

April 24 Adult Spiritual Growth Class Synopsis

Anxious for Nothing: Chapter 10: Cling to Jesus

What does it mean to abide in Christ? Are you deliberate and diligent in this abiding? If not, what may be some obstacles for you?

How do we cling to Jesus?

In John 15:1-11, Jesus speaks figuratively to his disciples in the Upper Room to prepare them for what is to come – His betrayal and crucifixion. *He is the true vine; the Father is the gardener; they are the branches. Those who remain (abide) in Him will bear much fruit all for the Father's glory, for apart from Him they can do nothing. He tells them when they remain obedient to His commandments, they remain in His love. He tells them these things so that they will be filled with His joy, an overflowing joy.* May we also make our home in Jesus and may His words be at home in us, such that we too may bear fruit and our hearts be filled and overflowing with His love and joy!

Paul writes in Galatians 5:22-23: *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* The fruit of the Spirit is the outpouring of Christ within us. Jesus reminds us, as He does the disciples, that our goal is not to bear fruit, but to stay attached to Him. Our assignment is not fruitfulness but faithfulness as Lucado writes. Paul gives in Galatians 2:20 the essence of being the branch whose transformative life comes from the vine: *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Joshua, who faithfully led Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses' death, says to *cling to the Lord your God as you have done to this day (Joshua 23:8). Joshua tells us that it is important to remember God's faithfulness (Joshua 23:9); to remember that God fights for us (Joshua 23:10), and to be diligent in our love for our God (Joshua 23:11)*

Aimee Smith, a mom of four, provides reflective insight on clinging to Jesus, following a child's example (www.restinthetrench.com).

Get close – you can't cling if you're not close. Picture your child clinging to your leg. That's just impossible if they are on the other side of the room. It's the same for you. To cling to Jesus, you must get close to Him. Be diligent in the little things each day. Read your Bible. Talk to Him in prayer. Sing a song of worship. Talk to Him early, then continue talking with Him throughout your day.

Let go - you can't cling if your hands are full. See the child trying desperately to not be left in the nursery. They're not holding on to the toys. They are holding on to *you*. Your hands can cling more tightly if they are not full of something else. Unforgiveness? Bitterness? Hurts? Your own agenda? Pride? Insecurity? It is hard to release something that feels like part of you, but it is worth letting go so you can cling to Someone better.

Take action - you can't cling by being passive. Consider the child afraid at the edge of the ocean. They are certainly not passive. Their efforts to cling are absolutely active. To cling requires action and energy. Pursuit like this cannot be passive. Turn up the music. Sing a song of worship. Write a verse and post it somewhere to see often. Then repeat. And repeat again. Stubbornly hold on to Jesus. Refuse to let go.

Pour out your heart - you can't cling by bottling up your thoughts and emotions. Picture that clinging child once more. What do you hear? Silence? No. You hear sobs, screams, pleas. Children just aren't concerned with looking good. They are more concerned with being heard.

Same for you. If you are going to cling to Jesus, you must express what is really going on inside you. Don't worry. God already knows the truth. Carve out a few minutes to be alone with Jesus today. Tell Him what is in your heart. Try saying it out loud, even if just in a whisper. He doesn't need you to tell Him, but He wants you to. Pouring out your heart expresses dependence on Him. Dependence on God – your Creator, Sustainer of the universe, your true Friend – brings relief and freedom.

In Hebrews 10:23 we are told: *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.* The hope we profess is Christ crucified and risen from the dead, to return at the proper time for the ushering in of the New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev 21:1) and recompense for his children (Rev 22:12). The hope is that any who believe in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). We hold tightly to the hope we profess, and we are held firmly by a Savior who is a great high priest. He understands our weaknesses such that we can approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16). Walking closely with the Lord involves a life of faith, clinging to God's promises as with Abraham and all the family of faith who have preceded us (Romans 4:20-21, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 6:12-15, 11:32-33). The Lord's promises for our future infuse us with hope for today. We can stand, walk, sleep, and wake secure in this truth: God is trustworthy to keep His Word. *"For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does,"* declares Psalm 33:4.

And when it seems that we are no longer able to cling to Jesus, we can be assured of His promise that He cares for us, holds us and carries us when we need Him most: *"I have cared for you since you were born. Yes, I carried you before you were born. I will be your God throughout your lifetime – until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you".* (Isaiah 46:3-4)

We are reminded that in every hour of our going out and coming in God in Christ Jesus and His Holy Spirit fulfill us with His promises. Amber Brantley, in her great time of need when she got news that her husband was diagnosed with the Ebola virus in Liberia while on a medical mission, shares: "Through hymns, I was able to connect with God in a meaningful way when I couldn't find my own words to pray."

Song to reflect and pray on:

[I Need Thee Every Hour \(with lyrics\) - The most BEAUTIFUL hymn! - Bing video](#)

Looking ahead – Sunday May 1

Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World

Section 4: Meditate on good things.

Chapter 11 – C.A.L.M.