

Having examined last week our Savior's exhortation to abide in Him, we come this week to His related command to abide in His love—if you remember, by "abide" is meant "to remain"—thus, to abide in Christ is to remain in Him by faith, and to abide in His love is to remain conscious of that love—these two are closely related—as we continually trust in Christ, we must ever be aware or mindful of His love for us—we must abide in Him and His love...

CHS—"The love of Christ to his people is the sweetest, fullest, and most profitable theme that a preacher can bring before his people, and it is always a suitable and seasonable subject, whatever the condition of the congregation may be."

And thus, I want to come this morning, to verses 9-11, and our theme—Abiding in Christ's Love—wand we will do so with the help of three main headings—The Command, Means, and Result of Abiding in Christ's Love...

- I. The Command to Abide in Christ's Love—v9
- II. The Means to Abide in Christ's Love—v10
- III. The Result of Abiding in Christ's Love—v11

I. The Command to Abide in Christ's Love—v9

1. Our Savior begins by stating—"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you"—He then adds—"abide in My love..."
2. This is a sweet command—"abide in My love"—you would think there would be no need for this command...
3. And yet, our Savior would not only have His people abide in Him (where they will find safety and strength), but also His love (where they will find joy satisfaction)...
4. Thus the question becomes—What exactly did our Savior mean by abiding, remaining, or continually in His love...
5. Well, before I suggest an answer to this question, let me rather briefly clarify what is not meant by this command...
6. Our Savior is NOT commanding us to keep ourselves in a state or condition that deserves or merits His love (we did nothing to earn His love and thus we can do nothing to keep His love)...
7. Nor do I think our Savior means—we are to abide or continue in our love to Him (though this is a truth of Scripture)...
8. But by abiding in His love our Savior meant—we are to remain in the awareness and realization of His love for us...
9. Alexander Maclaren—"By abiding in His love is not meant our continuance in the attitude of love to Him, but rather our continuance in the sweet and sacred atmosphere of His love to us..."
10. Melancthon Jacobus—"To abide in Christ means to abide in the knowledge and acknowledgment of the love which Christ bears to us—to continue to enjoy it, and to glory in it..."
11. To be more specific—I suggest abiding in Christ's love entails at least four things—we understand it, we ponder it, we believe it, and experience it...
12. [1] We understand it—that is, to abide in Christ's love necessitates that we understand the nature of that love...
13. Our Savior describes His love, at least in part, in the first half of v9—"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you..."
14. In other words, there is a similarity between the way the Father loved Christ, and the way Christ loved His people...
15. Thus, in order to assist us in abiding in His love, our Savior describes that love that we may better understand it...
16. Let me suggest three similar ways the Father loved Christ, and that Christ also loved His people—eternally, publically, and enduringly...

17. [a] Eternally—that is, the Father always loved His Son, and so too, Christ always loved His people from eternity...
18. And so, if we are to abide in that love, we must be mindful of its duration—that Christ always loved His people...
19. This is in part what it means to abide in Christ's love, it's to understand that it always existed, from eternity...
20. [b] Publically—that is, the Father openly declared His love for His Son at various times, esp at His baptism...
21. And so too, our Savior continually displayed His love for His disciples both by words and works—He showed them His love...
22. And yet, out of all the various ways our Savior showed His love, none was more evident or public, than the cross...
23. This was the clearest and most public display of Christ's love for His people—the cross was a pulpit from which He preached love...
24. Now our Savior describes His love in the past tense—"I have loved you"—referring to His life and death (He speaks of His death as if its already happened)...
25. And so, if Christians are to abide in His love, they must be knowledgeable about the nature and effects of the cross...
26. We must always and ever stay near the cross, for it's here at the cross, that Christ's love is most publically known...
27. Dear brethren, simply put—if we are ever to abide in Christ's love, we must abide beneath the shadow of the cross...
28. CHS—"The window through which you can look into God's heart is the cross of Christ. If you want to read the love of God, go and look through the wounds of the Savior..."
29. [c] Enduringly—by this I mean, the Father always loved Christ, throughout His life, including on the cross...
30. Now, it's true, for those dark hours upon the cross, the Father withheld the sense of that love to His human soul...
31. And yet, there is another sense in which He never loved Him more than when He obeyed Him on the cross...
32. And so, Christ always loves His disciples—His love for them is fixed and unchanging—it is ongoing and constant...
33. Thus, to abide in Christ's love is to understand that love—it's to have a clear grasp on what that loves entails...
34. It's to understand it is eternal, public, costly, redemptive, underserved, permanent, unending, enduring, and abundant...
35. Eph.3:14-19—"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge..."
36. [2] We ponder it—to ponder is "to think deeply or meditate upon"—it's to allow a truth to linger in the mind...
37. Dear brethren, regardless of what we read from His word, we must find our way to His love, and deeply ponder it...
38. Every other truth relates to this—He elected us because He loved us, He died for us because He loved us, He saved us because He loved us, and He will glorify us because He loves us...
39. There is a true sense in which the entirety could be summarized into one truth—God's love for sinners in Christ...
40. Oh my dear brethren, when was the last time that we gave a substantial amount of time to ponder on the love of Christ...
41. I suggest that every day, as we read through our Bibles, we find some statement of Christ's gracious love for us...
42. [3] We believe it—by this I mean, to abide in Christ's love necessarily includes we are assured of His love for us...

