Our walk with God becomes wonderfully different (2:6).
- We love others (2:10).
- We are fearlessness in the day of the Lord’s Coming, when we will be ushered before Him (2:28).
 - “And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.”
- A life of victory (5:4).
 - ⁴ For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. ⁵ And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Next steps

- Concentrate on what ***has been done***, not doing.
 - **The yoke of Christ.**
 - **“It is finished!” -John 19:30**
- Renew your mind daily. What does that look like?
 - **Going back to the truth: Knowing God’s Word, Prayer, *Spending time with God and His church.***
 - **Rest- solitude with the Lord is key.**
 - **Eternal mindset – Allowing God to transform our thinking and align it with His will. -Romans 12:2**
- A reminder of the Good News, the Gospel of God.
 - **Christ died. “Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said” -1 Cor. 15:3**
 - **Christ was buried. Christ was resurrected. “He was buried and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said” -1 Cor. 15:4**

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT) ⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.