

A. Introduction

B. The Nature of Abiding

1. A Present, Continuous Reality

a. Present

b. Continuous^A.

2. A Mutual Experience

a. Involving Us with God, Son and Father^B 24b, 28

b. Involving Us with God, the Holy Spirit^C 27

3. An Earnest of Eternity 23b-24a, 25

a. Eternally Abiding

b. Eternity Now^D.

C. The Fruit of Abiding

1. True to the Truth

a. Living the Truth^E 23b-24a

b. Defending the Truth^F 27

2. The Confidence in Christ

a. Day of the Lord 28

b. No Shock, No Shame

3. Practising Righteousness^G.

D. Conclusion

^A Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20

^B John 15:1-4; Colossians 3:8-10

^C Titus 3:5-6

^D John 17:3

^E 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24

^F John 14:6, 16:13; Ephesians 4:11-13

^G Matthew 5:6

A. Introduction

1. over July and August we are looking at this book of first John
 - a. specifically, each week at one of a number of tests
 - b. each of which provides a test of a Christian
 - c. one preacher describes these tests as “How to Know that You Know”-^{2}.
 - d. each is a very personal tests by I can examine myself
 - e. tests to see if I am indeed a child of God
 - (A) test 1 was, ‘How do I deal with sin?’
 - (B) test 2 was, ‘Am I obedient?’
 - (C) test 3 was, ‘Do I love other believers?’
 - f. the title of today’s sermon could be ‘The Test of Mutual Abiding’,
 - (A) or to put it in the form of a question
 - (B) ‘Am I abiding in God, and He in me?’

2. Scripture Reading

1 John 2:18-29

3. today we are only going to look at the last 6 or 7 verses of that reading
 - a. and centre our thoughts upon them as follows:
 - b. our abiding relationship with God is intended to be
 - (A) a present, continuous reality
 - (B) a mutual experience
 - (C) an earnest of eternity
 - c. such abiding has demonstrable results
 - (A) holding onto the truth
 - (B) awaiting Christ’s return with confidence
 - (C) practising righteousness

B. The Nature of Abiding, 1. A Present, Continuous Reality

1. Present

- a. did you notice that most of this passage is in the present tense – it tells of what is – not what was, not what will

be – focuses on 'now'

b. it is speaking about how things stand at this instant

- (A) verse 18, 'it is the last hour ... antichrist comes'
- (B) verse 20, 'you have an anointing ... you all know'
- (C) verse 23, 'whoever denies ... the one who confesses'
- (D) verse 24, 'what you heard ... abides in you'
- (E) verse 25, 'this is the promise'
- (F) verse 27, 'the anointing ... abides in you'
- (G) verse 27, 'His anointing ... teaches you'
- (H) verse 27, 'is true and is not a lie'
- (I) verse 28, 'abide in Him' – a command for the present
- (J) verse 29, 'who practices righteousness is born'

c. so abiding then,

- (A) is not something we have done and finished with in the past
- (B) is not something which is left for the future
- (C) it is a 'now' experience, the continuance on into the future of a state that has existed in the past
- (D) abiding is something that is intended to commence at conversion and continue until we are taken into the very presence of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

2. Continuous

a. I have used that word advisedly

- (A) 'continuing' or 'continual' would describe a relationship which goes on and on but which can be intermittently interrupted
- (B) but abiding in its intent does not admit interruption

b. on God's part, it is certainly true, "... for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,'" (Hebrews 13:5) and Jesus' closing promise was, "... lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

c. nevertheless, these words are written to us, because so often we allow our practice to fall short of God's intent

C. The Nature of Abiding, 2. A Mutual Experience

1. Involving Us with God, Son and Father. vv 24b, 28

a. ... in the Son and in the Father, verses 24b, 28:

