

Abiding in Christ (Session 2)

by Joseph Carroll

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ through the Holy Spirit for true spiritual transformation and victory in the Christian life.

Duration: 42:46

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, John 15:4, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:3

Topics: "Abiding", "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Abiding in Christ"

Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ through the Holy Spirit, highlighting that true blessings and spiritual riches are found only in Him. He explains that the Spirit of God is essential for transformation, moving from chaos to order in our lives, and that we must yield to the Spirit to experience the fullness of Christ within us. Carroll warns against trying to achieve spiritual success on our own terms, stressing that Christianity is not about rules but about a personal relationship with Christ, who is our life. He encourages believers to recognize that Christ lives in them, enabling them to live victoriously and bear fruit for God's glory. The sermon concludes with a call to depend on the Spirit for guidance and empowerment in our Christian walk.

Transcript

We bow together in prayer. Dear Father, we thank Thee for the presence of Thy Spirit and the presence of His Word in our hands and in our hearts. We thank Thee that He is the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Light, the Spirit of Life, waiting to reveal to us the riches that are in Christ for us, to lead us not into a better life, but into an experience of Christ, who is our life.

Father, we pray that Thou would dispel from us all false concepts and grant to us, we beseech Thee, that illumination of the Spirit of God, that we might see with the eyes of our heart, that we might yield our wills, that we might be filled with Thy Spirit and know in truth fellowship with Jesus Christ. Lead us into truth, that the truth might make us free, set us free, Lord. In this we pray with thanksgiving in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let us turn again to Genesis 1-1 and see God's order. You will remember Monday evening we saw that He never alters it, this is the way He works, this is the way He operates.

His answer to need is always firstly the moving of the Spirit of God. Why? Because only God can do the work of God. Man's problem is playing God.

It's the problem. Trying to change flesh into Spirit. Only God can do the work of God.

That's obvious. Well, how does God do His work? By the Spirit. By the Spirit.

How's He going to bless you? Because you're in Christ, that's why. Otherwise, there is no blessing. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with what? All spiritual blessings.

In heavenly places, where? In Christ. Not in Greenville, not at the Evangelical Institute, in Christ. So let's be very clear about this.

All our blessings are in one person, alone, Christ. By the Spirit. He was a great man of God, a Frenchman, very saintly man, gifted, very gifted teacher of the Word of God.

And when he was dying, he kept on repeating these words. I've tried for a long time to have them placed on the wall here, we just can't fit them together there. All in Christ, by the Holy Ghost, for the glory of God, all else is nothing.

Now, that's true. All in Christ, by the Holy Ghost, for the glory of God, all else is a big zero. If only you can get hold of that, live by it, it's going to save you a lot of wasted time and effort and heartache.

All in Christ, by the Holy Ghost. How can what is true for you in Christ be made real in you? By the Holy Spirit, it's God's method. What is true for you and these tremendous riches that are in Christ for every one of us, how are they made real in us? How do they become part of my life? By the Spirit, by the Spirit.

He does it as we yield. He gives the light, we yield, and then we experience the blessing. But why? That I might go away from here feeling now I am a victorious Christian.

No, for the glory of God, for the glory of God. Now, you can miss right there. The Lord will bless you if you make yourself available to him on his terms.

Of course he will, he's a God of love, cannot deny himself. Of course he will bless you, he wants to. He sent his son to a cross that he might bless you.

Can he do more? He wants to bless. Why are people not blessed? They want to be blessed on their terms. Oh no, you are dealing with a sovereign God.

He doesn't lower his standard to accommodate himself to our weakness. All in Christ, by the Holy Ghost, for the glory of God, all else is nothing. It's nothing.

You could be a missionary for 40 years and add up to nothing. Yes, you could. You could be a preacher for 30 years and go to a devil's hell.

Yes, you could. God's way. So in Genesis 1 we see disorder, chaos.

In other words, something totally and utterly beyond anybody but God. Now, we're apt to think that that's fine. God can deal with the big things and I can deal with the little things.

Listen, you can't deal with anything. Neither can I. That's where we get into trouble. Now, I spoke Monday before last on disciples on the sea in trouble in the storm.

