

# John

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[ 0 : 00 ] Singing of the Lord's help, I direct your attention to the Gospel of John chapter 15 and reading verses 3 and 4. Gospel of John chapter 15, reading verses 3 and 4.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. And as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye accept, ye abide in me.

May ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye accept, ye abide in me.

The two words which stand out here, and one is clean, and the other is abide. They speak of spiritual truth regarding the souls of God's dear people.

They rest upon my spirit as divine realities. There is a reality in forgiveness.

[ 1 : 24 ] Jesus spoke of, in the Gospel of Matthew, of his blood being shed for the remission of sins.

And that is what this word clean means. Sins put away forever.

For the remission of sins. He said that in the institution of the Lord's Supper. This is my blood which is shed for the remission of sins.

This is the cleanliness which is spoken of here. And then there is this remarkable word. Abide.

Think as it is with his parable of the vine and the branch. This abiding is a living abiding. You've, I think, heard me say this before, but I'll repeat it tonight.

[ 2 : 27 ] It is something quite local and something some of you will know about. But when I was only a child of seven or eight, I used to come here into Wiltshire and stay at the cottage of the old deacon, Mr. Drury at Enford in the hamlet of Thyfield.

Very old cottage and a very ancient garden he had there which went back to his wife's parents who had lived there in the previous generation. Way back in the late Victorian period.

And there was an apple tree there which was very, very old. It had fallen down lying on its side. And it had grown in such a way that the branches from the horizontal trunk had turned up vertical.

So it was a very strange tree to look at lying by an old shed. But Mr. Drury spent his time grafting into that. And I as a child was interested to watch him.

I often watched him when he worked in his garden. And I remember this tree and how he grafted all sorts into that old stock.

[ 3 : 40 ] And there were cooking apples and eating apples which he'd graft in. And you could see the boughs that were growing out of it. And I have seen him putting a twig into it and splicing it and binding it up with brown paper and treacle.

And watched him at work. The evidence that it was grafted was absolutely clear. There was the fruit. And the sack was flowing. And you could see all this in this ancient stock.

Similarly of course men do it with roses. They graft. But grafting is an interesting word. As the Lord spoke here of the vine and the branches.

His people are grafted into him. And you know the figure here is that they be united to living vine.

A real union. And I would have you notice this. The abiding in which he speaks of here is his work.

[ 4 : 53 ] The uniting to the living vine is his work. It is a grafting in of God himself into that vine.

Oh it is. Then that fessed sap flows. flows. And the evidence is the fruit. When that sap flows sweetly.

And so it is with God's dear children. There is to be fruit in their lives as the sweet evidence that they are grafted into living vine.

The apostle Paul later speaks of ancient Israel. in the 11th of Romans. And uses this same figure of grafting into living vine.

He uses the figure regarding Israel that the Jews will depart. But they will be grafted in again. It is a day which the church of God waits for.

[ 6 : 00 ] It is very interesting that when the pilgrim fathers sailed the Atlantic in 1620. At the end of every day they came to prayer and at the end of the prayers of each day it is recorded that they pray for the grafting in Israel.

It is one of the things they look for and it is one of the things we look for today. We have seen it that they have gone back to their own land but we haven't seen them grafting. the veil has not been taken away.

We are told that when it shall turn to the Lord the veil will be taken away from their eyes. And then the apostle says and they will be grafted in again into the church of God manifestly seeing that Jesus is the Messiah.

They will come to this blessed place where amongst the Israelites today we shall see the work of God's Spirit bringing them into this knowledge that is here grafting them into this living life.

We are brought to know that Jesus Christ was their Saviour. We have seen the land opened we have seen the people return only in recent years the Russian Jews have gone back but the Lord is working.

[ 7 : 13 ] We wait this blessed time and we wait this precious word. But let us come now to this truth now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.

Well it's a good word you know but the question is this what do we know about it? Something very real and vital. These are the words of Jesus regarding his dear children.

