

Abiding in His Love

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[0 : 00] For my name is Alan. For those of you who don't know, I serve here. I oversee the youth ministry here at Watermark. Kong He Fa Choy. Happy Chinese New Year. Did I say that right? Kong He Fa Choy?

Yeah, I think one thing I've learned in primary school is I asked the wrong person, not I asked Nils. Did I say that right? What? Okay, anyway. Okay, so for the past three weeks, as the year began, we've been looking into, we've been going through this series called Abide in Christ.

We usually, when we think about a new year, we usually go into a year making plans. Okay, how am I going to do better this year? How am I going to improve myself? But the reality is that we don't have much control of what's going to happen down the line or down the year.

I mean, life is going to throw us things we least expect. Life is going to throw us terrible heartaches. Life is going to throw us amazing good stuff, beautiful stuff, broken stuff, sadness, and a whole lot of things.

So how do we approach it? We try to take control of it or we just become a little optimistic, hoping that a year would be better. But this year, we have been talking about another way that we could approach it, and that is by actually abiding in Christ.

[1 : 15] Yes, life will throw us incredible sadness, but it's actually abiding in Christ that secures us, that keeps us hopeful, that keeps us secure and in Christ's love.

I mean, life is going to throw us amazing good things, promotions, maybe new relationships, and it's abiding in Christ that keeps us from being prideful and being focused on Jesus Christ who, in the words of Paul said, Hey, everything is nothing compared to the surpassing knowledge, the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

So for the past two weeks, we've been looking to abiding in Christ. Last week, we looked into abiding in His Word. And where we talked about, Hey, how do we get into God's Word? How do we drench our lives in God's Word?

How do we speak God's Word, not only in our church, families, into every part of our lives? It's not about having different branches in our lives, like church, family, churches, or whatever.

But actually, having all of our branches of our lives drenched in God's Word. And so finally, today, we have come to the last week of Abiding in Christ, the series, and we'll be looking into abiding in His love.

[2 : 27] So let me call Soda, who will read today's scripture. And let's read from John 15. Yes? Good.

Thanks for the great introduction. And let us all listen to God's Word and let every single Word of God speak power in your life for whatever that He wants to tell you.

Today's scripture is in John 15. You can follow along on the screen or your own Bible. Starting in verse 1, we read, I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

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. I am the vine, you are the branches.

[3 : 44] Whoever abides in me and I in him, he 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. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so proved to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

This is the word of God. Thank you, Soda. Hey, can I pray for us before we start? Father, we come before you to talk about something that is so majestic, that is so vast, that is so great, that truly, God, I feel so feeble and so small to stand and talk about your love.

[5 : 03] Love that surpasses knowledge, love that goes beyond anything that we can ever come to imagine, God. So, Father, we pray this morning, would you come, would your Spirit come and speak to our hearts?

Unless you don't, you come. Father, this is just going to be another talk. So, Father, we pray earnestly, desperately, that you would come this morning, and that you would speak and reveal your love to us this morning.

Father, would you come, and would you be glorified? Would you increase, and we would decrease? Would you speak to the idols of our hearts? Would you speak to our insecurities?

Would you speak to our fears and our plans, our need to control our life? And, Father, we pray that you would come and speak. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. So, have you come across a quotation or a saying that is so profound, so deep, so amazing, that you had to stop in your tracks, stop for a while, and just let it process for a while.

[6 : 08] You know a saying or something? So, when I was in high school, this was one quotation that stopped me on my path. I was just a teenager. I was a very romantic quote.

So, here was this quote. If I had to choose between breathing and loving you, I would use my last breath to tell you I love you. It's cringy. So, hey, I was a teenager. I saw this quotation.

I was like, oh, I know I'm single, but, oh, man, I would love this girl, whoever this girl is, like this. And I would write it on my notebooks. I would write it on my books. I would carve it on my desk. Don't ask me why I have a knife in high school.

But I would carve it on my desk and do all sorts of things with this quotation. And I'm sure we all have come across a quotation like this in our lives, when we are reading books or when we are just walking down the streets.

And today, we'll be looking closely at verses 9 and 11. And I'm not sure if these verses have ever stopped us in our tracks in the same way.