And they got into trouble in the storm because when they set sail to cross the sea, they simply ignored the Lord. Oh, when it comes to loaves and fishes and feeding a multitude, that's his job. He works miracles, but we know the sea.

Oh, do you? But you don't know the devil. So the Lord's asleep in the boat. He's not in charge, they're in charge.

We can do this, we can handle this, no problem. That's always the devil's opportunity to kick up a storm. And exactly what he did.

Then they have the audacity to say, Lord, don't you care? And we get ourselves into a pit and say, Lord, why did you permit this? Well, he didn't, you did it. So let's think clearly about God's way. It's all here in these first verses.

There's a need, has a need, meant the Spirit of God moved. The Spirit of God moved. Isn't that wonderful? The Holy Spirit who is God, now he is moving.

And what happens? God said, let there be light. Let there be light. And what follows that? Order.

He puts everything in order. He separates the light from the darkness. Isn't that beautiful? I think it is.

That's what happens in a life when a life is truly born again. Chaos. Spirit of God moves.

Conviction of sin. Response to the moving of the Spirit. Light.

And what do you find? Order in that person's life. Out goes the darkness and the light comes in. That's what happens when a person is converted.

But that's what also happens when a person is led into a deeper, fuller walk with the Lord. You may have come here to the conference and you are not experiencing what you know you should experience. What this Word says you should be and what you are is very different.

So you come with a consciousness of need. How is God going to meet it? He is going to meet it by his Spirit. The Spirit is going to speak.

He is going to speak through his Word. He is going to show you light. Light is going to be shone on his Word and you are going to see it.

Now, your response is very important. Someone has said you must set your sails to catch the wind of the Spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth, you see.

Now here is the sound thereof, canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is everyone born of the Spirit. In other words, when you see the Spirit moving or when he is moving in your life, set your sail.

In other words, turn yourself toward the Spirit of God in obedience. But the Spirit must move and therefore we come with total dependence, total reliance on the Spirit of God. Remember the three things we emphasize again and again.

First one, unceasing dependence on the Spirit. So I know what some people are going to do. We are going to finish this session and somebody is going to ask somebody else, I wonder who is on next.

Nobody is on next. The Spirit of God is present. It is not a performance.

It is a person you seek. You seek the Spirit of God. Not a performance, not a person, the Spirit.

Because as we saw yesterday, he is the only teacher. He is the only person that can teach you anything about God. You realize that.

I can't. Nuremberg can't. But the Spirit can.

And if you make yourself available to him, he can take you a long way in a short time. But if you resist him, you will stay right where you are and then you begin to go backwards. Because you never stand still in the Christian life.

You are either going forward or you are reversing. We see that in Paul's two great prayers in Ephesians. He prays firstly for the moving of the Spirit in the first chapter.

What? That the eyes of their heart might be enlightened, that they might what? No. First the moving of the Spirit, then the seeing with the eyes of the heart, then knowledge. That's the prayer.

And then in his next great prayer, in the third chapter, probably Paul's greatest prayer, what is he praying for again? Again, the moving of the Spirit of God that Christ may feel perfectly at home in their hearts. But again, the Spirit moves first. That's what he's praying for in both prayers.

The moving of the Spirit of God in order that an objective might be achieved. And that's what we're praying for here. In each meeting, the moving of the Spirit of God in hearts that have been prepared to submit to him in order that the will of God might be achieved to the end, that God might be glorified in what? In your going from this place and bearing fruit to his glory.

Not that you might go forth victorious and say, I've been blessed. No, is God going to be glorified in you and through you wherever you go from this conference? Now that's all that matters. Now yesterday we touched very briefly on the experience of this great Bible teacher, Trumbull.

What was his problem? Christ was an external saviour, someone outside. Now that was his problem. That someone was always there ready to help him.

See the point? Ready to help him. That's a very serious problem. In other words, he was an external saviour.

External. But then he realised that Christ was in him. In him.

Literally and actually within him. Christ had taken him into union with himself and they were now one. Now that's a great discovery.

That Christ is in me by his Spirit. I am one Spirit with his Spirit. What does that mean? Well, what do you mean to Trumbull? You remember? Never again did he ask the Lord to help him.

