

# Abiding In God

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Preacher: Craig Morris

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     So we don't often sing that song at Cogdowood. That's an absolute belter. I'm so thankful for worship leaders like Alan.
- I'm not gifted in worship. And in my sermon, I actually mention another song. But I'm so glad that we sung that song. If you've got your Bibles, we're turning to 1 John.
- It's the very end of chapter 2. And we've got 10 verses of chapter 3. So 1 John, chapter 2, verses 28-29.
- And then we're into chapter 3, down to verse 10. Let me pray.
- Father, we thank you. We thank you for your love. We thank you for your grace. Lord, we thank you that if we believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, Lord, then one day we will see Jesus.
- [ 1 : 1 9 ]     Lord, that we will be with you. Father, we thank you for your word. Father, I pray that you would help us to hear from you this morning.
- Father, we thank you so much for the children. We pray that they would learn something of you this morning as well. So, Father, be with us. In Jesus' name we pray.
- Amen. So this is God's word. This is what it says. 1 John, chapter 2, verse 28, down to chapter 3, verse 10. And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him and shame at his coming.
- If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.
- And so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now. And what we will be has not yet appeared.
- [ 2 : 3 1 ]     But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
- Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins.
- And in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.
- Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil.
- For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning.
- [ 3 : 3 3 ]     For God's seed abides in him and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this is evident who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil.
- Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For the reason why I picked this passage of Scripture was, if you don't know me, I work for SU Scotland.

I'm the Glasgow regional worker. And every Wednesday, the staff at SU Scotland gather to pray. So Wednesday morning is our prayer time as a whole staff team.

And a lot of people are in the office and some people are in Zoom. And for me, Wednesday mornings suits me better to be on Zoom. And there's a rota of different people, different staff members who are on each week to lead.

And a couple of weeks ago, I was down to lead and I was given this passage. And this passage I've been carrying for a couple of weeks now. So when Cal said, I've got a free hit on what passage to use this morning, I felt it was good to go back into 1 John.

[ 4 : 42 ] And I was even more encouraged when I heard just this week that the previous preacher last week was also in 1 John. So it's a really nice continuation. So we're still here in 1 John.

But I wonder, where did your thoughts go when you were reading these words or when you were listening to the words? So for me, a few things came to mind.

So there's an old song of the early 2000s, a song by Fat Fish. And it's like, we shall see him as he is. And when I was prepping for the issue of prayers for the Wednesday, I actually Googled that song to find that old, I say old band.

It just shows my age. So a band in the early 90s, late 90s, early noughties. And to say that their video hasn't aged well is an understatement.

But it's a good song. It's a very good song. So that song came to mind because, as Alan said from the hymn that we've just sung, the words are lifted directly from this passage. Another word that jumped out to me was abide.

[ 5 : 50 ] And we're going to dig into this abiding. What does it take? What does it mean to abide in God and in his words? And then the final thing that came to mind was a sketch that I remember from years ago.

And it was Michael McIntyre, the stand-up comedian. And I thought that he was referencing Abide in Me, that old hymn, Abide in Me.

So again, prepping for SU prayers. I Googled and I was so hoping I would find what I was looking for. And I did. And it was great. So to set the context, so that's the old music video from the early noughties.

That's Fat Fish singing there. And then Michael McIntyre is on the other side. So let me just, as best as I can, back one, Steve, back one. As best as I can, let me tell you why I'm bringing this up this morning at church.

So picture this scene. And the Comedy Roadshow goes across different cities in the United Kingdom. Michael McIntyre headlines it. And I'm sure it was even before he had said anything, it was as he walked on stage.

[ 6 : 57 ] He starts belting out Bread of Heaven. And he gives it the big theatrics. He's like, Bread of Heaven. And then instantly, automatically, because he was in Cardiff, the Welsh people sing it back to him.

And you see, and he ends up doing like a wee mini rounds. And it's really quite funny. But as soon as it stops, the next thing that Michael McIntyre says is, you know you're all insane.

