



CHRIST CHURCH PRAYER GUIDE

John

ABIDING
IN CHRIST

FALL 2023

Introduction

We have recently finished the sermon series on John which included Jesus' seven "I AM" statements. We will be using those statements as a guide this week as we pray. We want to see and cultivate transformed lives— as individuals and as a congregation—so we are asking God for an abiding and relational knowledge of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to abide in Christ?

In a sermon, Pastor Bob gave a list of terms to help us grasp the meaning of the word "abide":

- To connect with Christ
- To be attached to him
- To hang on to him
- To talk to him
- To live with him
- To worship him
- To lean on him
- To ask of him
- To confess and repent of sin
- To wait on him for answers to prayer
- To have faith in him
- To trust him

This week, we will focus on one "I AM" statement each day. We will worship him for who he is, thank him for what he does, and ask him to transform us. We desire that God would work in us so that we abide in him daily in order to bear much fruit, that our joy would be full and our love for one another would grow. We also want to do all he commands (John 15).

Behold—The Man!

Each day, we will look at who Christ says he is. We will behold him, which is to say that we will fix our eyes on him with "unceasing interest, deepening in (our) connection into love and joy"¹ of him.



1 "What Does Beholding Mean?," Bible Definition and References, biblestudytools.com.

SUNDAY

Behold—The Bread of Life!

JOHN 6:35

One day, Jesus took five loaves of bread and two fish, gave thanks for the food, and then fed the large crowd that had been following him. The next day, the people came to him looking for more bread, but Jesus knew their hearts. He desired that the people shift their focus from the barley loaves from the day before to the spiritual food that he wanted to give them. He desires the same for us. Jesus, the bread of life, reminds us that if we eat his bread (come to him in faith), we will not hunger. If we believe in him, we will not thirst.

As we abide in him, we come to him and believe in him.

Praise

- He is the bread of life.
- He is the living bread.
- He is the one who came down from heaven and gave life to the world.
- He is the bread that strengthens our hearts.

Thanksgiving

- The Father gave the true bread from heaven.
- We do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.
- There is food that endures to eternal life.
- Jesus came down from heaven to do the will of him who sent him.

Ask God

- Teach us to trust him for our daily bread, for all of our daily needs.
- Give us insight into the motivations of our hearts. Are we living to put bread on the table or are we living to do his work which has eternal significance?
- Work in us so that nothing else becomes our ultimate bread.

Children's Prayer

- You are the bread of life.
- Thank you, Jesus, for coming down from heaven to do God's work.
- Help us believe in you.

Scripture References

Ps. 104:15; Matt. 4:4, 6:11; John 6:27, 32–33, 35, 38, 51

MONDAY

Behold—The Light of the World!

JOHN 8:12, 9:5

Jesus spoke to the crowd, telling them that he was the light of the world. Then, he told his disciples that as long as he was in the world, he was the light of the world. “Christ in calling himself the light expresses that he is . . . most excellent and glorious.”² To the world, he announced that “he is the fountain of light, enlightening every man. What a dungeon would the world be without the sun! So would it be without Christ by whom light came into the world.”²

As we abide in Christ, we will follow him. To follow him is not to absentmindedly walk behind him, dawdling along the way. Instead, it is as Charles Spurgeon said: “[to] come straightaway, [to] come at all cost, [to] come without a question, [to] quit old haunts, [to] follow [our] leader without stipulation or reserve.” We are to follow him with resolve, purpose, and focus.

Praise

- He is our light and salvation, the true light, and the everlasting light.
- He is light, there is no darkness in him.

Thanksgiving

- He lightens our darkness. In his light, we see light.
- His word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light to our path.
- As we follow him, we will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.
- Someday we will not need the sun or a lamp for he will be our light.

Ask God

- Help us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light.
- Help us walk as children of the light, and have fellowship with one another.
- Work in us to become ever increasingly the light of the world—that we would let our light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven.

Children’s Prayer

- You are the true light.
- Thank you that your word is a light to our path.
- Help us to let our light shine for you.

Scripture References

Pss. 18:28, 27:1, 36:7, 119:105; Isa. 60:19; Matt. 5:14, 16; John 1:9, 8:12; Rom. 13:12b; Eph. 5:8; 1 John 1:5, 7; Rev. 22:5

2 www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/john/8.html.

TUESDAY

Behold—The Door!

JOHN 10:7, 9

A door is “a place of transition, an entryway, a gate, a portal.”³ We use doors in our daily lives. We transition from the outside of our home to the inside by going through the outer door. All who have been saved by faith go through the Door, through Christ, for he is the only way to salvation.

Because of him, we have undergone a transition, a change from one condition to another.⁴ Today, we will focus on a few ways that Christ has changed us.

We thank him that he transformed us . . .

From death to life
From a slave to sin to a slave to righteousness
From one who was lost to one who was found
From the old self to a new creation
From deserving eternal punishment to receiving eternal life
From unbelief to belief
From his enemy to his friend
From condemned to justified
From sinfulness to righteousness

This, and so much more Christ did for us. Our response to his goodness to us—*Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good!*

As we enter by him, we are saved. As we abide in Christ, we find pasture which means we find safety, rest, care, and provision. “Pastures are places of refreshment, security, and satisfaction. . . . Jesus uses the image of pastures to indicate the supply of all needs for the saved.”⁵ We, as his people, can rest in His green pasture, knowing that he supplies all our needs.