- b. 24b ... If what you have heard from the beginning should abide in you, you yourselves shall abide both in the Son and in the Father. ... 28 So now, children, abide in Him. RGH
- c. we are exhorted to abide in Christ
 - (A) Jesus says in John 15:4, "Abide in me, and I in you"
 - (B) but, we ask, how?
 - (C) it begins with the acceptance of the gospel as our life foundation
 - (D) John 15:1-2b gives another step, one somewhat more painful, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ... every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit."
 - (E) we must submit to God's pruning-shears so he may cut away all that is diseased, maimed, bug-ridden; everything keeping us from the abiding relationship for which He has designed us
 - (F) God's written truth confronts us with what needs pruning in Colossians 3:8-10: "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"
- d. since eternal God's purpose is that there be mutual abiding
 - (A) which means, He abides in us, and we abide in Him
 - (B) and since God is so holy that He cannot tolerate sin
 - (C) and since God is true and truth
 - (D) then, how can that abiding fellowship exist unbroken
 - (1) if there is uncleansed, unforgiven sin in our lives?
 - (2) if there is falseness in our hearts or on our lips?
 - (3) hence the first test given was "How do I deal with my sin?"
 - (4) which involves the working of the Holy Spirit within us
- e. so then, abiding is a mutual experience involving us not only with the Son and the Father, but also ...

2. Involving Us with God, the Holy Spirit. v 27

- a. 27 And you received the Anointing from Him (it (or, He) abides in you) and you have no need that anyone should teach you; but as His Anointing teaches you concerning all, even what is true and not false; accordingly even as He taught you, abide in Him. RGH
- b. what is the 'Anointing'? (some of your translations may be 'unction')
 - (A) it is not the endowment of an ability or experience
 - (1) these verses make clear it is a Person indwelling you life

- (2) that Person is the Holy Spirit of the Triune God
- (B) this anointing, the Spirit's indwelling, is not restricted
 - (1) to particularly gifted Christians, nor
 - (2) to those engaged in preaching, teaching or other service
- (C) no; God's Holy Spirit dwells in each and every believer from the moment that they are saved
- (D) "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5-6)
- c. take note, then that it is the Holy Spirit who enables
 - (A) – activates, one could say – our abiding with the Triune God,
 - (B) but He is also the One who teaches us spiritual truth
 - (C) and to this we shall return in a few moments

D. The Nature of Abiding – Three, An Earnest of Eternity. vv 23b-24a, 25

1. Eternally Abiding

- a. 23b ... the one confessing the Son, also has the Father. 24a Let that which you yourselves have heard from the beginning, abide in you. If what you have heard from the beginning should abide in you, ... RGH
- b. as we have repeatedly noted, John is speaking to Christians
- c. Christians are those who have heard the gospel of God's salvation in Jesus Christ and who have taken hold of its truth for themselves
- d. the gospel abides in them – working its continuing work of salvation – accompanies God who Himself abides in them, and they in God
- e. this abiding – beginning at conversion, continuous throughout life, is a profound guarantee of the future, verse 25: Now this is the promise which He promised to us, the life eternal. RGH
- f. we cannot call a thing "THE eternal life" if it exists apart from the abiding relationship with the Eternal God
- g. any everlasting existence other than this is hell

2. Eternity Now

- a. pause and think upon this for a moment
 - (A) at this present instant, all those who by faith are in Christ Jesus
 - (B) are inextricably joined by their mutual abiding with eternal God
 - (C) that relationship transcends time and space

- (D) in a spiritual sense even while we are yet in the world, we are not of it because we abide in God and He in us
- (E) heaven and eternal life for the believer have already started
- b. as Jesus declares, "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