And I thought that was, he puts his finger on the pulse of a nation that is steeped in God's word and in worship. And he makes a reference, he can't do that in England.

He can't walk on stage in a city in England and start a hymn of chorus because it would get booed off. All right. But yeah, he puts his finger on the pulse of a nation that even in the 21st century, the audience, we don't know if they are believers or not.

And probably most of them aren't. But there's something ingrained in them as a nation that they can recall and they can sing back word for word. Bread of Heaven.

[ 8 : 12 ] Intentionally or unintentionally, yeah. He'd done that. And it's very clever what he has done. But then, as I thought the clip was taken from Abide in Me, but it turns out it was Bread of Heaven.

Again, when I think of Abide in Me, and because this passage, the word abide keeps coming up and up again. When I thought of Abide in Me, I thought of the FA Cup final. So I don't know if you're sure, but every year at the FA Cup final in Wembley, they sing Abide in Me.

And I was so hoping that the clip matched up, but it didn't. It kind of worked, but it would have really, really worked if it was Abide in Me that he started building out. But it wasn't. So yeah, so when I hear Abide in Me either sung in church, I instantly go back to the FA Cup final.

So the Welsh built out Bread of Heaven. And I think they particularly do it at the rugby. Any rugby fans? Yeah, yeah, yeah. So if you've been to Cardiff, if you've been to away games, I don't know. You might have experienced that.

I'm sure it would be amazing. So Welsh have Bread of Heaven. The English have Abide in Me at the FA Cup. So all that was to say that that's where my mind went to.

[ 9 : 21 ] I wonder where your mind went to as we have read and as we have heard God's word this morning. So I've broken up our passage, and I want to take us through three different sections.

So we'll look at chapter 2, verses 28 and 29, and I'll title that, confidence in Jesus. And then we'll look at chapter 3, verse 1 to 3.

We have children of God abiding in God. And then we'll finish up verses 4 through to 10, and I've entitled that, children of God fighting sin.

So confidence in Jesus. So confidence in Jesus. Children of God abiding in God. And children of God fighting sin. Let's reread verses 28 and 29.

Now little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him.

[ 10 : 24 ] So John writes to his readers, and he continues the description that he's been using throughout the letter, and he's describing the readers as children.

And he also continues his request for them to abide in God. And here in verses 28 and 29, it looks ahead to the future when Jesus returns, and the impact that this will have on His readers, but also the impact that it will have on every single person.

And as Alan so brilliantly brought to us this morning, that song gets us thinking about when Jesus returns. So this week, as I've prepared the sermon, I've taken the time to read the full letter, and I relate to the simpleness of John's message in 1 John.

So John's Gospel, so the Gospel of John, that's deep. That's deep waters in terms of the Gospels. But his letter here in 1 John, I find it's a lot simpler.

And it's quite blunt at times. And I find that, because I'm not really smart, so a simple message is better for me. And sometimes we need to be blunt. So think on that for a moment.

[ 11 : 41 ] Think of Jesus' return. When Jesus returns, let's just take a minute, take a couple of seconds and think about that. So when we abide in Jesus, and again, we'll think about this abiding, what it is to abide.

We'll think of that in a wee bit more. But we will have confidence. So there's that word confidence, verse 28. We will have confidence that we will be on the right side of Jesus' judgment, which will be in full display when he returns.

And when I read verse 28, specifically verse 28, I remembered a bumper sticker that I saw as a young person. So I don't know if some of you know my family.

So the Morris family, we went on our final family big holiday, 2001. So I was top end of high school. My sisters were middle high school, and my brother was just out of high school.

And this was our last family holiday. And we went to Florida, because we'd never been to Florida. And as we went through school, lots of our friends were going to Florida, and we never got the chance. So in 2001, the Morrisseys went.

[ 12 : 56 ] And we didn't do Disney, because we were too old for Disney. We did all the other big kid stuff. And it's funny, there was one bumper sticker, a specific bumper sticker, that I saw, and I clocked.

