

“Abide in Me, and I in You; Therefore Walk with Me”

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The Savior’s promise to abide in us is true and available to every covenant-keeping member of His restored Church.

The ancient prophet Enoch, described in the Old Testament, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price,¹ was instrumental in establishing the city of Zion.

The scriptural account of Enoch’s call to serve indicates that “he heard a voice from heaven, saying: Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them—Repent, ... for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off.”²

“And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth ... and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?”³

Please notice that at the time of Enoch’s call to serve, he became acutely aware of his personal inadequacies and limitations. And I suspect all of us at one time or another in our Church service have felt much like Enoch. But I believe the Lord’s response to Enoch’s pleading question is instructive and applies to each of us today.

“And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance. ...

“Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt *abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.*”⁴

Enoch ultimately became a mighty prophet and a tool in God’s hands to accomplish a great work, but he did not start his ministry that way! Rather, his capacity over time was magnified as he learned to abide in and walk with the Son of God.

I earnestly pray for the help of the Holy Ghost as we consider together the counsel given to Enoch by the Lord and what it can mean for you and me today.

Thou Shalt Abide in Me

The Lord Jesus Christ extends to each of us the invitation to abide in Him.⁵ But how do we actually learn and come to abide in Him?

The word *abide* denotes remaining fixed or stable and enduring without yielding. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explained that “abiding” as an action means “[to] stay—but [to] stay *forever*.” That is the call of the gospel message to ... everyone ... in the world. Come, but come to remain. Come with conviction and endurance. Come permanently, for your sake and the sake of all the generations who must follow you.”⁶ Thus, we abide in Christ as we are firm and steadfast in our devotion to the Redeemer and His holy purposes, in times both good and bad.⁷

We begin to abide in the Lord by exercising our moral agency to take upon ourselves His yoke⁸ through the covenants and ordinances of the restored gospel. The covenant connection we have with our Heavenly Father and His resurrected and living Son is the supernal source of perspective, hope, power, peace, and enduring joy; it also is the rock-solid foundation⁹ upon which we should build our lives.

We abide in Him by striving continually to strengthen our individual covenant bond with the Father and the Son. For example, praying sincerely to the Eternal Father in the name of His Beloved Son deepens and fortifies our covenant connection with Them.

We abide in Him by truly feasting upon the words of Christ. The Savior’s doctrine draws us, as children of the covenant, closer to Him¹⁰ and will tell us all things what we should do.¹¹

We abide in Him by preparing earnestly to participate in the ordinance of the sacrament, reviewing and reflecting on our covenant promises, and repenting sincerely. Worthily partaking of the sacrament is a witness to God that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ and strive to “always remember him”¹² after the brief period of time required to participate in that sacred ordinance.

And we abide in Him by serving God as we serve His children and minister to our brothers and sisters.¹³

The Savior said, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”¹⁴

I briefly have described several of the many ways we can abide in the Savior. And I now invite each of us as His disciples to ask, seek, knock, and learn for ourselves by the power of the Holy Ghost other meaningful ways we can make Christ the center of our lives in all that we do.

And I in You

The Savior's promise to His followers is twofold: if we abide in Him, He will abide in us. But is it indeed possible for Christ to abide in you and me—individually and personally? The answer to this question is a resounding yes!

In the Book of Mormon, we learn about Alma's teaching and testifying to the poor whose afflictions had compelled them to be humble. In his instruction, he compared the word to a seed that must be planted and nourished, and he described "the word" as the life, mission, and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Alma said, "Begin to believe in the Son of God, that he will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins; and that he shall rise again from the dead, which shall bring to pass the resurrection, that all men shall stand before him, to be judged at the last and judgment day, according to their works."¹⁵

Given this description of "the word" by Alma, please consider the inspiring connection he then identifies.

"And now ... I desire that ye shall *plant this word in your hearts*, and as it beginneth to swell even so nourish it by your faith. And behold, *it will become a tree*, springing up *in you* unto everlasting life. And then may God grant unto you that your burdens may be light, through the joy of his Son. And even all this can ye do if ye will."¹⁶

The seed we should strive to plant in our hearts is the word—even the life, mission, and doctrine of Jesus Christ. And as the word is nourished by faith, it can become a tree springing up *in us* unto everlasting life.¹⁷

What was the symbolism of the tree in Lehi's vision? The tree can be considered as a representation of Jesus Christ.¹⁸

My beloved brothers and sisters, is the Word in us? Are the truths of the Savior's gospel written in the fleshy tables of our hearts?¹⁹ Are we coming unto and gradually becoming more like Him? Is the tree of Christ growing in us? Are we striving to become "new [creatures]"²⁰ in Him?²¹

Perhaps this miraculous potential inspired Alma to ask: “Have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?”²²

We should always remember the Lord’s instruction to Enoch: “Thou shalt abide in me, *and I in you.*”²³ And I testify the Savior’s promise to abide in us is true and available to every covenant-keeping member of His restored Church.