[7 : 09] Maybe for some of us, it has stopped us in this track. Maybe for some of us, it has not stopped us and we have just brushed over these few verses. And I believe that it's because this verses, verses 9 to 11, is sandwiched between such amazing verses that are talking about divine, abiding in Christ, that we kind of, it's so easy to miss verse 9 to 11 and not ponder over these three amazing verses.

So, let's take a closer look at verse 9 where there's like a sudden change of words. In the beginning, we've been looking, Jesus talks about, okay, you've got to abide in me. And later on, the words changes.

It becomes, you've got to abide in my word. Let my words abide in you. And here's the third change, which is abide in my love. So, let's look at verse 9. And it says, As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Abide in my love. Okay, let me read that again. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. And that's the end of the sermon.

Think about it. As the Father has loved me, Jesus says, so have I loved you. What can be said of the mystery and the profound of this one line?

[8 : 31] This love the Father has for her son, Jesus Christ, is something unlike any of us have fully experienced. And I use the word fully experienced in a very greedy and miserly way.

I mean, it's not like the love a mother has for her baby. I mean, we saw the really cute babies of Enrica and others. And it's not like that kind of love. It's not the love a teenage boy has for this girl, the most beautiful girl he has ever laid his eyes on.

It's not like the love a husband or a wife has for each other that has grown deep over years and years of marriage. I mean, all of this love do come close to the love of the Father, the love the Father has for his son.

But I say it comes close in the sense that if God's, if Father's love was like an iceberg, it's just the tip of the tip of an iceberg. It's just so close in comparison to Father's love.

Now what we are talking about here is a love that is completely unimaginable. Now you can see my difficulty in talking about this. It's a love that is so unimaginable.

[9 : 43] When we talk about God loving, we are not merely talking about an emotion that a father has for his son or the father feels towards another. We are not merely talking about the many works the Father does, the many things, the activities of God the Father.

I mean, what we are talking about according to 1 John 4 is that love for Father God is who he is. 1 John 4 tells us that God is love because for God, love is not one of the many things that he does, but for God, love is who he is in his being.

For God, it is the very essence of God. It is the indispensable thing about God. It is the very core of who God is. So to talk about, to talk about love for God and to take love out of God is like going to a restaurant and ordering an eggless omelet.

It just does not make sense. You cannot have an eggless omelet. In the same way, you cannot have love without God. For God, love is who he is. I mean, in our lives, sometimes we come across a love that is so amazing, right?

A love that is so profound that can leave us scarred, that can leave us traumatized, that can leave us transformed. It can be a love between a man and a woman. It can be a love between a parent and a child.

[11 : 00] It can be a love between a man and a dog. A love that is so profound. I know I saw this movie, a Korean movie, in high school. I mean, today is all about Korean.

It was called The Classic. I don't know how many of you have watched the Korean movie called The Classic. And even to this day, when I listen to the soundtrack of this song, I still feel the pain in my chest.

I mean, I would encourage you to go and watch it. The Classic. I mean, if I listen to the music, and I fear like, if I listen to it too long, I'll break down and cry. It was just so heartbreaking and beautiful.

And I actually don't watch it anymore because I feel like, if I watch it, I'll spoil the beauty that I had felt before. So it's, you know, we do come across love that is so profound.

And can you imagine us human beings, sinful, selfish, broken, humans are capable of creating such beautiful love, imagining such amazing and beautiful love.

[12 : 07] How about a God who's beautiful, holy, pure, who himself is love, who is the creator of love, who is himself, is the very being love. In what way does he love his son?

I mean, I don't even know where to begin to describe that. And just to scratch the surface, we do see glimpses of this love the father has for his son.

For example, John 17, 24 tells us that the love of the father over his son had existed way before creation. Jesus says, God, you loved me before the foundation of this earth.

I mean, before time began, before the creation was even thought of or even created, love was there. It is a love that existed way before creation that has been existing for eternity, which is a love that is eternal, that goes on and on for all eternity.

It does not stop. It does not falter. It does not change or wane in any way. I mean, it's a love that never changes. I mean, our love changes. Our love falters. There are points in our life when we question our love, but for God, it's a love that is eternal.

[13 : 19] Because for him, it's a love that overflows from who he is again, right? It's a love that comes out like a roaring water, like a water that's gushing out from who he is.