And I remember my sister, she also clocked it as well. And I've got a wee picture of it. I'll put it on the screen. And it says this. It says, Jesus is coming, look busy.

Yeah, I know, exactly right? So as a kind of teenager, I was like, yeah, that's quite funny. And I don't know if it's popular now, but certainly in 2001, we saw it quite a lot as we were driving around Florida.

But it's the tone of the bumper sticker that reveals the lackluster attitude that so many people have, not just in Florida, but across the world towards Jesus Christ.

Now, this bumper sticker message has some truth to it. Jesus will return. They've got that spot on. That's true. But the idea that on his return, if we just deploy this attitude of, look busy as though what you were doing, you shouldn't be doing, so stop doing that, and now actually do what we think Jesus wants us to be doing.

[ 14 : 18 ] Okay, that's not good. That is not helpful. If we are truly abiding in Jesus, we don't have to look busy. As we will be doing what we know to be righteous, as John writes to his readers in 1 John.

And how do we know what we will be doing is righteous? It's because God's word tells us. And John tells his readers that as well. So those who abide in Jesus will have confidence in Jesus.

And those who don't abide in Jesus will shrink and shame. And yet they can at best try to look busy, but it's not going to fly.

It's not going to wash. So that's simply where my mind went to, verses 28 and 29. When we abide in Jesus, we don't have to look busy, because we know what we're doing will be righteous.

So let's move on. Let's go into verses 1 to 3. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. And so we are.

[ 15 : 24 ] The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared.

But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Now I mentioned John's Gospel. If you were to go to John's Gospel, chapter 8, verse 31, you don't have to turn there. Let me read it to you. So John's Gospel, 8, verse 31, says this. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.

So John's Gospel tells us that Jesus spoke to the Jewish people who believed. If they abide in his word, they will be his disciples. And in our passage this morning, John reminds the readers of who they are.

So in the same way that Jesus told the Jews who believed, John is telling his readers that they are the children of God, and so they are, and so we are this morning, if we have put our belief in Jesus.

[ 16 : 39 ] So Bells Hill Baptist, are we abiding in God's word, as Jesus said to the Jewish people in chapter 8, verse 31? Are we abiding in God's word?

And I ask that to myself more than I ask it of you. And it's so easy to say yes to that in the safety of church on a Sunday morning.

But what does that look like on Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday? When life is in full flow, are we carving out the time to sit under God's word and to take it in?

For each of us, how our weeks pan out is completely different. But as a church, can we do our Bible daily readings better?

When each of us were to put into practice our daily Bible reading, when we abide in his word daily, then when we come together on a Sunday, we will be so much more like the children of God that John is describing.

[ 17 : 48 ] So as I said at the start, this passage was given to me by SU Staff Prayers a few weeks ago. But what was particularly encouraging for me was, so that was on the Wednesday, the following Sunday, I was at church in the evening service, and John McKinnon was in Mark chapter 4, and it was the passage of the four soils.

And John was talking about the importance of being more like Jesus. So when our heart is like the correct soil, we will be more like Jesus. And John made the point, so John in his 60s was making the point, if he is more like Jesus, then that should flow from him, people should see that in him.

And what he was saying was, if he's perceived as being a grumpy old man in his 60s, then he's got a problem. And he got us to think about that as we sat there and listened to that preach.

And it got me thinking, having just been in 1 John, chapters 2 and chapter 3, it got me thinking about, am I living for Jesus?

Am I abiding in his words? So naturally, children should resemble characteristics of their parents. Should they not?

[ 19 : 04 ] How many times have you seen a child and they look and they act so much like their parents? So I'll be 40 in two weeks' time.

And I am beginning, I've known this for ages, but I'm beginning to look more and more like my dad. And we had an extended family. It was my uncle's 60th and he had a big barbecue.

And I got there late and for some reason it was just me. So I was like bombing it through to Stirling, safely, but bombing it through to Stirling. And I got out of the car and the first person I saw was my oldest cousin, who I've not seen in ages.