Why? Because the Lord was not going to help him do God's will. The Lord himself in him was going to do it through him. Now that's the vital difference.

Christianity is Christ. Christianity is a person. It's not a set of rules.

It's not a set of doctrines. You need to know the doctrine, but the doctrine must lead you to Christ. That's a very important difference.

That difference is going to spell victory or defeat in your life when you leave here. Why should he help me? Every time I do anything I mess it up. Why should he help me? It took me perhaps 25 years to realise that God never accepted any of my good ideas.

As if he needed my help. You've got to get hold of the fact that Christianity is a person. The living Christ.

He's everything. And he's in you. If you've really been born of the Spirit, he's in you.

Now you can go away and think on that for a month. Now you just think on that. This Christ, this all-victorious Christ, this Son of God, lives in your spirit.

What manner of men ought we to be? What manner of women ought you to be? Christianity is what? Christ. Christianity is a person. Now Trumbull saw that.

And what did it mean to him? Well, before his was a life of hope, now it became a life of faith. Now what do we mean by a life of hope? All right? Well, you go away hoping you will be victorious. Or some people hope they have sufficient training to do the job.

Or sufficient experience. But it's all hope, you see. I hope I can do it.

Hope I've got sufficient background, experience for it, know-how, technique, you name it. I hope, I hope, I hope. That's failure.

Because all the time at the back of your hoping there is a realisation that you may not make it. When the Spirit of God reveals to you that Christ is within you, and Christ is your life, and Christ desires to live his life through you, it's transforming. What did we sing in the hymn this morning? Saviour come and what? Live in me.

You live in me, Lord. Come and make me rich. How? In thee.

It's a beautiful hymn. And it's a prayer. Saviour come and live in me.

Come and make me rich in thee. No. It's not a matter of hoping that I can do this, I have enough power, enough experience, enough preparation, you name it, enough education added on.

No. Christ within me waits to do it through me. That's the important truth.

Now what's that going to mean? It's not somebody outside coming to your aid, but somebody within you doing it through you. So you never again ask the Lord to help you. He's not in the helping business.

He's in the controlling business. He wants to control you by his Spirit. To live his life through you, and to speak through you, and to work through you.

Now Paul, in that beautiful verse, Galatians 2.20, brings this home to us with great force. We touched on it a little yesterday. We could spend a month on it.

I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Christ liveth in me. He says, I live, and yet I don't live.

It is Christ in me who's living, and therefore his life is seen through me. Now that's the transforming power of one who has experienced a living Christ within him. Transforms the life.

That's what made Paul, Paul. What made Paul, Paul? Christ made Paul, Paul. We say Paul the great intellectual, the great man with all this training, Gamaliel and all the rest of it.

That's a lot of nonsense. Christ made Paul the great apostle. It was Christ through Paul.

So he said, I live, I'm alive, and yet it's not me, it's Christ. I've been crucified with Christ. So what does he mean when he says, I've been crucified with Christ? That I've been so identified with him in his death that his death was my death, and now I'm living a life that is a resurrection life by the resurrection power of the victorious Christ.

That's what he's saying. His death was my death, so there's no longer I that live, I died in him. Christ now lives in me.

That's a tremendous birth. That's Christianity. It is no longer I that live.

So the new life was not Paul himself, it wasn't his own life, it was Christ living in him. Christ had entered into Paul. He not only kindled life within him, but he was that life.

Now you might say, ah, that means my personality is going to be merged. No, it isn't. For the first time, you'll see the real person.

You'll see the real person. Somebody asked me, what were the objectives of the institute? I said, we have three objectives. First, the impartation of biblical knowledge in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, the release of the personality. Now that may surprise you. When Christ takes control, you see the real person for the first time.

And what else? Conformity to Christ. That's the ultimate. The forming of Christ in the individual, that's the ultimate.

You begin with what? Impartation of biblical knowledge. And as that word is yielded to, what happens? You see the real person. And the more Christ is formed in the person, the more you see strength of character and a strong will to will to do the will of God.

Christ is being formed in the individual. And you'll also see joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. We have a young teenager, she's come to us here, Olive Lorton.

