

Proverbs 9:1-6
Ephesians 5:15-20
John 6:51-58

Sermon August 15, 2021

Jesus Abides in Us

Two weeks ago, we reflected on the first section of Jesus' "I am the bread of life" sermon where Jesus invites us to depend on him for our survival and well-being. Last week, we reflected on the second section of Jesus' sermon where Jesus promises us eternal life. That not even death will stop us from experiencing the fullness of God's kingdom. This week, we reflect on the third section of Jesus' sermon where we find out what happens to us when we do depend on Jesus. When we do believe in Jesus' promise of eternal life.

And the answer is...Jesus abides in us. Jesus is present within us. Comforting us when we grieve. Healing us from our wounds. Changing us through his teachings. Welcoming us with his grace. Lifting us up with his promises. Giving us what we need to live like Jesus.

So, we can comfort people in their grief. So, we can be Christ's hands of healing to those who are suffering. So, we can change people's lives through Christ's teachings. So, we can welcome people as Jesus welcomes us. So, we can give people hope in a world that at times seems hopeless.

When we depend on Jesus. When we hope in Jesus' promise of eternal life. Jesus abides in us, and we abide in Jesus. We become Jesus' hands and feet. Bringing healing, hope, and love to the people we meet.

The past eighteen months have been hard on all of us. From the pandemic that has impacted our lives in ways we couldn't even imagine to the unmarked graves at former residential schools that we found in different communities across Canada that have retraumatized our indigenous neighbours, and also, have challenged the way we see our history. From the raging fires burning across Canada threatening many people's livelihoods and health to the intensified flooding we are seeing across the globe. From the scorching heat waves that have made it harder for us to enjoy our summer vacations to the droughts that are plaguing our farmers right across the prairies. From the heated tensions between public leaders leading to polarization and violence among the people to the increased mental health challenges we are facing. The past eighteen months have been hard on all of us.

Well, in the midst of us facing all these challenges, our gospel this morning redirects our attention to the promise that Jesus abides in us, and we abide in Jesus. This is the belief we are encouraged to cling to in times like these. Jesus is walking with us

through these storms. Jesus is giving us what we need to deal with the outcomes of these storms. Jesus is giving us what we need to reflect Jesus' healing and redeeming love to others in the midst of these storms. To help people find comfort and healing from the impacts this pandemic has had on their lives. To listen to the pain of our indigenous neighbours, and help support them where they need it. Building bridges of reconciliation. To doing what we can do to care for God's creation. To help create opportunities for peaceful and respectful dialogue over major issues. To be a safe community for people to find support and love as they deal with mental health struggles.

Jesus abides in us, and we abide in Jesus. When we welcome this invitation for Jesus to abide in us, and for us to abide in Jesus, we face these challenges with faith. Not only do we believe we can endure through the worst of these challenges, but also, that we will bear witness to new life coming out of these challenges. We will witness Jesus' healing and redemptive love transforming our lives and the lives of our neighbours into something new.

Now welcoming this invitation is easier said than done. All that I have said up to this point is easier said than done.

Often times when we face challenges like we have over the past eighteen months we get discouraged. Frustrated. We try to deal with these challenges on our own. Or we try to avoid these challenges altogether. Or we get angry and lash out. Or we give up.

Often times we struggle to see God. We struggle to hear Jesus' invitation. Jesus' promise that Jesus is abiding in us when we are living in the midst of these struggles.

It isn't easy to welcome Jesus' invitation for Jesus to abide in us, and for us to abide in him, especially when we are living in the midst of these challenges.

Yet, through the gospel, through our faith community, through prayer, through worship, through the sacrament, Jesus keeps reassuring us of this promise that Jesus abides in us. Jesus continues to poke and prod us until we see that Jesus is indeed present in us. Working in and through us to reveal God's healing and redeeming work in the world.

Jesus doesn't give up on us no matter how dire the circumstances may seem. John actually states that Jesus gives himself up for us. For this world. Jesus sees something redeemable in this world. No matter how despairing our future may sound on the six o'clock news. Jesus sees something redeemable in us, in all of God's creation. And Jesus will continue to invite us, call us, to be the church in the world. To be Jesus' hands and feet in this world. Healing and redeeming this world.

Yes, the last eighteen months have been painfully exhausting and overwhelming to say the least. But Jesus is abiding in us. As we are abiding in him. There is hope. There is healing. There is redemption coming to all of God's creation.

Let us pray, gracious God, this past year and a half has left many of us wounded. Your whole creation is groaning with pain. Please help us. Open our ears to hear your invitation to abide in you. Reassure us that you are abiding in us. Giving us what we need to be your hands and feet in this broken world. Revealing your healing and redeeming love to all of God's creation. **Amen.**

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