And as I stepped out of the car, she got the fright of her life. She was like, oh my goodness, Craig, I thought you were your dad. You look so much like your dad. And I was like, backhandily compliment. I was like, thanks very much, because good to see you too.

But another example of that, so that was more how I'm beginning to look like my dad. A couple of months ago, it was Anna's primary two. So Anna was out here for the children's talk. It was her primary two assembly and she was part of the performance.

[ 20 : 12 ] So all the parents were invited and grandparents were invited as well. So Anna had seven lines. I think she had the most lines. She wasn't the main character. It was Katie Morag and she was one of Katie Morag's grannies.

And as I said, she had seven lines. So we got an invite. I cleared the work schedule and me and Carly were sitting. And of course, we said to our folks, so they were there as well. And the head teacher welcomes the whole school and it's Mrs. Quinn.

And she's gotten so well behaved. She's like, good morning, Mount Cameron. And they're like, good morning, Mrs. Quinn. And then she turns to the parents and I'm like, oh, here we go.

And she's like, good morning, parents. And I'm like, good morning, Mrs. Quinn. And I was the only guy to do that. So Mrs. Quinn calls me out and she goes, thank you, Mr. Morris. That's very, very encouraging.

And I'm sitting there cheekily laughing, knowing that, yeah, I got away with that one. Carly's not happy. But over my shoulder, my mother-in-law just says to me, she whispers and she goes, you're so like your dad.

[ 21 : 17 ] And then she pulls back. And my dad's just off on my peripheral vision and I know he's giving it, well done, son, like, well done. But it got me thinking, it was like, yeah, oh my goodness, not only am I beginning to look more and more like my dad as my hair gets greyer and greyer, but I am now actually displaying, publicly displaying the characteristics that my dad would do.

So children should resemble their parents, not just by in their likeness, but in their character. Christians should resemble Jesus.

If we're abiding in Jesus, then we should be seen to be like him as he is. And we'll never physically resemble Jesus, that's impossible.

But in our character and in our behaviour, we should be more and more like Jesus every single day. We should be more like Jesus now than we were last year, as John McKinnon was getting us to think about a couple of weeks ago.

Look at verse 2 of chapter 3. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. we know that when he appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

[ 22 : 35 ] What we will be basically means having glorified bodies that have not yet come. That will take place in heaven. So now, we surely need to be like Jesus in how we act and how we live.

And when we do, that leads us to standing out from the rest of the world. Look at verse 1. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. This verse tells us or gives us the answer why would John's first readers, why would the world not know what they are doing or why they are doing it.

Well, the verse tells us it is because the world did not know Jesus. So back to Michael McIntyre, when he instantly describes his audience as being completely insane, it is because the world does not know Jesus.

To the world, Christians galling together and building out Behold our God, Ancient of Days, if they were to walk in, they would think we are completely insane.

[ 23 : 52 ] So one of the major theological themes in the whole book of 1 John is this, and I put it on a slide. When God abides in his people, his word also abides in his people, and then they abide in God, which results in God's people abiding in the light of God, for God is light.

So if you were to take the time and read the full letter, or the full book of 1 John, you would hopefully see that circular picture that John writes. God abides in his people, his word abides in his people, they abide in God, which results in God's people abiding in the light, for God is light.

So when we, as God's children, walk in the light, the ones walking in the darkness cannot understand it. And going back to the old hymn, abide in me, it states, in life, in death, O Lord, abide in me.

In life. When we abide in Jesus, our lives will shine for Jesus. Are we living for Jesus more than we were last year, as I've just said?

Are we shining for Jesus more this month than last month? Will we abide in God's word more this coming week than we did last week? Let's move on.

[ 25 : 22 ] Verses 4 through to 10. Going back to John's gospel, John chapter 15, verses 4 to 6 says this, Abide in me, these are the words of Jesus, Abide in me and I in you, 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. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers, and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. John 15.

So Jesus describes two ways to live in John 15. John in our passage this morning, look at verse 6. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. What Jesus and John are saying is that we will never, we will never become sinless.