E. The Fruit of Abiding – One, True to the Truth

1. Living the Truth..... vv 23b-24a
 - a. we have already briefly referred to these words, 23b ... the one confessing the Son, also has the Father. 24a Let that which you yourselves have heard from the beginning, abide in you. If what you have heard from the beginning should abide in you, ... RGH
 - b. from a human perspective Christianity is based upon a faith-trust relationship in Jesus Christ as Saviour
 - (A) but as well the Christian faith is founded upon a body of truth, and our acknowledging that truth by 'confessing the Son'
 - (B) as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..."
 - c. but here, John
 - (A) is not talking about a specific confession made; nor a salvation prayer prayed; nor some experience in the dim, distant past
 - (B) but, rather, the test of our Christianity
 - (C) which is that the truth that brought us to salvation
 - (D) must be an abiding, present reality in us and shaping our lives
 - (1) "and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Colossians 3:10)
 - (2) "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." (Ephesians 4:24)
 - d. so John, therefore, encourages us, "Let that which you yourselves have heard (the gospel message of truth) from the beginning (from when you were saved), abide in you."

2. Defending the Truth v 27
 - a. we have already read from verse 27, ... His Anointing teaches you concerning all, even what is true and not false;

accordingly ...RGH

- b. this Anointing, this indwelling of the Holy Spirit,
 - (A) is what guides and empowers us in the matter of truth
 - (B) it is by His strength that we are enabled to abide in the truth, to make God's truth part and parcel of our lives
 - (C) just as the man Jesus of Nazareth, being the Son of God, was the embodiment of truth as He taught while He dwelt on earth: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father but through me"
 - (D) so the Holy Spirit of God is the guardian of truth in the believer's life: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." (John 16:13)
- c. the Holy Spirit who brings us to know Truth – the Truth in Person, Christ Jesus Himself – is the One who preserves the believer in that Truth in a world that seeks to divert him from the truth
- d. now it would be easy for us to interpret this and to say, well, now I do not need to pay any attention to people and to books that will help me know the truth, I do not need to come to church, or even, I do not need to read the Bible ... I can get it all directly from the Holy Spirit
- e. but that denies the Scriptures, e.g., in Ephesians 4:11-13, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ."
- f. no, the context here in first John shows that this Anointing is
 - (A) to provide the believer with discernment in a world where there is a jumble of voices, some true, some false
 - (B) to give us a 'spiritual nose' to distinguish between what savours of Jesus Christ and that which is rotten

F. The Fruit of Abiding – Two, Confidence in Christ

- 1. The Day of the Lord v 28
 - a. 28 So now, children, abide in Him, in order that if He should appear we should have boldness and should not be ashamed on account of Him in His appearing. RGH
 - b. the Bible describes the day of Lord, the time when Christ shall return and the time of judgement begins, as fearsome

c. but, for the believer, because He is in Christ, it is not one to strike fear, but to bring joy; not to be faced with timidity, but boldness

2. No Shock, No Shame

a. there should be no shock to us whose life has been spent in mutual abiding – we in God, and God in us – for God is our Father

b. no shame, because we stand complete in Christ's righteousness

c. so Fanny Crosby could write, and we can join in to sing the great truth that we look to Christ's return not with fear, but with joy

When my lifework is ended and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see,
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me. ...

...

In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight–
But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. ^{–{3}}.

G. The Fruit of Abiding, Three Practising Righteousness

1. finally, verse 29 says, **If you should know that He is righteous, then you know also that everyone who practises righteousness has been begotten from Him.** RGH

a. there is a righteousness, not that which makes us right before God, but the practical expression of our abiding relationship with God, with His truth abiding in us, with the Holy Spirit abiding and working in us

b. in that we live our lives seeking to please God and not ourselves

c. Jesus said, **"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."** (Matthew 5:6)

d. to this point, Lord willing, we shall return another day.

H. Conclusion

1. God will do His part in this matter of abiding; there is now a responsibility on us His children ... there is little that I can do but close with John's own words: **"And now, little children, abide in Him ..."**

1. © 2015 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory "of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus ii.13). Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard version, used by permission.
2. David Hoke, Kerux sermon #2631
3. '*My Saviour First of All,*' by Fanny (Frances) Jane Crosby (1820-1915)