43. Dear brethren, surely this is an obvious point—knowledge of Christ's love is useless, if it isn't embraced personally...
44. The knowledge that God loves sinners, is a grand truth, but brethren, even more grand is the truth that He loves me...
45. Gal.2:20—"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me..."
46. But how can we be assured that Christ loves us, not with that general love He has for the world, but with a special love...
47. Well simply put, this special love is for His sheep, His bride, and His friends—are you His sheep, bride, and friends...
48. Have you come to know yourself as a needy and helpless sheep, who put's all of His confidence in the Good Shepherd...
49. Are you His poor and needy bride, who owes all that she has to His beloved Groom, who has graciously paid her debt...
50. Are you His friend, although who were by nature His enemy—do you love Him and walk with Him in fellowship...
51. If these things are true of you in any real sense, then be assured, He loves you, not merely generally, but specially...
52. [4] We experience it—that is, to abide in Christ's love is to bask in the warmth of that love—to expose our souls to it...
53. Abiding in Christ's love is far more than merely growing in understanding, but it's enjoying and rejoicing in that love...
54. For example, think of a person who has a broad knowledge of the Dominican beaches and the Caribbean Sea...
55. He may have seen many pictures of the clear, light-blue water, with its clean white sand, and dark-blue skies...
56. He may have read about the 72 degree water, the smell of sea salt, the warm breeze, and the delicious food...
57. But brethren, all of this knowledge is merely theoretical—for all of his understanding, he has never experienced it...
58. Now take that same man and give him a ticket to Dominican Republic, and let him stand for himself in the water...
59. His knowledge has now passed from the merely theoretical to the experiential—he now knows the Caribbean Sea...
60. So too, our Savior is exhorting His beloved disciples to go behind merely learning more about His love, but to venture out further into that love...
61. You know, there are fewer things I am more afraid of that deep water—nothing frightens me more than the thought of being stranding in the middle of the ocean...
62. And yet, dear brethren, nothing renders me more joyful than the thought of venturing further into these endless waters...
63. Jude 1:21—"keep yourselves in the love of God"—that is, keep yourselves in the warmth and awareness of His love...
64. For example, let's say the felt realization of Christ's love is like the sun, that brings warmth and joy to our souls...
65. To abide in that love is to come out of the shadows and to expose yourself to that love—to allow it to warm the soul...
66. CHS—"It is one thing to hear the outward sound of love, it is another thing to feel an inward sense of it. It is pleasant to hear the rippling of the brook; but if you are dying of thirst that will not refresh you if you are unable to drink of the stream..."

II. The Means to Abide in Christ's Love—v10

1. Our Savior not only gives the command to abide in His love, but, provides a primary means to abide in that love...

2. Now, some of you will remember that to "keep His commandments" means—you cherish and obey His commandments...
3. The Greek word rendered "keep" means to "cherish or treasure" and "obey or comply with"—because you treasure them who obey them..
4. By "commandments" is meant the moral law or Ten Commandments, couched in a distinctly New Covenant setting...
5. That means—there's the addition of NC ordinances (baptism and Lord's Supper), the change from the 7th to 1st day Sabbath...
6. In addition to these positive or additional laws, there's the example of our Savior's love (which He calls the new commandment)...
7. This is what our Savior meant by "My commandments"—and Christians treasure and comply with these commands...
8. Now, our Savior also speaks of His "Father's commandments"—which include our Savior paying our sin debt...
9. In other words—our Savior came to earth to obey His Father's commands, which include His life and death...
10. He kept these commandments willingly and perfectly, and thus, lived in the constant awareness of His Father's love...
11. Thus, our Savior says there's a connection between our obedience and the knowledge and enjoyment of His love...
12. This then brings us to this obvious and important question—How does our obedience relate to abiding in His love...
13. [1] Undealt with sin hides God's smile from us—that is, failure to keep His commandments, hinders the sense of His love...
14. Now, listen carefully to what I am and am not saying—I am not saying, our disobedience means God no longer loves us...
15. But what I am saying is—our disobedience hinders the awareness of love—it lessens our sense of His love...
16. For example, the sun may be shining in the afternoon, even though clouds may hide from us the sense of it's heat...
17. So too, when we sin and fail to deal with it, God may, for a season, hide from us the felt SENSE of His love...
18. But this doesn't mean, He doesn't love us, but it simply means our behavior affects the degree we know His love...
19. Ps.51:11-12—"Do not cast me away from Your presence...Restore to me the joy of Your salvation"—he lost his joy not salvation...
20. But why did he lose his joy, but because God removed the sense of His presence—or, the felt awareness of His love...
21. [2] To walk in holiness is to walk in fellowship with Christ—the closer we walk with Christ, the more we know Christ...
22. And my dear friends, the more intimately we know Christ, the more we will know His love and abide in it...
23. Jn.14:21—"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loved Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him (1Jn.1:7)..."
24. Those who keep His commandments as an expression of love, will be loved by the Father and the Son—that is, such a person who come to know His love more intimately...
25. Or perhaps we could put it like this—those who lovingly obey His commandments, will abide in Christ's love...
26. "I will love him and manifest Myself to him"—that is, I will make Myself known by him more deeply and intimately...
27. [3] To walk in obedience is to hunger and thirst for Christ and His love—it's to desire to know that love more...
28. A holy heart is a hungry heart—hungry to walk with Christ and abide in His love—it's not satisfied with anything less...