He says to them ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you. What do we know of that? word. My mind went to the Apostle Paul in the first of all to the Corinthians where he speaks in that language such were some of you but ye are washed ye are sanctified ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

That is clean ye are washed ye are sanctified ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. What do we know of being washed?

What do we know of being sanctified? What do we know of being justified? the Apostle could say to the church at Corinth? They he lists the sins of their life vast catalogue of most solemn and heinous evil and sin and he says such were some of you that she are washed lovely word who are these we read in the book of the Revelation whence came these are they that came out of great Revelation they washed their love in the blood of the Lamb they know the reality of it and if we look as I often do at the opening chapter of the book of the Revelation and that word of the anthem in glory and him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own love it is a vital word the apostle John in his epistle in the first general epistle the first chapter says this the blood of Jesus

[ 9 : 36 ] Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin I always look at that and think yes he's speaking of those to whom he writes and he's speaking of himself us the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us can you come in can you come in ye what all have we been what this word of Christ presupposes one thing and one alone the word which I have spoken unto you what word has the Lord spoken unto you which is thank you you know go thy thy sins which are many are all forgiven one thing to sit in the sanctuary of God all the days of your life and it's another thing all together to know the blood of Christ in your heart and of course preceding this cleansing work of the revelation of the blood of

Christ in the soul there comes conviction godly sorrow repentance mourning over sin confession and pardon and peace there comes the language of the scriptures wash me and I shall be whiter than snow the psalmist in that 51st psalm was brought into conviction and he was brought to ask that the Lord would plunge his soul in that crimson ocean and he uttered this word purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean wash me and I shall be whiter than snow ever asked it I'll give you another example of the pathway to washing it's this have you ever walked in ever been in these precise footsteps because I believe

I know an occasion in my own experience that could take you to the very spot where I uttered these words pardon mine iniquity O Lord for it is grave there's an approach to the mercy seat in this washing in this cleansing in this sanctifying work of the spirit when we read sanctified it means the blood of Christ is applied there's no other holiness outside the blood of Christ and his sacred righteousness that sanctification when it's known in the soul that is the work of God there's no sanctification of ourselves it's a deep truth that we have to learn I'll give you an example out of my own experience and you might think perhaps as you consider it that it came to me very late in the pathway but it was after I was baptized sitting down at the

Lord's table I entered into temptation which is the pathway my master entered into temptation I entered into temptation that I would eventually be left to eat and drink condemnation of my soul and I used to struggle week after week month after month to repair myself and feel ready to sit down at the Lord's table but always I fell and came to the Lord's table feeling as though the Lord would strike me down dead at the table such was the sin and iniquity besetting the sin and an inability total to escape them and feeling so utterly unfit to come to the Lord's table and yet I was little better than a Roman Catholic that goes to confess his sins before he goes to the Lord's table and seek the priest's pardon

I was seeking in my own strength to make myself righteousness and holy and sanctify myself before God just as the Catholic does when he abstains from meats and food and all sorts and goes and confesses his sins trying to prepare himself to come to his mass and I was little better but you know dear friend there came a day when I felt so condemned going down to the Lord's supper one night at Bethesda St.

[ 14 : 54 ] Hampton I could take you again to the very spot the end of Archer's Road on the avenue there and I remember in agony of soul feeling absolutely unfit to come to the Lord's table crying out Lord help never shall I prepare myself and then came the word with divine power into my soul which was the very lesson in the Lord's hand to teach me what sanctification was then came the Lord with great sweetness and power and it came again and again into my heart the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleansed us from all sin and it cleansed me that night I learnt the path to his tale it's through perfect poverty alone it is perfect poverty alone that sets the soul at large whilst we can call one might our own we have no full discharge there's an avenue to this word year washed year clean we have coming down through that filth and vileness of our own souls our own hearts the evils of our fallen nature learning it well and truly in our hearts and our own utter inability no duty faith here oh dear friend with great zeal

I could take the axe to the root of that wretched error duty faith there's no such thing in man that he can exert he hasn't got it he cannot believe if he would this abide in me does not mean duty faith all you've got to do is believe no it means the axe laid to the root of your own strength your own ability and to be brought in naked undone like the man at Bethesda Paul who couldn't ride and to prove the blessedness of the strength which comes in this blessed work of cleansing the blood of Jesus Christ his son and you know I've proved this that when the Lord does speak a word with divine power there comes with it the truth the word is spoken into our hearts the truth