It's like a love, like a mighty river. I don't know if you guys have ever been to a mighty river. I used to live just above this river in India, and you can listen to this river all night.

It's like a majestic sound. I'm like, ch-ch-ch-ch-ch. And God's love, I'm sorry for that sound effect, but it's God's love is like a mighty, gushing river that's pouring out.

You know, sometimes we imagine God's love to be calm and peaceful. I mean, at times it is. But if you look into Scripture, if you look at his passion in the Old Testament, if you look at the way he pursues his people, if you look at the way he pursues justice, if you look at the way he's angry over the injustice, over the sinfulness, and all of this motivated by his amazing love, powerful and passionate love, you'll see that his love is something that is gushing out with such force, with such strength that is just majestic and mighty.

This is the love that is motivated. This is the love of the Father and it's so majestic. Luke 3.22, in the baptism of Jesus and the transfiguration in Matthew 17, it talks about God just breaking in and as Jesus is being baptized, as Jesus is right there, God breaks in and he says, this is my beloved son and with you I'm well pleased and even though this was fulfilling the Old Testament, I mean there is a sense of God breaking in and saying, this is my son, this is my son, my beloved son and with you I'm well pleased and although my son has done nothing till now, he's about 30 years old, he's been a carpenter all his life, all he's done is build some tables and chairs and I know he has done nothing worthy of worth but this is the son with whom I'm well pleased.

[15 : 28] I mean I wonder how many of us has gone through life ever hearing that. Son, daughter, I'm pleased with you not because of your academic achievement or your career achievement but I'm pleased with you because you are my son and daughter.

I wonder how many of us have ever heard that in our lives. This is, you see, because for God to love his son Jesus Christ was not based on what Jesus has done, was not based on what was in the heart of Jesus but for God to love was based on what was in his heart and it was a heart that was full of love for his son and it was a love that was just being poured out from who he was.

It was his being, it was who he was. John 3, 35, Jesus says, the father loves the son and has given all things into his hand. You see, the father out of his love for his son has given all things to the son sharing, creating for his son and to flood his son with his love.

I mean, we could go on and on to describe the father's love. I mean, but if I may, in my insufficient words, in my feeble attempt to describe God's love in one sentence, it's a love that is eternal, never waning or changing, that delights over and powerfully pours out over out of the abundance of his heart and being that gives everything out of love.

I mean, that's a very long sentence, but let me say that again. It's a love that is eternal, that goes from beginning to the end, never changing, never waning, that delights over, that powerfully pours over out of the abundance of his heart and being and that gives everything out of love to the son.

[17 : 22] And this is the love the father has for his son, Jesus Christ. And we cannot even begin to imagine how powerful, how beautiful, how majestic, how incredible and all the words that I can have in my little dictionary is God's love for his son.

Then Jesus turns around and he looks at each one of us and he says, as the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Let that sink in.

As the father has loved me eternally, has loved me with never waning, never changing, that delights over me, that powerfully pours out out of the abundance of his heart and who he is, that gives everything and in the same way, I love you.

And if you think about it, Jesus did give everything, did he not? He gave his life on the cross. He took up our sins. He made them his very own.

He went to the cross bearing the price that we had to pay and gave his life. And if you think about it, it grips my heart when you think about the way the father loved the son and then yet he was still willing to give his son for us.

[18 : 44] And I mean, it's not only Jesus who loves us, it's also the father who loves us in the same fashion. I mean, remember the famous John 3, 16?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only begotten son, that he gave his son that he loved so much for us. He gave up everything.

I mean, now there's so much that can still be said, but in the words of an old hymn by Frederick, let me read it out. He said in this hymn, could we with ink the ocean fill and wear the skies of parchment made, wear every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade to write the love of God above who drained the ocean dry, nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky.

I mean, we could go on and on and on and then it would still be infinite, it would still be eternal, it would still go on and on. Now you can imagine in Revelation why the elders and the people and they bow down and they go on and on for eternity saying, holy, holy, holy are you God because his love is eternal.

His love goes on and on and on way beyond we can ever imagine. And as the Father has loved me, so I have I loved you. And Jesus says, abide in my love.

