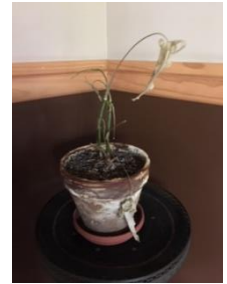


Abiding in Christ

Have you ever tried to save your house plants? Trim, water, feed, pick off the dead leaves. I have a few that I have been trying to save for a long, long time. There's this one that has just one stalk left, brown leaves, crusty looking soil and I'm thinking maybe it's supposed to die. Maybe it's time and I'm not supposed to nurture it anymore? Maybe I'm not supposed to bring it back from the brink. No trying to fix it. Maybe I just need to let it die!



The verse that I've chosen for our time is **John 15:4**. In the ESV it says, "Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."

To **ABIDE**-- what exactly does that mean? The definition goes something like this: "to accept, comply, obey, observe, follow, uphold, heed, agree with..." (I love this part) "...to continue without fading or being lost. To remain, survive, last, persist, stay, hold on..." and then there's this (under archaic or old-school -- not used much in today's speech) "...to live or dwell." There it is! That's the one! That's the one that made the most sense to me.

Let me read the verse again... "Abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine neither can you unless you abide in me."

In **John 15:5-6** it says, "I am the vine you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

When I think back on my dying houseplants, how I've spent so much time and energy trying to save them -- watering, changing the light, changing the temperature, feeding them -- I realize that for some of my plants nothing has been working. I started to think about **what God was saying about me** in these verses from John 15. I compare this to how God pictures me, us. **What does it look like when I'm not abiding in Him?** I'm not thriving. I'm not in mission. There are no juices flowing. This "plant" that I am is barely hanging on. It needs to be cut off, or pruned. And I am aware that he's pruning me again! So I ask Him -- **What needs to die, so that I can abide? What am I holding onto that's not healthy? What needs to be cut off and thrown away so that I can thrive again in His joy?**

I've come to realize that I had been nurturing anger. Not really letting it go. Just holding on enough to ignite it at anytime. Anger at my life's circumstance. Anger at unmet expectations. Anger at things I have no control over. If I'm being honest, I could have said all day long that I was laying it down and I wasn't carrying it anymore. But the truth was that I was letting it control me. Anger was the filter, the lens, in which I looked at the situation through.

But what I now know to be true is that when I abide in Jesus, when I allow Him to dwell in me, and I see my circumstance through His lens, then I obey, I remain, I hold on. I understand that I can't fix or control my circumstance the same way that a plant can't fix its dead or dying branches. But God

can! He prunes us so that we can thrive. He takes that dead stuff and cuts it off. He wants us to be healthy and thriving. He wants us to continue without fading. To tolerate, to endure! That's abiding in Him. My anger may not be gone entirely, but it no longer holds the same power to control me that it once did. God can fix whatever "it" is. He can take what's wrong and make it right. I can't fix or control my circumstance, but God can! He fights my battles.

Are you abiding?

Are you thriving?

What needs pruning?

What needs to die for you to move on and be filled with joy?

When I stay in tune, when I abide, when I am still with our Lord, I'm filled up with him. I can hear Him in the silence. When He says "be still" He means to stay connected, abide, conform to, pay attention. When I do that my need for control abates. I'm more peaceful. **BE STILL**-- that's actually a very active thing. Being still reminds me of Exodus 14:14 (ESV) where it says. "**The Lord will fight for you and you have only to be silent.**" Our Lord says "be still and I will fight for you!" To me that means, be still and listen, be still and hear me, be still and worship me, be still and be in my word, be still and breathe. Stop already Claudia and hear me! The Message Bible says it like this, "**God will fight the battle for you and you you keep your mouth shut!**" Never a truer word was spoken to me.

God will fight your battles. Be still -- He will do it. Let go, let God. It's not yours to do. Sometimes it's hard to hear those words. I'm not a passive person. I want to do. I want to fix. I want to make it better. In this passage God is telling us to be still, be silent. He's got it! And yet we know He wants to hear our hearts. He knows who and what I'm fighting for because we are connected. Remember, prayer is not about results so much as it is relationship. When I'm grumbling and whining to those around me -- "I want it this way! Why can't it be that way? You shouldn't do that!" -- that's me fighting the battle. If I'm abiding, I'm being still, I've done my battle with God. I've told Him everything. He already knows, but putting it out there to Him always feels better. Now it's His turn. If I do all the grumbling I'm not letting Him do His job. The grumbling is me staying in the past. It's holding on to whatever holds you back. For me it's anger at circumstance. I know I'm allowed to feel this way and He knows it, too! What I really want at the end of the day is to abide in joy. **I'm fighting for my JOY!**

Choosing to be still and move on. Move on what from what keeps you from your Lord. Move on from grumbling. Move on from circumstance. Move into abiding in his joy. Take courage to move past the known and the predictable. Stand your ground in abiding in Him! That's where hope is! That's where joy is!

So once again I invite you to be still to listen...

Are you abiding?

Are you thriving?

What needs pruning?

What needs to die so that you can move on and be filled with His Joy?



O' Lord

[Lauren Daigle](#)

Though times it seems
Like I'm coming undone
This walk can often feel lonely
No matter what until this race is won
I will stand my ground where hope can be found
I will stand my ground where hope can be found
Oh, O' Lord O' Lord I know You hear my cry
Your love is lifting me above all the lies
No matter what I face this I know in time
You'll take all that is wrong and make it right
You'll take all that is wrong and make it right
Your strength is found
At the end of my road
Your grace it reaches to the hurting
Still through the tears and the questioning why
I will stand my ground where hope can be found
I will stand my ground where hope can be found
Oh, O' Lord O' Lord I know You hear my cry
Your love is lifting me above all the lies
No matter what I face This I know in time
You'll take all that is wrong and make it right
You'll take all that is wrong and make it right
(Right, so right)
Make it right
(Right, so right)
Make it right, right
I will stand my ground
I will stand my ground
I will stand my ground where hope can be found
I will stand my ground where hope can be found
Oh! O' Lord O' Lord I know You hear my cry
Your love is lifting me above all the lies
No matter what I face this I know in time
You'll take all that is wrong and make it right (take all that is wrong)
You'll take all that is wrong and make it right
(Right, so right)
Make it right
(Right, so right)
Make it right, right