Children’s Prayers

- You are the door.
- Thank you that you change us and care for us.
- Help us to look for you for all that we need.

Scripture References

Ps. 107:1; Matt. 25:46; Luke 15:5, 19; John 6:29, 15:14; Rom. 5:10, 5:18; 6:15–23; 2 Cor. 5:17, 21; Phil. 4:19; Col. 3:9–10; Heb. 3:12; 2 Tim. 1:10

³ *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1998) 215.

⁴ Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

⁵ *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 630.

WEDNESDAY

Behold—The Good Shepherd!

JOHN 10:11, 14

In the article, “Can Sheep Live Without a Shepherd?,” the author answers with a definite no. “[Domesticated] sheep cannot live without the shepherd. They are entirely dependent on the shepherd for everything. They require constant care and watching over. So leaving them unattended can put them at risk and greatly endanger their lives. . . . Without a shepherd, sheep are prone to wandering off from the flock.”⁶ God says we are the sheep of his pasture. Just as sheep are prone to wander, we, too, are prone to wander, prone to leave the God we love.⁷ Jesus calls his sheep and leads them out. He goes before them and his sheep follow him. He lays down his life for his sheep. What a comfort to know we are always under the tender care of our Good Shepherd.

As we abide in Christ, we know his voice and listen to him.

Praise

- He is the Good Shepherd. He is the Chief Shepherd. He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep.
- He is the shepherd and overseer of our souls.

Thanksgiving

- Christ shepherds his flock in the strength of the Lord. He is our peace; we dwell secure.
- He searches for us—his sheep. He rescues us and feeds us with good pasture. He seeks the lost, and brings back those who have strayed. He binds up the injured and strengthens the weak.
- **For our leaders**—Our pastors and elders willingly and eagerly shepherd our congregation with their oversight and are examples to the flock of Christ Church. We are grateful for the way in which they care for us and that they speak the word of God to us.

Ask God

- Make us rest in green pastures, lead us to still waters, and restore our souls, that his rod would protect us, and his staff would guide and direct us.
- Be our shepherd and carry us forever.
- Help us to make our pastors’ and elders’ work a joy, not a burden, and help us to imitate their faith.

Children’s Prayers

- You are the Good Shepherd.
- Thank you that you are always with us.
- Be our shepherd and carry us.

Scripture References

Pss. 23:1–4, 28:9, 100:3; Ezek. 34:11–16; Mic. 4:4–5, John 10:11, 14; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:7, 17, 20;
1 Peter 2:25, 5:1–4

6 <https://farmingbase.com/can-sheep-live-without-a-shepherd>

7 “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

THURSDAY

Behold—The Resurrection and the Life!

JOHN 11:25

Jesus's friend, Lazarus, had been dead four days when Jesus arrived in Bethany, where Lazarus, and his sisters, Mary and Martha, lived. Martha met him as he came near their town and stated that her brother would not have died if Jesus had been there. After some discussion with her, Jesus said he was the resurrection and the life. By saying this, Jesus declared that he is "the source of life and guarantor of our resurrection from the dead . . . the giver and restorer of life."⁸ Martha responds with words of faith, "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

Praise

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- He is the Author of Life. He is our Life.
- The Spirit raised Christ Jesus from the dead.

Thanksgiving

- He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
- By believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, we have life in his name.
- We were also raised with him through faith.
- Because we have died with him, we will also live with him.
- He gives life to our mortal bodies.

Ask God

- Since we have been raised with Christ, work in us so that we seek the things above, where Christ is, for he is seated at the right hand of God.
- Help us to remember that we have been crucified with Christ, so that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.
- Strengthen us to imitate Christ who, like a grain of wheat fell into the earth, died, and bore much fruit.
- For the unbelievers we know, draw them to Christ so they confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord and then believe in their hearts that God raised him from the dead, so they will be saved.

Children's Prayers

- You are our life.
- Thank you that we have life in your name.
- Help us to believe in Jesus.

Scripture References

John 12:24–26, 20:31; Acts 3:15; Rom. 4:25, 8:11, 10:9; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:12, 3:1, 4; 2 Tim. 2:11; 1 Peter 1:3

FRIDAY

Behold—The Way, the Truth, and the Life!

JOHN 14:6

When Jesus told his disciples he was leaving them, Philip said they didn't know where he was going and they didn't know the way. Jesus answered him by stating that he is the way, the truth, and the life. Christ, as the way, "is the highway spoken of in Isaiah 35:8 . . . he is our way, for we enter by him. . . . He is the true way to life, the only true way; other ways seem right, but the end of them is death."⁹ Christ, as the truth, "is the source and standard of truth, the One whose revelation in Scripture and in nature form a sure foundation on which to stand. . . . He is fully trustworthy."¹⁰

Praise

- He is the only way, and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other way under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
- No one comes to the Father except through Christ. Through him we have access to the Father.
- The Son of God has come and given us understanding, so that we may know him—the True God.
- It is impossible for God to lie.