[20 : 13] And if you remember, abide means to remain. Abide means to abode, to make this your resting place, to live in this thing, to live in his love, to cling on, to continuously remain in his love.

And Jesus says, abide in my unimaginable love. Church, how many days, how many of us go through days without even experiencing God's love, amazing love?

When was the last time you sat beneath this amazing, unimaginable love of God and just rested and remained and abode and lived there and continuously lived there?

When was the last time we did that? And if we are being honest, we don't always do it, do we? There are days we just go through through the motion and suddenly it's already bedtime.

There are days we feel everything, we experience everything except God's love for us. I mean, we sometimes feel like God tolerates us, don't we? Do you know what I mean by tolerate?

[21 : 20] I mean, yes, he loves me, but everything I do, when he looks at my lifestyle, he's just there frowning at me. He's like, oh, this guy. Or sometimes we feel like, yes, God loves me, but my every action is making him go, this guy.

Oh man, again. Alan, again. We feel like God tolerates us and what that leads us to is, is that, is that we try to start doing a certain stuff to actually make God love us.

I mean, it becomes so easy to do something that would make him love us, right? So we pray a little more, maybe add in a little bit of fasting and tithing, maybe go to church, join some CGs, lead some stuff, just so that we feel like God does not tolerate us, but that he would actually love us.

I mean, imagine the frustration of God over that. Imagine God being frustrated over us trying to earn his love. I mean, Dan Audlin in his book, Deeper, right there, book Deeper, he shares his frustration over his kids.

This is what he writes in his book. He says, when I tell my five young kids that I love them, they shrug and they say, I know that, but they don't. They believe it, but they hardly know it.

[22 : 34] I cannot hug them tight enough. I can't say it loudly enough. I can't express it often enough. I have a blessed frustration at being unable to communicate to them how precious they are to me.

I mean, for us to earn God's love and not really realizing that God's love is eternal. It does not change. And do you know that that is how God views us?

His frustration over us to let us know that he loves us with a love that is completely inseparable, that never changes. I mean, let's take a break from John 15 and let's go to John, sorry, Romans 8 for a bit to see this.

I mean, if you have a bulletin on your hands, the Romans 8 is on the next page. I mean, if you have a Bible, let's turn to Romans 8 and let's see that. Let's look at verses 31 to 39. I mean, Romans 8 is a massive chapter.

I feel like I'm saying a lot of massive stuff. I mean, we'll definitely not go into details here. I mean, this is considered to be the Mount Everest of Romans 8, of the letter to Romans.

[23 : 49] I mean, it was the peak of Romans. It's the, I mean, you cannot go any higher than Romans 8. I mean, Niels told me that like, hey, with these verses are so profound, so beautiful that it is just better to repeat it 20 times and finish the sermon and that's it.

That's, I cannot say anything much more beautiful than what's already been said. And me, obeying my pastor, I'm going to do just that. I'm going to say it 20 times. I'm just kidding. I'm not going to do that.

Okay, so let's look at this. Let's look at this Mount Everest from a distance and let's look at it from very far and one thing you'll see is at the end of all, in verse 39, Paul cries out that there is nothing that will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, that his love for us is inseparable.

I mean, well, you got to read the whole of Romans to see how he comes to that conclusion, but let's just look from verse 31 onwards and you'll see that he asks a few questions and he answers them at the same time.

Now, let's look at verse 31. He says, if God is for us, who can be against us? Now, he's saying that, do you know that God is for you? Do you know that God is on your side?

[25 : 05] I mean, in the world that we live in, it's so unpredictable. I mean, after having gone through lockdowns, looking at the news, looking at the war, I mean, for some of us, jobs going terrible and all sorts of things going terrible.

I mean, sometimes it can feel like God is everywhere except with us. I mean, sometimes it is even our own sins and our choices that messes us up and it feels like God is not on our side, but in fact, God feels like he's opposite of us.

Looking at us, frowning at us. I mean, but what we see here is that God is for us. I mean, even if you think about our choices and our habitual sins, it does feel like God is opposite of us.

But actually, this says, no, no, no, no. God is not opposite of you. God is not against you, but God is for you. He's actually for you and he's strengthening you in your struggles. Do you remember Philippians 4, 13?