[ 26 : 34 ] Only Jesus was sinless. And as we saw with the children earlier, because only Jesus can remove our sin, therefore, we cannot, we can never become sinless because we were, we are sinful.

So Jesus was the only person who was sinless and that is the reason why he can take away our sins. And when talking about sin, particularly in my job, in the context of my job, working with children and young people, I often use the illustration of sin being like rubbish that gathers up every day, every week.

And I kind of got them, I got the children to think about it like that. But let's just take, just humour me for a little minute. Let's just press on that a wee bit. Imagine how bad it would be if North Lanarkshire really did cancel the bin uplift permanently.

Imagine how bad the smell would be across Bells Hill, across the council, imagine the Scottish government did it. Imagine the smell of rubbish just being piled up and piled up and not being taken away.

Verse 5 says this, you know that he appeared in order to take away sins and in him there is no sin. The one who knew no sin became sin for us.

[ 28 : 00 ] And again, abide in me says this, I need thy presence every passing hour. What by thy grace can foil the tempter's power who like thyself my guide and stay can be?

Look at verse 8. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

So John takes his readers and he takes us back to the origin of sin and to the devil and to the works of the devil. So the works of the devil is the countless sins that occur every single moment of every single day across our world.

But John tells us that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. That's such good news. And again I often say to children and to young people I work with I love Easter time more than I do Christmas time.

And when you say that to a child or to a young person it literally sometimes stuns them. They can't get their head around how can somebody like Easter more than Christmas.

[ 29 : 21 ] But I counter that by saying Christmas is the start of the good news but Easter is what the whole Bible points to. Jesus' victory at the cross and the empty tomb and the fact that Jesus is alive.

There is no better news. As Christians we are on the winning side. And as somebody who's competitive I love that.

I love the fact that as Christians we're on the winning side. verse 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning for God's seed abides in him and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

So we can't be sinless. We've already said that. But if we are abiding in Jesus then we can certainly strive to sin less.

Can we start sinning less? We'll never become sinless. But can we strive towards sinning less? Just as we are God's children we should be becoming more and more like Jesus.

[ 30 : 36 ] So too should our sinful ways become less. So the sinful habits that I had when I was a teenager I would hope to think that they are not on display now.

But what my problem is is the fact that I'm human. So I'm sinful. So the sinful desires and sinful habits that I have now nearly in my 40s I didn't have when I was a teenager.

But I need to check what my sinful habits are that I've picked up. And then what do I do with them? Well we need to confess our sins to God on a daily basis.

So in the same way that we should be reading the word of God on a daily basis we should be confessing our sins on a daily basis as well. John writes in chapter 1 if you turn back to chapter 1 and 1 John.

Verse 10 If we say we have not sinned we make him a liar and his word is not in us. And at the start of chapter 2 my little children I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

[ 31 : 49 ] But if anyone does sin we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

And Kyle's opening verses from Sam was getting at that as well. So as we conclude off the back of Easter just a week or so ago the greatest news that's ever to take place.

Church do we have confidence in Jesus? Safe in the knowledge that we won't have to look busy when he returns. As God's children and so we are are we more and more becoming like our Father and Lord and Saviour Jesus?

And finally our children of God as we as children of God are we confessing and fighting our daily sinful battles remembering that we are on the winning side.

Let me pray. Father we thank you for Jesus. Lord we thank you that Jesus willingly came to earth.

[ 33 : 16 ] Father we thank you that it was your plan for Jesus' mission to be cross shaped. And Father we thank you that Jesus took on our sin and he has dealt with that sin and he has taken it away.

Father help us to live that out. And Lord help us not in our own strength but by the help of the Holy Spirit to shine for you. Lord we pray as a church that we would shine for you as a congregation that would shine out into this community.

Father we thank you for this time that we had. We thank you for your word. We pray that you would help us to continue to worship you. Not just now but as we go into the week Father would we worship you.

Would we abide in you Lord. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.