

abiding in love

Gospel of John 13:33-35 and 15:1-12



Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 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. 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. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 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. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

God's kind of love is produced in a human life when a person, any person, abides in Jesus Christ. "Abiding in" presupposes a pre-existing relationship. To 'abide in' a relationship with God, through humble obedience to the teachings and lifestyle principles of Jesus, presumes the relationship already exists. And, if a person is attached to or connected with God, through a commitment to be a disciple of Jesus, then abiding is essential. However, Jesus' relational teaching using the imagery of a vine and branches is also conditional and volitional. To 'abide in' Christ is never forced; it is always a matter of the will. When a person clings onto Jesus but their life bears no fruit of Jesus' character, that branch is severed; for it is sucking the life of the vine with no intention to bear fruit. The way to bear the fruit of God's character is to do what Jesus taught; keep his teachings – especially his only NEW commandment. What is often called 'the eleventh commandment,' the only commandment Jesus ever handed to us as his followers was this: "love one another." It is essential that we worship; it is important for us to be servants, to learn, to be faithful stewards and to offer joyful witness. However, Jesus gave us one central order: LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

QUESTION:

Why do you think 'Love one another' is the only NEW commandment Jesus ever taught?

POEM:

Love's Prerogative (by John Oxenham)

Love ever gives – forgives – outlives –
And ever stands with open hands.
And while it lives, it gives.
For this is Love's prerogative; to give – and give – and give.

PRAYER:

God who is love, I find it easy to love most of my 'one another people,' as Jesus called them. It's easy to love people with whom I agree; well, you know – people like me. Yet, some of my 'one another people' are difficult, conceited, manipulative, arrogant, selfish, ignorant, judgmental, rude; well, you know – not like me at all. Do you really mean I should love ALL my 'one another people?' Do you expect me to take Jesus seriously? He said, "**Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.**" If you want me to love like Jesus loved, I have a lot to learn. Yes, I see the bread and cup. "*In remembrance,*" you say?!! Let there be love on earth and let it begin with me. AMEN