It says, Paul says, I can do all things through him who strengthens me. It's not me doing all things, but it's God who is in me strengthening me, that he's for me.

[26 : 15] But how do you know that he's for you and that he's giving you all his amazing promises? Well, look at verse 32. He says, Paul says, he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

The son, we just talked about, that he loves eternally without change, that delights over, that he gave his son for us, if he can't do that for us, will he not fulfill his promise for us and not just for eternity, but even for this life, for his presence in our life, for his presence and his strength in our life, for our sanctification, for us to overcome what we go through in this life.

That God is for us, that he's not against us. He's on your side. Verse 33, 34. Who is it that is going to bring charges against us? No one.

Because we have been justified by God. It's God who justifies us. Who is it that will condemn us for our sins and rebellion? No one. Because even though it was us that was supposed to be condemned, even though it was us that was supposed to pay the price, it was Jesus who was condemned.

It was Jesus who took our death and shame and he gave his life for us so that now we can stand justified putting on Jesus' righteousness and we can all stand as if we have never sinned in our lives.

[27 : 37] That now we are standing justified because of Jesus who has justified us, who has paid the price. And finally, what is it that will separate us from the love of Christ?

Nothing. Verse 38 and 39. For I am sure, he starts off, Paul starts off with that words. For I am sure. Why is he sure?

Because of all the things he talked about, that Jesus paid the price, that God gave his one and only son whom he loved so dearly, so eternally, that he gave his son for us, that now we stand without fall, covered in his righteousness.

And because of all this gospel truth, the gospel of the good news of Jesus Christ, because of that, I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, nor the troubles in your life, nor the sins that you have put up before God, nor anything that we have in our lives or in this creation, spiritual or physical, or anything can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

man, isn't that just amazing? I mean, it is so true. I could have just read that and finished it with that. There's nothing, nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

[29 : 09] And if I may, if I can squeeze out one word from all of that, it is security. These verses are reminding us that God's love for us is so deep, so unshakable, that we are so secure in the love of God found in Christ Jesus.

And if you think about it, in real life, in our day-to-day life, things will happen that will take us, that will leave us out of control, that will make us feel insecure.

I mean, even in the beginning of this series, we were talking about it, right? That as we go into the year, 95% of the things will be out of our control. 95% of the things will be things we are not expecting.

And when that happens, we feel insecure. Maybe God is not with us. Maybe God is not for us. Maybe God is not in my life right now. Where are you, God? How long, oh God?

Where are you, God? I mean, even the things that we suffer can leave us in such a mess. I mean, even the sins that other people commit against us.

[30 : 17] It can be small, like your boss scolding you. Or it can be big, like an abuse by someone. And all these things can leave us in such a mess. And all these things can shape us and leave us in such a mess.

But actually, what this is saying is that your life is not what proves God's love for you. It's Christ's love on the cross that is what proves God's love.

For you. It's not who you are or the mess or the chaos or the suffering that you go through. It is the chaos and the mess and the suffering that Jesus went through that proves God's love for you.

Isn't that amazing that there is nothing, nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. I mean, it's like what Kevin was sharing last week about what his dad used to tell him.

That he used to tell his sons that son or a kid, whatever you do in your life, whatever you say, whatever you do, whatever you decide, nothing can separate you, nothing can take away my love for you.

[31 : 22] But here's one thing that we need to remember. Here's one thing we need to remember. If you look closely in verse 39, you'll see that this amazing love, this love that is being poured out from the Father to the Son, from the Father to us, from the Son to us, the love that is inseparable, this love that is unimaginable, this love that is so profound and so majestic, this love of God is actually found in Christ Jesus.

So, if you're here for the first time or if you have never made a decision to follow Christ yet or if you're still debating on it, this can be the day for you to come and receive this amazing and profound love of God that can only be found in Christ Jesus.

Love that satisfies our deepest longings. Love that cannot be found anywhere else on this earth. A love that is based not on how you perform but on who God is and a love that will make you whole.

Will you come and taste this amazing love of God and that the Lord is good? I mean, if that is something you want to talk about, if that's something anyone wants to talk about, I mean, you can reach out to any one of us, Neil, Oscar, or any one of us at the end of the service.

