

# Abide In Me and I In You

Saint George 10th Ward  
Sacrament Meeting Talk

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I appreciate the opportunity extended to me by the bishopric to address you. I humbly accept their invitation to speak about the nature of the relationship that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to have with each of us.

## MY TESTIMONY

For too long in my life I believed that the Lord Jesus Christ had accomplished His atoning mission, resurrected from the dead, and taken His place at the right hand of the Father, there with the Father to look down upon the children of men from a distance.

For too long in my life I believed that the Father and the Son basically left us alone, left us to sink or to swim based on our own choices, our own capacities, our own natures.

But, in the context of the most difficult experience of my life, I came to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is not a distant, disinterested being. I came to know that, if you could imagine Him standing just a few feet from you in the air, you would begin to have a correct idea of how aware He is of you. While I cannot comprehend how He has individualized awareness of billions of individuals, I nevertheless know that it is. But, more than that, I came to know that He knows us completely and loves us anyway. He is a being of profound kindness. He is on our side. He wants us to succeed. He is willing to forgive our sins. And He wants us to humbly walk with Him.

## PROPHETS

In many instances, the Lord has revealed to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7) the nature of the relationship He wants to have with us. One of these prophets was Enoch. As recorded in the book of Moses, chapter 6, verse 34, which is the 2026 youth theme, the Lord said to Enoch, "... and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me". Given that the Lord has repeatedly said "What I say unto one I say unto all;" (D&C 93:49), this invitation extends to you and it extends to me.

Notice that the Lord speaks in the imperative, "Thou shalt abide in me". He then binds Himself to abide in us. And then concludes "therefore walk with me".

Can it really be that He who formed this planet on which we now live, He who in the premortal councils stepped forward and said “Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27), He who, like our Heavenly Father, is perfect (3 Nephi 12:48), wants us to abide with Him and walk with Him during this our probationary state?

On its face it seems paradoxical that, to be tested and tried and learn from our own experience, we needed to depart from the presence of God but that God actually offers to be with us during the thick and thin of life’s travails. This seeming contradiction fades away when we realize that the purpose of life is not to be “without God in the world” (Alma 41:11) but to walk by faith and not by sight.

In order for us to abide with and walk with Christ, as taught in the Lectures on Faith, it is essential that we have a “a correct idea of his character, perfections and attributes.” (Lecture Third, Verse 4). And, as such, the adversary seeks to distort our understanding of the Lord and tells us that because of our fallen natures the Lord is displeased with us. The adversary points at us a finger of scorn and in effect says “See. You are broken”. And then tells us because we are broken that we should cover our sins and distance ourselves from God. But this is a lie, set forth by him who is the father of lies, designed as with his other lies to “cheat our souls” (2 Nephi 28:21). Distancing ourselves from God after yielding to temptation is precisely the opposite of what is required. While it is true that the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance (D&C 1:31), He looks upon the sinner with compassion and mercy and promises forgiveness to the penitent soul.

Instead of distancing ourselves from God, we should follow the counsel of the Book of Mormon writer Amaleki, and “offer your whole souls as an offering unto him,” (Omni 1:23). Share with Him your regrets, your shame, your sorrows, your fears. For when you do, you will find that He will apply a healing balm to that wounded place within your soul. And He will endow you with a spiritual gift, a gift we call hope.

We do not need to be free from sin to walk with Christ. As Amulek taught Zeezrom, it is His mission to save us from our sins. (Alma 11:34).

The Lord has provided a number of metaphors to describe the nature of the relationship He wants to have with us. In these metaphors we are taught important dimensions of our relationship with Christ.

I will speak of 3 of these.

### CLAY IN THE HANDS OF THE POTTER

First, through Jeremiah, the Lord told ancient Israel “as ... clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand,.” This metaphor clearly conveys that the Lord is willing to be “hands on” in the workings of our life. It communicates that He has in mind to make of us something of utility and also beauty. It suggests that our task is to be soft and moldable, to believe that He is there,

and that even the hardships of this life will serve to shape and mold us. The metaphor also conveys that sometimes it may become necessary to collapse our work in progress and have a new beginning. But, even if so, He is there and His purposes will yet be accomplished.

### TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU

The second metaphor. When the Saviour invited “Come unto me all ye that labor” (Matthew 11:28), he added “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;”. In the metaphor of the yoke we see that during our mortal sojourn the Lord will be at our side and will carry with us our burdens. He will allow us to carry such portion of the load as will educate our senses and refine our spirits. But when the load exceeds our capacity to bear, He will step in. He will not allow us to be crushed by the weight of life’s challenges.

### THE VINE

Metaphor number 3. As recorded in the 15th chapter of John, Jesus taught “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5) This metaphor makes clear that Jesus is the source into which can and must tap in order for fruit, that is good outcomes, to come to our lives.

Here again He says, “Abide in me, and I in you.” He goes on to say, “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”; (John 15:4)

### I IN YOU

The Lord says “Abide in me and I in you”. Does the Lord really mean that He will abide in us?

To understand what he means by this we need to grasp that, to the Lord, He and the Holy Ghost are unified in such a way that Christ refers to the Holy Ghost as “my” spirit. In the sacramental prayers, the Holy Ghost is referred to as “His” spirit. The priesthood holder says these words, “that they may always have his Spirit to be with them.”

In Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 we read “the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us. A man may receive the Holy Ghost, and it may descend upon him...”

When we experience the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives, in the language of the Lord, He is abiding in us.

## RECOGNIZING

But sometimes we are challenged, not recognizing when the Spirit of the Lord is striving with us. On a certain occasion, Brigham Young had a dream in which the prophet Joseph Smith appeared to him and counseled him on how he and the other brethren could recognize the Holy Ghost.

“They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God.”

## CONCLUSION

As President Oaks taught in his February BYU devotional address, as we strive to prepare for the second coming of the Lord, nothing will be more important than cultivating our relationship with the Lord in the here and now.

It is something He wants us to have.

It is not contrary to His will for us to seek His face.

He wants us to abide with Him and He with us.

Now.

And forever.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.