Jesus himself is the word and here we prove the blessedness of that word of life in our own hearts spoken into our own souls with almighty power lifting us out of our own inability and giving us his strength and his grace that ability to believe and trust in him and to prove the reality of his blood in our hearts cleansing us and you know I can tell you I sat down that night at that ordinance in absolute peace and I don't know when I sat down at the Lord's table like it Satan abhornt and quit my sight he was gone that awful foe was not at my elbow any longer to torment me because the blood was there over my heart in my soul be clean through the word that I have spoken unto you that is the cleanliness that is spoken of here it is when

Christ comes into our heart and applies his precious blood in our souls and we are lifted out of our guilt for it takes it away when there is reconciliation between our souls and our God when there is pardon and peace known when we are cleansed ye washed ye sanctified that's cleansing and it is the blood that sanctified and the blood of the eternal son of God that will cleanse us of all how we need it today we may have as much religion as we can carry around with us is it of any value did it come from heaven or is it in our minds do we extract it from the word of God with our minds or is it given to us from above by the Holy Spirit I believe in the great day of judgment the only word that will stand you and me when we are brought before the majesty on high will be what he's given to us through the word that

I have spoken unto you all else will be what he's done when we put that in the scales how much have we got how much have we got that has come as this sacred truth the word that I have spoken unto you what a lovely expression it is God speaks through his servants they are his instrument his sent servants they are the very instrument of the foolishness of preaching it is not their wisdom it is nothing the glorious God he uses them because he has ordained such an instrument it has pleased him by the foolishness of preaching says the apostle what a lovely expression that is to save them the believe their wisdom is to be dependent upon their

[ 20 : 49 ] God their wisdom is to cast their bread beside all waters and their wisdom is not to try and find where it is going to go God will do it he tells them they won't know which is going to prosper this or that and then he has that lovely word of whether both alike should be good but it is going forth to bring this blessing into the hearts of sinners that cleansed their souls and washed them in the fains of his precious blood and that's the vital nature of preaching when my father chaired the church meeting and he sent me to preach I never forget his words that night in 1969 October 69 he said let Christ be the beginning and Christ the middle and Christ the end of every sermon I had a savage rebuke once in a particular chapel in Wiltshire I came out of the chapel I preached in weakness and in bondage and as I left the chapel a man met me in the car park and he wound his window down in his car as he was leaving and he turned on me with all his guns and he said to me you haven't preached the most important thing tonight you've left

Christ out of your sermon and he wound the window up and he drove off and I left that chapel in I can tell you hurt wounded but you know dear friends I drove along I won't tell you where you'll find out where it was but I drove along that night being pretty sad thinking to myself I never preached in that place again but as I passed the particular spot the Lord showed me what I preached was what he gave me how poor it was then I saw that not only was I under attack but he was my Lord and Saviour was under attack himself and then you know I was at peace I saw that yes he was treated like him God's servants are treated like him and then I had such a view that yes I could go there again I've gone there for many years many years and I feel a great love to that people but you know the Lord teaches he brings his dear servants down and their ministry all you mark it it brings them in that effect of that savage attack that night brought me to this place back to what my father had told me when he sent me out is Christ the centre the beginning the centre and the end of every sermon is the blessed teaching of the gospel preaching the gospel preaching

Christ but here it is tonight this is Christ teaching the power of the word which he has spoken and you know I ask you here tonight what word what word in your heart in your life fits in to the words of Christ has he spoken to you and they that fear the Lord spoke often one to another what did they speak about what Christ had spoken to them the book of remembrance that the Lord has contains those things he's spoken to you and he's spoken to me sacred spots blessed places where the ministry has had a savour of Christ in your heart where you have known the blood of Jesus Christ in your soul it may be in the singing of his praises but they are the times when the