But for those of us who have been a Christian for some time or if you're new or if you're a follower of Christ, I want us to know that abiding in His love is not something that we experience deep in our hearts.

[32 : 58] It's not something that is passive. It's not something we feel internally but actually it is something that is the reality of our lives. Abiding in His love means that our whole life is being shaped by it and it's more than that.

Abiding in His love means that our source of our joy is His love. I mean, let's go back to John 15 again. I mean, we're going back and forth. Let's go back to John 15 and let's look at verse 10 and 11.

And it says here, if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. Now, if you read that properly, that sounds a lot like, hey, the way to abide in His love is to obey His commandments.

Okay, if you want God's love, you better have obedience in your life. I mean, it's sounding a lot like that, right? But actually, if you stop and think about it, not really. Because you see, it's quite easy to fall back into trying to earn God's love, right?

And being very insecure in God's love. But yet, there's something about abiding in God's love and obedience that fits in one sentence. I mean, one thing we should think about is, you see, His love for us never changes.

[34 : 16] That's something we talked about, right? His love is eternal. It's never waning, never changes, never goes down, never goes up because that's the highest He can get. So, His love for us never changes, but yet, whether we choose to abide in it or not, now that can make a difference.

You see, abiding in His love, His love never changes, but we can choose to move away from His love and one of the ways we can choose to move away from His love is disobedience.

I mean, let me give an example. Imagine a husband sitting on his sofa all day, doing nothing and the wife's request to help out in the home falls on deaf ears.

And for the husband to say, I love my wife, I mean, I know my wife loves me, and I love my wife so much, I care for my wife. That's quite unreasonable, isn't it?

I mean, how many of us have a husband like that? That's good. I'm not going to ask that. But that's quite unreasonable for the husband to say, I love you, but at the same time, do nothing, not hear, not listen to his wife at all, is quiet.

[35 : 24] It just does not fit in in one sentence. You don't believe that the husband loves this wife. Obviously, this analogy falls apart because the wife's love for the husband starts to falter, starts to go down.

While God's love for us never changes. His love is always steadfast, but it's us who's choosing to walk away, right? Now, but, but it just does not end there.

Now, look at verse 11 also. What he ends up with is, he says that, he has said all these things so that his joy may be in us and our joy may be full. Now, to the equation of abiding in his God's love, commandments, obedience, Jesus adds one more thing.

He adds joy. Now, joy, this is a joy that is not based on circumstances, but on the security of God's love. It's a joy that sits steadily deep in us regardless of our circumstance.

It's a joy that satisfies us in a way that are beyond comprehension. It's a joy from God's love that is beyond anything this world can offer. I mean, if you remember David's psalm in Psalm 63, he says, God, your love is better than life itself.

[36 : 34] Have you ever thought of that psalm? God, your love is better than life itself? I mean, what else do we humans have apart from life? Life is the only thing that we have.

And David comes up and he says, God, your love is better than life itself. There's some kind of satisfaction in God's love. There's some kind of steadiness, wholeness in God's love that keeps us, that leaves us saying, God, your love is way better than life itself.

There's a joy in abiding in God's love and obedience. There's a kind of joy that when we abide in God's love that leads to obedience, that gives us a joy that's so deep within.

I mean, if you remember Hebrews 12, it says, where it says, it was for the joy of Jesus to endure the cross in obedience to the Father. It was a joy for Jesus Christ to obey His Father and to go on the cross to take our sins.

This is a joy that comes from abiding in His love and obedience. And it's not just a joy that fills our heart, it's a joy that strengthens us. That, if you remember, the joy of the Lord is my strength.

[37 : 44] See, this joy is not just an emotion, not just something that's fleeting, it's something that's deep within us. It's almost like a circle, abiding in His love, obedience, joy.

It almost goes at the same time, if that makes sense. So just to bring that in, church, here's the thing to think about.

What are we abiding in in our lives? Are we abiding in our performance? Are we trusting and basing our identity and value in what we do and what we perform?

Or is it in His love that we are secure and accepted? Where is the source of our joy? Is it our work? Is it our achievements? Is it our families?

Is it what we do and what we receive? Or is it this unshakable, inseparable, unimaginable love of God found in Christ Jesus? Is our Christian life marked with rituals of church attendance or a few minutes of Bible reading in the morning?

