

BELIEVE, LOVE, and ABIDE!

(Scripture: 1 John 3:22,23)

Introduction: If you look at 1 Corinthians chapter 13 talks so much about love, but it completes that thought with an interesting last verse.

1 Corinthians 13:13.

13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Likewise, we can see three important aspects of our faith in the following verses: they are **faith, love** and **abiding in the Spirit**. If we have these three, we have it all! Before we dig into these three important areas, let us look at the reason why our prayers are answered or not answered.

1 John 3: 22

22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

From Genesis to Revelation we see one thing in common. Blessings flow in our lives when we obey the Word of God, and we reap curses if we disobey. The history of Israel demonstrates when and how God's blessings and curses flow.

Whatever we ask, we receive from the Lord because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Is it any wonder that our God is blessing this church beyond our expectation, and that only proves that we are striving hard to keep His commandments and do those things that pleases Him? Let's continue to keep up the good work. Be zealous to keep His commandments that our prayers may be answered always.

Why do we strive to live holy? Because it is the right thing to do, and also that God may answer our prayers always! His commandments are not hard to follow. As a matter of fact, all the commandments come under the following one verse in 1 John 3:23: Obey them so that our prayers may be answered always.

1 John 3:23.

23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

!. We must believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ!

The word "believe" comes from the Greek word *Pisteuo* to believe, entrust! What does it mean by believing on His name? His name stands for Christ's essence, substance, His life, His death for our sins, His resurrection, His position next to His Father, His Lordship, and His sovereignty as the king of all creation! Believing on His name is not just believing on His death on the cross for our sins, but rather believing on His eternal preexistence with His Father, as the Son of God, and believing on His every attribute,

and His creative power of all created things, and His Lordship over it! We must believe everything what God, and the Word of God stands for!

Believing on the name is not just acknowledging the existence of our Lord, but trusting Him for everything. He is our Righteousness, our Rock of salvation, our Deliverer, our life, and because He lives, we shall live also. He is our example, paradigm, the Chief Shepherd! Believing means not only trusting Him, but to follow Him, and obey His commandments. It is no use calling Him Lord, Lord, when we don't care to implement His words in our lives!

Finally, believing is yielding our life totally to Him. Believing is trusting, and trusting leads to being part of that person! If you really believe a person, you will love that person dearly! So believing automatically leads us to loving, and that is what is commanded in the latter part of verse 23!

II. Love one another

This is so important because without love we cannot come near God! Steadfast love toward Him, and with ALL people, that includes our enemies also, are the foundation of our living! We can actually see the spiritual growth and maturity of a believer if we follow this commandment of love. Those who cannot love ALL will become highly judgmental, and will move only with those they can relate to. They will run away from those who do not think like them. They just cannot relate to people who are different from them. Christ loved everyone, including His enemies, and He prayed for them. Likewise, we must set aside our biases, prejudices and judgements, and must love everyone, irrespective of their strange personality.

Christian life depends on right belief and right conduct combined. We cannot have one without the other. There cannot be Christian belief without proper Christian conduct. Likewise, there cannot be just right conduct without Christian belief. Our belief is not real belief unless it demonstrates in action; likewise, if our action does not stem out of the unconditional love of Christ, it will turn out to be a favor eventually, or quid pro quo. Our actions must stem out of our observance of how Christ walked on this earth.

1 John 3:24.

24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

III. Abide in the Spirit!

Jesus has spoken so much about abiding in John chapter 15! Let me just read some of it quickly to bring it to your remembrance!

John 15:4-9.

4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

9“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

10If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

First of all, God has to come and abide in us! It is not like the Old Testament period where the Spirit of God sat upon the mighty men of God temporarily, and then left. But now, God abides in us permanently, and the Spirit of Christ in us is our eternal hope of glory!

But we must abide in Him also, or else we will become dry branches, that are gathered to be burnt. If He abides in us, and we abide in Him, we will ask what we desire, and it will be done for us, if that desire is according to the will of God. If all our prayers are answered by our Lord, whether the answer is yes or no, it is a good sign that we are abiding in Him! If we abide in Him, we will bear much fruit. Our Heavenly Father is indeed glorified, if we bear much fruit of love because God is love!

Jesus wants us to abide in His love! How? By keeping His commandments of love! It is indeed all about relationship! In order to keep our relationship going, we must abide in God’s love, and must love one another. If we cannot abide in Christ, we cannot love either, and therefore our prayers may not be answered. Let us examine ourselves. Do we keep His commandment of love or not? If we do, we will abide in Him and our prayers will be answered according to His will. If not, see where you are holding your love, and from whom?

It is a very good exercise to go through the “sermon on the mount” checklist – it’s various components of love. Just like the car parts in engine, we have to make sure that we are aligned with the Sermon on the Mount. What is your anger level, your judgement of others, your forgiveness tolerance, your grudge level, any form of adultery in your relationship, is your answer filled with truth of yes or no, do you really love your enemies etc. Every commandment mentioned is very important, and we must fine tune ourselves and obey in order to love one another. Every word Jesus spoke meant to bring love within us. If we ignore His teaching, we ignore the very dynamics of love!

Believing, loving, and abiding, these three commandments go hand in hand just as faith, hope, and love!

The Spirit is given to us not only as witness, but as our eternal companion and life. Let us not grieve that Spirit in any way. Let us abide in Him, and obey His commandments, and love Him dearly, and love one another. This is indeed the will of God for us! God wants us to believe, and trust Him fully, love one another, and abide in His Spirit. These three components are mentioned in psalm 91 also.

Psalm 91:9-12.

⁹ For you have made the LORD, my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

¹⁰ No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near your tent.

¹¹ For He will give His angels charge concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.

¹² They will bear you up in their hands,
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.

Psalm 91:14-16.

¹⁴ "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him *securely* on high, because he has known My name.

¹⁵ "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.

¹⁶ "With a long life I will satisfy him
And let him see My salvation."

Here we can see faith, love, and intimate relationship to know God's love, which is abiding with each other! I have preached countless sermons but when I am gone that even if you don't remember any of my sermons you should remember this particular message: faith, love, and relationship of abiding in Christ by keeping His commandment of love.

Conclusion:

Let me conclude with 1 Corinthians 13:13

13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

- **Christian life** is all about believing Christ and following Him. It is all about relationship! We must love everyone, no matter how terrible the other person is!

- **Christian life** is all about abiding in the Holy Spirit and obeying His voice eternally.
He is our hope of eternal life! Christ, the hope of our glory!
- **Christian life** is as easy as ABC or 1, 2, 3.
Just focus on trusting and believing our Lord Jesus Christ, love everyone, and abide in the Holy Spirit. He will lead us into the right path, and all our prayers will be answered! This is how you will experience/feel the actual spiritual growth!
Pray that you will grow very strong in faith, love, and abiding in the Holy Spirit!

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