Lord has come and you have learnt that lovely lesson which I learnt many years ago every grace and every favour comes to us through Jesus blood whatever answer to prayer God has given you whether it be in providence or in grace whatever precious warming of your heart did not our heart burn within us you have known in the haste of God whether it be the singing of his praises or sitting under the ministry whatever sweet light has shone upon the word of God whether you have been walking in the countryside in the busy scenes of a town in the London underground wherever it may be your heart has been warmed by a word spoken in your soul that has come through Jesus' blood it is part of that sacred work of the spirit in sanctification in cleansing in washing bringing your soul into this gracious abiding into this union with

Christ he is speaking the word that I have spoken unto you lovely expression it is when the spirit is sent forth when that hymn was made a special time to you when that one sermon the lips of his Lord was made a peculiar blessing to your heart and you went forth from the house of God lifted up and strengthened go thy way as thou hast believed that's it when faith has been brought into blessed exercise and you have gone forth lifted up and the servants of God know this in a peculiar way which they alone know when they enter the pulpit in absolute bondage full of fear the word of the Lord is an absolute burden to them they stand on their feet and they don't know what they're going to say and the Lord suddenly appears and gives them a door of utterance and there's sweet liberty and there's fresh matter you can read this in dear

[ 26 : 58 ] Warburton's mercies how time and again when that dear man of God went to preach under a cloud the Lord appeared and lifted the cloud and gave him sweet liberty to preach Christ that he is the son of God that he is the saviour that he is the redeemer that he does lift his dear church up that he does pardon her sin and to speak of those things which as we read in this word he had handled and felt as John says or as Peter says which he tasted of the good word of life and they're these things a word that I have spoken unto you now examine yourself tonight here have you got one word which God has spoken unto you one sweet time in your heart when your heart has burned within you one place in the word of God which you can say that's mine and put your finger on it a time never to be forgotten when you opened the word of

God and the Lord spoke to you out of it one place perhaps in the countryside and you can mark a spot where the Lord drew near and touched your heart and you walked past it a hundred times since but you've never had the same sweetness as you had that morning pressures are these times in the hearts of God's dear people they're realities they're here and they lie at the root of this word of Christ abide in me it's not a beginning it's a going on that's what this word means abide there has been a union the Lord said abide stay remain where you are in me abide in me he has brought you into that union you haven't brought yourself but he is speaking here to his own church not to the ungodly he speaks here to his own disciples he says abide in me seek my face often at the mercy seat and you don't have to get down on your knees to do that you can do that in your daily life walking about neither know

I what to do but my eyes are up under thee I tell you this God will make sure that your eyes are up to him because he'll lay such burdens on you day and night such sorrows in your pathway will be brought such dealings of God with your soul through all of life's journey if you're his child he won't leave you without a cause to come to him and as you get near life's journey's end and the weight and burdens of eternity rest in your heart with great weight so you will have such cause such a weight such a pressure such a need such a desire coming out of that need to abide in him those lovely words we think of of those two men on the pro to maus when the lord had so wrought upon their hearts with his blessed sermon to their souls abide with us for it is the war evening when the day is fast and he went in to abide with them oh sweet word did he he did it and he does it to his children to die he goes in to abide with them and oh they know his presence and his love and his mercy and that's all they want there's nothing else in life worth having abide with us

British award evening perhaps that is true of some of you here tonight I believe it is you know and the day is far spent life's day is far spent and you long for him to abide with you well he calls you into this blessed place of love and mercy year washed year clean through the word that I have spoken unto you abide in me and I in you so shall he bring forth much fruit and our thoughts go back at this moment to him washing the disciples feet and that lovely word which speaks of something spiritual he that is

Peter said to him not my feet only and Jesus said to Peter he that is washed needeth not to wash save to wash his feet and is clean every whit and year clean year clean oh what a truth that is has the Lord shown to you that you're clean washed in the fountain of his precious blood clothed in his spotless righteousness he are clean then to such he said abide in me what a blessed word he did think of a dear Dutchman who I loved in the gospel he was with me in England last year he lies in his grave today he died in