[38 : 45] Or is it marked with obedience in every part of our lives that comes out of knowing that we are secure in the love of God and full of joy that is unshakable in every circumstances?

Church, Jesus calls us to abide, to remain, to cling, to make this our home, to abide in His love so that everything that we do, everything that we go through in coming days, in this coming 2023, is grounded in the security and joy found in the love of God in Christ Jesus.

You see, that our lives are marked, that our lives are marked, I think this Kevin mentioned this, to be a man full of Christ, full of His word and full of love, to be a people that is marked with obedience and joy that comes from the love of God, that has taken us in, that has called us sons and daughters, not because of our good works, but because of what Jesus did on the cross, remembering, remembering that He loved us first, not us.

To bring it to a close, how do we do it? I mean, Kevin has been finishing with practical application, so it would be a sin if I don't. Here's, I don't have a lot of practical application of, okay, how do we do this?

Apart from getting daily into your scripture, praying for God to reveal His love in His word in our lives, here are three practical application that came to my heart as I was preparing this sermon.

[40 : 14] These are the three that I was reminded of. I mean, it's going to sound a lot like a traffic rules. You'll see what I mean. So first one is stop. Stop. It's so easy to get busy.

It's so easy to go with the flow. It's so easy to do family. It's so easy to do work, home, assignments. But when was the last time we stopped? Just stopped.

And pondered over this majestic love of Christ over us. Someone gave me an advice years, years back. He told me, go and sit on a big rock.

And the reason for that is it's very hard to find a big rock in Hong Kong. Unless, unless you go out of the way, out of the city to find a big rock. So stop and go find a big rock and ponder over the majestic love of God.

I mean, it's the same thing for couples, right? I mean, it's so easy to do family work, feed the kids, sleep on the sand bed, and forget to abide in each other's love. That's why date nights are so important.

[41 : 18] You go out once a week or how much ever, talk to each other, pour out each other, listen to each other. So take time off, stop, pause, take out a significant time out of your, out of, I would say, every day, and let God wash you with His love.

Second is this, talk. in our communities, with the people around us, it's so easy to pray for each other, it's so easy to tell, help each other in our sufferings, in our problems, encouraging each other, but let's also, let's also speak God's love to each other, reminding of God's amazing and unimaginable, unseparable love of God's love found in Christ Jesus to each other.

Let's speak that to each other in our communities and finally walk. Traffic rules, right? Stop, talk, walk. Walk as you go to school, as you go to work.

I mean, in my life, I found that when I walk from my home to work, that's the time when I, that's the time I get to really pray and let God wash His love over me.

So when you go to school, when you work, in those gaps, remember God's love that He gave His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, not because of any good thing I did, but out of purely of grace and love.

[42 : 35] That now I can come putting on His righteousness that Jesus looks at us and says, as the Father has loved me, so I have I loved you. So in our lives, let's take a pause, let's stop, let's talk, and as we walk in our lives, as we do our daily deeds, let's ponder, let's let God wash His love and let's abide in His love.

Let me pray for us. Father, we praise You and we thank You and there's not a lot of words I can say we can say about Your love and even in this feeble attempt of talking about this amazing love, God, I pray that You, Your Spirit, would take these words and put it deep in our hearts.

Father, until and unless Your Spirit opens up and reveals Your love to us, God, we are still blind. So, Father, we pray for each one of us in Watermark that we would be a church that abides in You, Jesus, that would abide in Your Word, that would abide in Your love, that we would be a church that is marked, that is recognized by being people, that is deeply sitting secure in Your love, that is full of Your Word, that is deeply full of joy because of what You have done on the cross and not because of our performance and who we are and how amazing we look from the outside.

Father, I pray for each one of us that we would be people that are deeply secure in Your Gospel. Help us to speak, help us to encourage each other in Your love, God, that ultimately that we would decrease and You would increase.

So, Father, we give You praise. May You be glorified. May You be lifted up. May Your love abide in our hearts and may 2023 be a year for us to get deeper into Your love that You would reveal day by day how amazing, how vast, how high, how deep, how wide Your love is that can be found in Christ Jesus.

[44 : 34] To You we give glory, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. ...