Therefore Walk with Me

The Apostle Paul admonished believers who had received the Lord: “So walk ye in him.”²⁴

Walking in and with the Savior highlights two vital aspects of discipleship: (1) obeying God’s commandments, and (2) remembering and honoring the sacred covenants that connect us to the Father and the Son.

John declared:

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

“But whoso keepeth his word, *in him* verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are *in him*.

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so *to walk, even as he walked.*”²⁵

Jesus beckons to each of us, “Come, follow me”²⁶ and “walk with me.”²⁷

I testify that as we press forward in faith and walk in the meekness of the Lord’s Spirit,²⁸ we are blessed with power, guidance, protection, and peace.

Testimony and Promise

Alma describes a loving entreaty from the Lord to all living souls:

“Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto *all men*, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you.

“... Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely.”²⁹

I emphasize the absolute comprehensiveness of the Savior’s plea. He yearns to bless with His grace and mercy every single person who now lives, who has ever lived, and who will yet live upon the earth.

Some Church members accept as true the doctrine, principles, and testimonies proclaimed repeatedly from this pulpit in the Conference Center and in local congregations around the world—and yet may struggle to believe these eternal truths apply specifically in their lives and to their circumstances. They believe sincerely and serve dutifully, but their covenant connection with the Father and His redeeming Son has not yet become a living and transforming reality in their lives.

I promise that by the power of the Holy Ghost, you can know and feel the gospel truths I have attempted to describe are for you—for you individually and personally.

I joyfully witness that Jesus Christ is our loving and living Savior and Redeemer. If we abide in Him, He will abide in us.³⁰ And as we walk in and with Him, we will be blessed to bring forth much fruit. I so testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See Genesis 5:18–24; Doctrine and Covenants 107:48–57; Moses 6–7.
2. Moses 6:27.
3. Moses 6:31.
4. Moses 6:32, 34; emphasis added.
5. See John 15:4–9.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Abide in Me,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 32.
7. See John 15:10.
8. See Matthew 11:29–30.
9. See Helaman 5:12.
10. See 3 Nephi 27:14–15.
11. See 2 Nephi 32:3.
12. Moroni 4:3; 5:2.
13. See Mosiah 2:17.

14. John 15:10.
15. Alma 33:22.
16. Alma 33:23; emphasis added.
17. See Alma 26:13.

18. I explained this principle in a devotional in 2017:

“Alma ... ‘began to preach *the word of God* unto the people, entering into their synagogues, and into their houses; yea, and even they did preach *the word* in their streets’ [Alma 32:1; emphasis added]. He also compared the word of God to a seed.

“Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that *the word* is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me’ [Alma 32:28; emphasis added].

“Interestingly, a good seed becomes a tree as it is planted in the heart and begins to swell, sprout, and grow.

“And behold, as *the tree* beginneth to grow, ye will say: Let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and *bring forth fruit* unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit.

“But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

“Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree, therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.

“And thus, if ye will not *nourish the word*, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

“But if ye will *nourish the word*, yea, *nourish the tree* as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to *the fruit thereof*, it shall take root; and behold it shall be *a tree springing up unto everlasting life*’ [Alma 32:37–41; emphasis added].

“... The central feature in Lehi’s dream is the tree of life—a representation of ‘the love of God’ [1 Nephi 11:21–22].

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ [John 3:16].

“The birth, life, and atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ are the greatest manifestations of God’s love for His children. As Nephi testified, this love was ‘most desirable above all things’ and ‘most joyous to the soul’ [1 Nephi 11:22–23; see also 1 Nephi 8:12, 15]. Chapter 11 of 1 Nephi presents a detailed description of the tree of life as a symbol for the life, ministry, and sacrifice of the Savior—the ‘condescension of God’ [1 Nephi 11:16]. The tree can be considered as a representation of Christ.

“One way of thinking about the fruit on the tree is as a symbol for the blessings of the Savior’s Atonement. The fruit is described as ‘desirable to make one happy’ [1 Nephi 8:10] and produces great joy and the desire to share that joy with others.

“Significantly, the overarching theme of the Book of Mormon, inviting all to come unto Christ [see Moroni 10:32], is paramount in Lehi’s vision [see 1 Nephi 8:19]” (“The Power of His Word Which Is in Us” [address given at seminar for new mission leaders, June 27, 2017], 4–5).

19. See 2 Corinthians 3:3.
20. 2 Corinthians 5:17.
21. Alma’s analogy teaches us that the desire to believe plants the seed in our hearts, nourishing the seed by our faith sprouts the tree of life, and nourishing the tree produces fruit of the tree, which is “sweet above all that is sweet” (Alma 32:42) and is “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (1 Nephi 15:36).
22. Alma 5:14.
23. Moses 6:34; emphasis added.
24. Colossians 2:6.
25. 1 John 2:3–6; emphasis added.
26. Luke 18:22.
27. Moses 6:34.

28. See Doctrine and Covenants 19:23.
29. Alma 5:33–34; emphasis added.
30. See John 15:5.