

Acts 8:26-40
1 John 4:7-21
John 15:1-8

Sermon May 2nd 2021

Jesus Is Our Support

The disciples are moments away from being delegated to continue the work Jesus has been doing. In Jesus' last words he wants to reiterate that though he is about to be crucified, Jesus will continue to support them. Jesus will continue to support us. If only they/we will abide in him.

This is the million-dollar question for the disciples, for us, as we try to live out Jesus' invitation to be his disciples. Do we abide in Jesus in our daily lives?

For example, you need to make an important decision. You think about how this decision will impact you. You think about how this decision will impact your loved ones. The distractions that come often during a busy day make it harder for you to make a decision that you think is best for all parties involved. You make a list of the pros and cons of each decision. You talk to your loved ones to feel where they are at. After wrestling through the uncertainty, you make a decision.

As we ponder this example, we see that an important piece in the decision-making process is missing here. Abiding in Jesus.

How often do we make decisions in our lives without taking time to abide in Jesus?

Or, you get in a conflict with someone, and you either do everything you can to avoid the person or you do everything you can to convince them that you are right and they are wrong (**Image**). You get angry. You scream. You withdraw. How often do we abide in Jesus when facing conflict in our lives?

Or, something tragic happens in your life. You grieve. You isolate yourself, as you feel overwhelmed by all the pain. You try to deal with the grief on your own. You stop coming to church, because you don't want people to overwhelm you with their platitudes. How often do we abide in Jesus when facing tragedy in our lives?

Or, you come across someone who needs your help (**Image**). You want to help them, but you have some fear and anxiety. You don't want to be an enabler. You don't want to put yourself in a vulnerable position. How often do we abide in Jesus when facing opportunities to help people in need?

There are times in our lives where we struggle to abide in Jesus. Where we deal with the decisions, the challenges, we face on our own.

In our gospel this morning, Jesus invites us to abide in him. Jesus promises us that if we abide in him, we will live our lives steeped in God's love. Bearing much fruit in the decisions we make. In the conflicts we resolve. In the grief we heal from. In the people we help.

As I reflect on this invitation, this promise, I reflect on what it looks like for us to abide in Jesus.

For example, you turn to stories in the Bible to help you in your decision-making process (**Image**). Finding stories that relate to the issue you are facing, and listening to Christ's guidance and example in these stories.

Whenever I need to make a very difficult decision in my life, I turn to Matthew 12:22-34 to reassure myself that God will look after my needs. This story often calms me down from the anxieties I feel about the uncertainty that comes with making a difficult decision.

Or, you make time in your busy schedule to pray (**Image**). To listen for God's voice. To listen to where the Spirit might be guiding you.

We see in our story in the book of Acts a disciple named Philip who makes time to listen to the guidance of the Spirit. The Spirit, which guides him to an Ethiopian person who needs help in understanding what it means to walk in the ways of Christ. When we are able to listen to the Spirit, we see that we are moved by this Spirit, to love others as Christ loves us.

Or, reflecting on the experiences in your life where someone touched your heart with God's love through their words and/or actions (**Image**). To remember what it felt like to be a recipient of this unconditional love. To feel moved by this love, to love others with this same grace.

Jesus supports us through different means to help us live as Jesus' disciples. From the Holy Scriptures that point us to Christ's words and actions, giving us a teaching and an example to follow. To the love we experience from our neighbours that move us to love others. From the opportunities for prayer that draw us closer to God's comfort and wisdom. To the healing and guidance we experience, from the mysterious nature of the Spirit. Helping us get back on our feet again to continue the work of Christ.

Jesus invites us to abide in him (**Image**), and gives us the tools to do just that. So, that we feel supported as we try to be Jesus' hands and feet in our world. Making decisions that are shaped by God's wisdom. Resolving conflicts motivated by God's grace. Feeling comforted, healed, and renewed from our grief by God's care. Being inspired by God's love to help our neighbours in need.

Jesus invites us to abide in him in our everyday lives. Like the branches abide in the vine. So, that like the branches of a healthy plant, we too, will bear much fruit **(Image)**.

Let us pray, loving God, guide us to listen to your Word and your Son's example when making decisions in our lives. Grant us opportunities for prayerful reflection. Where we are able to hear your Spirit at work in our lives. Inspire and motivate us through this Spirit to live our lives everyday abiding in you. So that we reflect your love to everyone we meet. **Amen.**

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