29. Phil.3:10—"that I may know Him"—that is, it was his heart's desire to know Christ more intimately and personally...
30. Dear friends, one reason you may not abide in Christ's love to a greater degree, is because there is no hunger for Him...
31. [4] To walk in obedience brings pleasure to God and is rewarded by God—Scripture often speaks of obedience as pleasing God...
32. Heb.13:16—"But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased"—He finds pleasure...
33. Now surely brethren we understand—God isn't so pleased with our obedience so as to justify us by it (in this sense, nothing but Christ's obedience pleases God)...
34. But our Father in heaven is pleased with the obedience of His beloved children, when that is done by faith and for His glory...
35. And how does our Father respond to that obedience—well, in part, He responds by rewarding His beloved children...
36. Ps.19:11—"Moreover by them (His commandments) Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward..."
37. Now again, not a reward in the sense that we've earned something, but in the sense, that God delights in obedience...
38. And what is one way in which He rewards His obedient children—He makes known to them His intimate love...
39. Ps.25:14—"The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant (He will make them know His covenant love)..."

III. The Result of Abiding in Christ's Love—v11

1. V11—"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full..."
2. Before I come to the subject of Christian joy, let me say a few things about this phrase—"These things I have spoken to you..."
3. I suggest by "these things" our Savior refers to everything He's said in this chapter, and especially to that which immediately precedes...
4. In words—fewer things will more increase true joy in the soul, then abiding in Christ's love by humble obedience...
5. A primary purpose of our Savior's command to abide in His love, was that His people would know true joy...
6. Thus, before we examine three things about true joy, let me attempt a simple definition or description of what joy is...
7. True Christian joy is the Spirit's work within our hearts, wherein we take delight and find pleasure in God and the things of God...
8. True joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to find delight and satisfaction in God and His salvation...
9. Thus, true joy is spiritual, rooted in the heart, focused on God, and able to exist in the midst of outward difficulty...
10. [1] It's His—"that My joy"—how is this joy His—well, He experienced it, purchased it, and applies it by His Spirit...
11. V10—"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love..."
12. [2] It remains—"that My joy may remain in you"—the word rendered "remain" is the same word rendered "abide"...
13. True joy remains as long as the object of that joy remains, and because true joy has Christ as an object, it always remains...
14. His joy is able to service through the ups and downs of this life, because it is not dependant upon these things...

15. [3] It's abundant—"that your joy may be full"—that is, that our souls may be complete or filled to overflowing...
16. Notice our Savior first speaks of His joy then our Joy—"that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full..."
17. In other words—though this joy comes from Him, it's experienced in our hearts, and thus in this sense, becomes ours...
18. Now, brethren it is simply amazing for us to consider, that our Savior would have our hearts overflowing with joy...
19. Lesson 1—Love, law, and joy go together—people love to talk about Christ's love and joy, but sometimes shy away from His law...
20. These three verses (9-11) bring all three of these together—Christ desires us to know His love and His joy...
21. But—what is the one way here provided for us to experience these—obedience to His commandments or law...
22. Oh my friends, never believe the modern-day lie, that God's law is someone contrary to His love and His joy...
23. Lesson 2—Love, law, and joy, are from Christ—notice each of these are His, v9—"My love" v10—"My commandments" v11—"My joy"...
24. This means, He alone truly love us, has a right to command us, and He alone can give us, true and lasting joy...
25. Oh dear Christian, seek these things nowhere else but in Christ—He alone perfect loves you and can give you lasting joy...
26. But let me end by speaking to you who know nothing of this love and joy—and here's why, who have broken His law...
27. Thus for you, the remedy is not to keep the law, but instead it's to look to Christ as your law-keeper—who perfectly obeyed in your place...
28. You are in the darkness of your depravity—come out from this today, and bask in the warm light of His love...
29. You are on the shores of depravity—come out into the waters of His grace—taste and see that the Lord is good...
30. Venture out into the waters of His love as foremostly evidenced at the cross—see there Christ's love for you...
31. Christ too entered an ocean, but in one real sense it was an ocean of God's wrath—the waters of God's just anger...
32. And do you know why He did this—so that you, if you trust Him, can enter, not the waters of God's wrath, but love...