[ 33 : 06 ] December within a few weeks of cancer but over his classroom door he was a teacher in Holland over his classroom door if you can believe this in Holland he had one thing is needful for his pupils to see before he died he wrote them a loving spiritual letter to his school to hundreds of his pupils and when he died hundreds came to his funeral one thing is needful all this union to the living God one thing is needful and Mary has chosen that better part shall not be taken from her do you know it abide in me and I in you it is to be united to Jesus Christ and it's a very remarkable thing that one single sinner should be so united to the eternal son of

God who created this union but true it is all things were made by him and without him is not anything made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men that is the truth all are you am I united to this living vine we should have not done it ourselves this verse does not command us to unite ourselves to Christ that is done by Christ himself he is one he is sanctified he is justified are we have we been brought into the knowledge of this blessed truth and do we find a sweet love in this glorious word abide in me our mind goes to Christ's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane where he prayed that they all may be one he was we are one

I in them and thou in me that they may be one in ours that was his desire it is for the dying thief it is for Samson it is for the woman of the world it is for greatest sinners greatly loved to be united to Jesus Christ and to know him it is only through that union that any one of his servants can stand up in the pulpit and preach can't preach anything besides that there is nothing else to preach they can't preach unless they united to living vines they may utter words but preaching is men who are sent by God under divine commission and you know the apostle says how shall they preach that's with any profit with any blessing with any fruit except they be sent and he then says how shall they hear without a preacher how shall they they can't unless they have a

God sent preacher then they'll hear when the Lord circumcises their ears and causes his word to enter their heart and their ears are bored to the doorpost of God's house then they are here how shall they hear without the preacher and you know dear friends this is the work of the spirit unite to Christ and God uses instruments in the accomplishment of this work and it's a work which one day will be manifest as his work it will indeed not the work of men no man will ever have a hand in it it's like this if you're a very foolish gardener you start to dig the seed up to see if it's growing if you're a very wise gardener you leave the thing utterly alone you don't touch it there are many foolish preachers around today who go around asking questions trying to see what their ministry fruits have been what

I call fiddling about solemn fiddling about trying to as old Herbert Dawson used to say fit caps it won't work it's a work of God leave it alone who is as blind as my sir he doesn't see what he's doing he casts his seed he leaves it to his God like the farmer does I always remember many years ago now talking of the seed and the work of the farmer and the fruits of his labors Rex Pocock stood talking to my mother one day looking at a field and he said to her well if it doesn't rain within a fortnight that field will be so much worse and if it does it will be worse so much and he said to him what's more he said

[ 38 : 53 ] I find that it all balances out at the end of the year what I lose on one crop I gain on another he was speaking of his work I often think of it he had such a sight of his whole labour is in the Lord's hands the Lord gave he gathered and he didn't spend his time wondering that crop is going to fail and what is going to happen I always remember David Kinderman at Manifor telling me on one occasion that there was a great drought I think it was 1976 and his potato crop was withering and he sought the Lord prayed earnestly because he was struggling to bring up a big family and then he said a great thunderstorm came just over his field whereas the crops failed all round his field grew and he saw the Lord's hand in it and you know it's like that with the Lord's sermons pour my soul and a potless my water

God gives the increase they can't put a hand to it it's God's word and this is seen here in this lovely word the Lord's work is to use his labour but all so often they don't see the fruits of their labour my late dear father in the last week of his life had several letters come in of blessings under the first sermons he preached when he went out in 1932 when I was six months old in 1986 just before he died two or three letters came to tell him of blessings in those early sermons and he turned to me when he read these he was absolutely broken because he was a dying man with cancer and he turned to me with these letters and he said John he said they're sovereigns they're not penny the Lord has kept them all these years to give them to me now and that is the work of

God's dear servant they labelled seeing little sign but they daren't as under the spirit touch the work of God to see what the Lord is doing in this precious work they sow the seed and the Lord works now you clean through the word that I have spoken unto you abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the mind no more can ye except ye abide in me and that lovely word without me ye can do nothing may may may the Lord bless his word and use it to his honor and glory amen who do for so