

Daily Discipleship

Sixth Sunday of Easter (B) – John 15:9-17

The Path of Discipleship: *Directed by Love*

Focus Question: *How do I abide in the love of Christ?*

word of life

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” John 15:12 (NRSV)

Read John 15:9-17

Jesus knows something of love. In fact, Jesus embodies God’s love, extending love to his disciples and others. In Christ, each of us has the possibility of experiencing a perfect kind of love, unmatched on this earth. Jesus invites his followers to abide in his love.

1. *What does it mean to abide in the love of Jesus?*
2. *How exactly does one abide in the love of Jesus?*

Jesus gives a fundamental tip on the practice of abiding. Jesus directly links abiding in his love to the keeping of his commandments. Thus, the commandments are not simply laws to establish boundaries in behavior, but serve to shape and direct a person in relating to God and one’s neighbor. Jesus reminds followers of the joy in following the commandments and sharing love. There is a depth of joy found in abiding in Christ. Jesus describes this joy as complete.

3. *In your opinion, how do the commandments teach us to love?*
4. *What makes joy complete?*

As Jesus continues, he makes it very simple. He condenses the commandments to one: Love one another as I have loved you. At least it starts simple, but then Jesus sets the standard high. He adds, “Love as I love you.” These are words spoken by someone who is going to be crucified and gives up his life for the sake of love.

5. *Describe someone who loves as Jesus loved.*

Jesus’ reminds his disciples of the sacrificial love of laying down one’s life for the sake of another. The love of Jesus is not self-centered. Nor does his love seek gain.

6. *Can a child have such love? How so?*
7. *Why don’t all adults grow into this mature, sacrificial kind of love?*

After all this, Jesus changes the way he refers to his followers. No longer are his disciples to be considered servants, but are friends. The status of “friend” means more than being Jesus’ pals and buddies; rather, it suggests an intimate relationship of knowing one another. Jesus and the disciples are friends in that they share certain values and common experiences.

8. *What does it mean to have Jesus as our friend?*
9. *How does it feel to be chosen to be a friend, especially a friend of Jesus?*

This privilege of being called *friend* by Jesus comes with a certain responsibility and expectation. Jesus expects his disciples to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. God’s love has a way of doing that – bearing fruit. The disciples are encouraged to dream big about sharing God’s love made known in Jesus.

10. *In what ways did the disciples bear fruit?*

word among us

Abide is an ancient word not often used in daily conversation; yet in John 15:9-17, we are invited to abide in Jesus Christ. Many times, we associate the word with staying close and connected with him. Take a few moments to explore definitions of *abide*:

Abide . . . to wait for

The season of Advent is the traditional time to ponder waiting for the coming of Christ. The first definition listed in the *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* is "to wait for". That makes sense. Jesus is not physically with us. Thus, we wait for his coming again. Like anyone who yearns and longs to be fully reunited with a loved one, we too can anticipate a future connection with Christ that comes at the end of time.

1. *How do you wait for Christ?*
2. *Explain the connection between waiting and abiding in Jesus.*
3. *What does loving have to do with abiding in Jesus?*

Abide . . . to remain

There are many things in this life that might tempt a person to remain and endure, but not all are positive and life-giving. A person doesn't necessarily have to choose to abide in something positive; for example, a person might abide and remain in an abusive marriage, alcohol, hatred, bitterness, or addictions.

4. *What tempts you away from abiding in the love of Christ?*

Abide . . . to accept without objective

Trust is part of this definition. We are encouraged to trust the goodness and love of Jesus as he invites us to abide in him. Trust includes accepting his reign and leadership in our life. We trust his wisdom and his love to become the guiding principles in our lives.

5. *Explain the connection between trust and abiding in Jesus.*
6. *How does trust encourage love to bear fruit?*

Jesus invites his followers to abide in him and his love. That love produces joy and fruit that lasts. Jesus reminds his followers, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13 NRSV)

7. *What are the first steps of love (long before one gives one's life)?*
8. *What is the difference between fruit and fruit that will last?*
9. *What fruits of love might you bear in the coming week?*

Prayer

Christ, hold us tight so we might abide in you, share love and bear much good fruit. Amen

Dig Deeper

1 Corinthians 13

last word

Begin each day with your hands
folded in prayer
asking Christ to hold you tight.



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