I first met Olive in Formosa in 1955. She's about 82 or 83, doesn't disclose her age, somewhere in the 80s. Like most of our dear sisters, hard to get their age.

But Olive's at least 84. Of course, Bertha, her colleague in China, is 93. But you know, there's no brighter person on this campus than Olive.

Bright, shiny. Always has a word from the Lord. Vital.

Why? Christ has been formed in that woman. You're not conscious of her age. She's like a teenager.

Christ has been formed in her. But she's not weak. She's a lover of birds.

She can tell you all the birds around here. So I said to Olive, do you like cats? And boy, her face changed. I don't like cats, they eat birds.

I got off that subject. She has strong will and convictions. And she lives by them.

Why? You see a person in whom Christ has been formed. No, personality is not merged, it's elevated. Elevated.

You see the real person. And that's a beautiful thing. Some youngsters come here and they're being twisted by their parents.

And slowly you see them being untwisted. And then you see the real person. No, Christ is not a source of life.

He is life. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory. I was in India in 1959 for a series of conferences there.

And I was going to the first meeting in the first, there are three towns in the Nilgiri Hills, South India, where we had the meetings. And I was going to the first meeting in the first town. And a lady came across the street of this little Indian town and said, I'm Carol Terry.

I was with your wife in Bible school. So I said, oh, that's fine, Carol. So she said, shall we walk to the meeting together? It was a little early.

So I suggested we have a cup of tea. In those little towns in India you have Indian tea houses. So we went aside and we were having a little cup of tea before the meeting.

And the conversation veered into this matter of living victoriously. So I said, well, it's wonderful to know that our old man has been crucified. He's dead, he's finished, he's gone.

And now Christ is our life. She said, oh, yeah, I know, I know, Mr. Carol, but somehow he comes back to life again. I said, no, no, he doesn't, Carol.

Oh, yes, she said, I was secretary to Brother so-and-so, and he was one of the great, well, so-called great people and real-life teachers in the United States. And she was secretary of him for years. I said, well, Carol, we must differ there, but anyway, it's time to go.

So we went to the meeting, and just before we arrived at the church, she said, I wonder if you'd have a word with our Indian Bible women this afternoon and some of our missionaries. She was the head of a large mission in northern India, and she'd brought about eight of her women with her, three or four missionaries, and four or five of the Indian Bible women. So I said, sure.

And that afternoon we gathered together, and I gave about a ten-minute word on 1 Corinthians 1.30, Jesus Christ, who of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. It's a very simple word. But emphasizing the point that Jesus Christ has been made unto me what? Wisdom.

He within me is my wisdom. A person is my wisdom. A person is my righteousness.

A person is my sanctification. A person, praise God, is my redemption. Do you see that? And the Spirit of God spoke to Carol Terry.

She'd never seen that before. Now, I wonder if you've seen that. If only I can have enough experience, and if only I can get enough education, I'll have wisdom.

No, you won't. You have Christ, whom God has made unto you wisdom. Now, please realize that.

You know, our problem very often is wanting to be something when the Bible says we're nothing. That's a serious problem. Why don't we accept what the Scripture says about us? Because we're not going anywhere until we do.

Now, what does the Scripture say? If a man thinks he's something when he's nothing, he deceives himself. That's quite a statement, isn't it? If a man thinks he's something when he's nothing, he deceives himself. Well, if nothing tries its hardest to become something, what does he become? Still nothing.

How can nothing become something? Now, if you can tell me, I'd like to know. Do you see the point, or do you not see the point? There's no way nothing can become something. That's impossible.

No way. It's impossible. There's no way you can become something.

From God's viewpoint now, we're thinking from Heaven's viewpoint because that's the only viewpoint that matters. I'm not speaking from Earth's viewpoint. I'm not speaking of the secular world at all.

I'm speaking from Heaven's viewpoint. If a man thinks he's something when he's nothing, says Paul, he deceives himself. Why? Because he's looking for something where there's nothing.

That's why he's deceived. He's looking for something where there's nothing. So you can add nothing to nothing to nothing and get six nothings and add them all up, what do you get? Nothing.

