

Abide in me as I abide in you Midweek Reflection # 55, July 9, 2009

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:4-5 NRSV.

William Barclay, in his excellent Daily StudyBible Series published by The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1955,

defines abiding or remaining (as some translations have it) as staying in contact with Christ. I know that for me, staying in contact with Christ involves a number of practices which primarily involve other Christians in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells . A short list would include worshipping with a faithful congregation, studying scripture with a group of others and alone, involvement in shared time and prayer with other Christian individuals who encourage and strengthen my faith. and service to meet other’s needs, especially when it involves working alongside other believers. Jesus, in John 15 connects abiding in Him with following His commands, the chief of which is loving one another as He has loved us and was loved by the Father. All of the above named practices become opportunities to grow in love for each other. By loving I do not mean Having warm fuzzy feelings toward but acting to care for the other’s needs.

The end passage of this section of John 15 reads:

“You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. (John 15:16 NRSV

This has been my focus verse through over 44 years of ministry, starting with Young Life volunteer work in Philadelphia in 1966 and continuing through 33 years of Young Life ministry and now continuing in parish ministry for the past 11 years as a pastor of our little congregational church in Magnolia, MA. God has been faithful in reminding me throughout that it was His choice and His power at work in both the abiding and in the bearing of fruit. I pray that we would all learn more of abiding in Christ and the Joy that is incumbent in that abiding as the days pass.

May your week be filled with “contact with Christ and may you be enriched by Christ’s abiding presence!

Under God's Mercy,

Howie