Thanksgiving

- He opened for us a new and living way through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.
- He shows us the way we should go.
- Though the gate is narrow and the way that leads to life is hard, there are those who find it.
- Jesus, the only Son from the Father, is full of grace and truth. His words are true.
- The Lord is near to all who call on him in truth.

Ask God

- Teach us his way.
- Make our way straight before us.
- Help us to wait for him and keep his way.
- Lead us in his truth and teach us for he is the God of our salvation.
- Cause us to speak the truth in love and put away falsehood.

Children's Prayers

- You are the only way to salvation. You are the True God.
- Thank you that you show us the way we should go.
- Teach us your way.

Scripture References

2 Sam. 7:28; Pss. 5:8, 25:5, 27:11, 37:24, 145:18; Jer. 42:3; Matt. 7:14; John 1:14, 8:31, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:18, 4:15, 25; Heb. 6:18, 10:20; 1 John 5:20

SATURDAY

Behold—The Vine!

JOHN 15:1, 5

Several months ago, Pastor Bob gave a sermon titled, “He’s the Vine,” based on John 15:1–17. Today, we will read some summaries and quotes from his sermon, then we will respond with prayer. There will be a sample prayer after each section, but feel free to respond with your own prayers.

Pastor Bob began his sermon by explaining that Christ is the true vine. This vine will never die, but bears beautiful fruit. Based on this passage, we each have incredible potential to change, to flourish where Christ has placed us. We can change as we are in relationships with others. We can change to glorify God, to have effective prayer lives, and to develop deep friendships. The only way to flourish is to abide in Christ in a non-stop way, to remain connected relationally to Christ. He came to attach us to himself in a vital, constant way.

Prayer

We praise you that you, Christ, are the true vine, and that you, Father, are the vinedresser. We thank you that you bear beautiful fruit always. Thank you for the metaphor that you are the vine and we are the branches which helps us to understand the connection we have with you. Thank you that we have incredible potential to change as we abide in you.

His command for us is to abide in him. This implies three things about himself. The first is that his aim for each of us as a branch is to bear much fruit. His aim is a series of surprising reversals that redeems all that is wrong in us. Can Christ really change us in such a way that we bear much fruit? Can he change a self-centered, anxious, arrogant, unstable whiner, and murmurer to become a mature, self-forgetting, warmly present, stable channel for many to be nourished and blessed? Yes, *he can!* In order for him to change us, we need constant abiding in Christ as a branch is attached to a vine, so that we bear fruit.

Prayer

Forgive us for all the ways in which we guard what is wrong with us from Christ. Forgive us when we doubt that Christ can transform us. Thank you that though I am a sinner who struggles with _____ (name your sin before the Lord), you can change me, so that I can be a blessing to others. Work in me the changes that you see are needed in my life.

The second thing is his way with us. How do we abide in him and flourish for him? By union with him and by the pruning that the Father does in love. His union with us means that we are doing life together with him through difficult things. The hard times in our lives bring out the truth in our hearts so we become aware and can say, “I am not self-sufficient.” As the Father prunes us, he draws very near to us. And it is for the purpose of bearing more fruit. We have some patience; he prunes so we have more. We have a little joy; he prunes us so we have more. We have sorrow, but remain stoic; he prunes us so we can cry. The vinedresser lops off growth, so that the vine is more fruitful. Pruning is necessary.

Prayer

Forgive us when we think we can just abide in Christ on Sundays. Forgive us that we admit too easily that we are self-sufficient. Give us hearts to repent of that, of our pride, of our independent spirit. Help us to remain in union with you in our daily lives. As you prune us, remind us that you are near, and that you cut off growth that needs to go, so that we bear more fruit in order to be a blessing to others.

The third thing is his likeness in us. As we abide in him, we will see answered prayer. We will, out of our relationship with him, pray knowing that he will answer us. As we remain in union with him, the Father will be glorified, for we, his disciples, will become like our teacher. As we abide, we will have the stability that comes from being loved by him. We will know that he loves us with an everlasting love. Through all the heights of honor and joy and through the depths of life with sorrows or humiliation, we will know that he chose us and we can abide in his love. We also will have deep friendship with him and others. As our friend, he never lets us down. He lets us in. We can be transparent and vulnerable with him.

Prayer

Help us to grow in likeness with Christ as we abide in him. Teach us to pray according to your will. We want the Father to be glorified through us. Transform us to become more like Christ. Give us the stability that comes from knowing that we are loved by you. And give us a deep friendship with you, and with others. Thank you that you never let us down. You laid down your life for your friends. Help us to begin today to abide in you every day. For we are yours and you are ours forever and ever.

Father, we thank you for this week of prayer. We are grateful that you are there when we wake up, go to work, and go through hard times. We remember that we can't do anything apart from you. Give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know you better every day as we abide in you.

Children's Prayers

- You are the vine.
- Thank you that you love us.
- Teach us what it means to abide in you, to live in you.



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