Zero. You can have a hundred zeros and add them all up and you still get zero. If every one of you came up here and put a zero on the board and we all added it up, zero.

See, Christ is not going to make you wise. He's going to be your wisdom if you let him. He, the person of Christ, is going to be your wisdom.

Now, we're quite clear on the righteousness. We're clear on that. Jesus Christ is my righteousness, clothed with a righteousness not my own faultless to stand before the throne.

Praise God for that. He is your righteousness. Hallelujah.

He's mine. We should set our hearts singing. We're clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

You can see it. A person out there, perhaps in poor circumstances, but they're clothed with the righteousness of Christ. They're rich.

And you can see another person out there riding in a Cadillac and they're poor. I was in the United States in about 1959 or 58 and I was speaking at Fuller Seminary for a week and I had news that my wife had suffered a miscarriage in Japan and I was required to return immediately, or at least they thought I should, but I said I'll come after I finish the meetings. And a dear woman during my time in the United States had said to me, Brother Carroll, is it very cold in Japan? I said, cold? Cold air in the Maconto Plain and in

Kurozawa, it just goes through you like a knife.

She said, well, I've got an old coat. I've got an old coat that I would like to give your wife. So I said, fine.

So she gave me this cover and inside was the coat and so I just put it with my belongings and forgot about the old coat. So we finally arrived in Japan and there's the customs at Haneda Airport and what's in this satchel over here? It's just an old coat. Okay, no problem.

Nobody looked at us so I went to the hospital and chatting with my wife, I said, Mrs. So-and-so has sent you an old coat. She says it's a very warm coat and will keep you warm in the winter. So I said, well, let's look at it.

Have you looked at it? No, I said, it's just an old coat. Well, it was an old full-length mink coat. She had five, so she decided she'd give my wife one.

It was a full-length ranch mink coat, worth about, I don't know, then \$3,000. So she looked at it and I looked at it. And I said, you can't wear that thing.

And she didn't. Never has worn it except one time. One time.

I don't know where it is now. It's somewhere in here. The Olympics, the Winter Olympics were being held in the little town where we lived in Kurozawa.

It was a very, very cold afternoon and the only coat my wife had that was reasonably warm was a pretty ratty old thing. You know, missionary barrel sort of thing. And so I said, well, honey, I don't know how you're going to keep warm up in that rink because there was no roof over the rink.

It was exposed. We want to see this speed skating. So I tell you what you ought to do.

She had this, it was sort of a raglan coat that flopped all over. I said, why don't you put that mink coat on and put the raglan coat over the top of it? And she did. She got it on.

She put the mink on and then she put this big old tent over the top of it, buttoned it up, and off we went to the skating. And as we were sitting there watching the skaters, you know, these wealthy Japanese in the vicinity, I'm sure if they looked at my wife and, huh, she's no big shot. Not in that ratty coat.

But underneath was a \$3,000 mink. And when you look at a person, do you realise that person has been clothed with the righteousness of Christ? You may not see it, but it's there, robed with the righteousness of Christ. God has given you his son.

Not things, but a person. He doesn't give you things, he's given you his son. And he's everything.

He's your righteousness. He's also your holiness. There is only one holy life.

Let's get hold of that. You go away from me, away from this place, saying, I'm going to be holy, I'm going to be holy. Well, you never will be holy.

Christ wants to be your holiness. You're never going to improve. Isn't that interesting? You're never going to improve.

Why? Because you're nothing. I'm sure you haven't got that yet. We've said you cannot improve when there's nothing, because nothing plus nothing is nothing.

Your holiness is Christ. Holiness is a person. You say a person is holy.

What do you mean by that? Well, he lives a holy life. Where did it come from? It's in Christ, in him. That's where it came from.

There's only one holy life. One. Let's get hold of that.

One perfect life. One life which is acceptable to God. His son.

So, Christ is our righteousness. Christ is our sanctification. And, of course, we all know that Christ is our redemption.

Now, God has made him that to us. Who of God is made unto us? Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. What about it? And early the next morning there was an Indian who came to my door and he knocked at the door very early and said, I have a note for you.

And Carol had written a little note about five o'clock that morning. She said, it's like being born again all over again. And it was.

Being born again all over again. What happened when she was born again? She had seen Christ as her saviour. Now she had seen Christ as her life.

He was everything. And she was set free. Of course she was set free.

Of course she was set free. Are you free this morning? Are you really free? You know the freedom of life in Christ. She went back to her mission, Ramabai Mukti mission.

And when she arrived, other Bible women and men and women on the staff came out to meet her. And they stopped and took one look at her and said, what has happened to you? And they came very close to having a tremendous revival in that mission. What has happened to you? What did they see in this woman they saw Christ? She'd been set free.

For the first time they saw the real Carol Terry. Now if Jesus Christ is to become your wisdom, you must lay aside all your wisdom. You've got to lay it aside.

If he's to be your strength, you must lay aside your strength. You must lay it aside. You know the life of faith is exciting.

It's watching him work. Watching him work. It's very exciting.

But as soon as you falter in your faith, in his faithfulness, then you are conscious that he isn't working. You've taken over. But it is an exciting life.

You watch him work. I could keep you here all day, indeed all week, telling you of experiences of the faithfulness of God in providing on a miracle basis. On a miracle basis, just watching him work, in little things as well as big things.

One of the most important lessons students learn here is to trust the Lord, obviously, because they see that he provides. He provides. We had dear Riley Reasoner with us last conference and he said, Joe, how much do you charge the people? Nothing.

And then he faints. You don't have any charge for these people to come? No. Why? Well, we pray the Lord will bring them.

We pray very earnestly about that. Lord, you bring whoever you want here. So if he brings them, they are his guests, not ours.

How can we charge them anything? Huh. Interesting. The life of faith is watching God work.

Watching him at work. And little things too. We had a young man, he was on a mission field today, and he was in his room in this men's dorm, the big dorm, and he didn't have any money to buy a toothbrush.

So he just prayed. He said, Lord, you know I need a toothbrush. Please provide one.

Three minutes later, the boy living next to him came in and said, do you need a toothbrush? He's watching him work. We have one of our graduates working amongst Muslims in London, Ned Garlington, dear brother. But Muslim work is, it demands faith unceasingly.

And so Ned, in his last letter to me, told me he was walking along the street in London, and London can be a very depressing city apart from anything else these days. Walking along the street, and the devil was telling him how rough it was, because he just had the thought that he would like to have a Mars bar, of all things. You know, one of those little chocolate bars.

Quite an interesting thought, you know. He was walking along the street in London, and it would be nice to have a Mars bar, you know. But he said, like a lot of OMers, I was penniless.

He didn't have a penny in his pocket. Nothing. Of course, the devil was trying to get to him, there you are, you're always broke, can't even buy a Mars bar.

Here you are, hungering for a Mars bar. They haven't even got a dime to buy the thing. And he was a little down.

You know what the dear Lord did? As he was thinking, you know, he's penniless and wouldn't it be wonderful to have that chocolate Mars bar, there right on the pavement in front of him, three huge chocolate mints perfectly wrapped in silver paper. So he looked at them, he couldn't believe it. It was his last letter to him, he'd last written.

There they were, worth more than ten Mars bars, great big chocolate mints about that size, perfectly wrapped in silver paper. So of course he picked them up and started rejoicing in the Lord. You know, the Lord will do exceeding abundance if the spirit's in control.

That's his promise in Ephesians 3.20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power, what power? The power of the spirit worketh in us. So Ned is learning. He's learning to trust.

He's learning to trust. That's why God makes him penniless from time to time, so that God can show him his faithfulness. If he can't trust God for a Mars bar, how can he trust him for Muslim souls? It's impossible.

The life of faith, the life of abiding is exciting because it's watching him work. Wonder of wonders through you and through others. But it's Christ himself in the person who's doing it.

Shall we pray? Dear Father, we ask thy forgiveness for being so foolish. Forgive our foolish ways. We thank thee for the life of peace and joy that is for us in Christ by the spirit.

Will you not quieten us in these days? Quieten us down into thyself, that thy spirit might lead us into life in Christ. And this we pray in our Savior's precious name. Amen.

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