



Life on the Rock Part Two – The Well-Tended Garden

Message by Pastor Andrew Kulasingham 23rd February 2020

In Part One of our series entitled “Life on the Rock” we learned that being a Christian is to become a disciple of Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- “**baptising them**” – Discipleship is total immersion into a relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are transformed into His likeness.
- “**teaching them to observe**” – Discipleship involves learning the teachings of Christ and applying them through practice.

Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV) – the parable of the wise man and the foolish man.

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

- The similarities – Both were building a house; both experienced rain, floods and wind beating the house.
- The difference – One heard and did; the other heard and did not do.

You cannot hear if you are not listening.

You will not do if you do not agree with what you are listening to.

Today we will look at the metaphor of a garden.

John 15:1-10 (NKJV)

¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ 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.

Note the following points from the scripture quoted above:

1. Our Heavenly Father actively tends our garden to make us fruitful (verses 1 and 2)

John 15:1-2 (NKJV)

My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

The Father actively tends to our garden so that we bear more fruit. I will talk more on the tending process next week -- how “He takes away” and how He “prunes”.

2. We are already clean.

John 15:3 (NKJV)

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Discipleship is not about who we are. We are children of God.

John 1:12 (NKJV) **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name**

Our status in Christ is secure. The tending of our garden is not about our being but our doing. The Father works on every disciple to shape and form Christlikeness into our lives. So that our “doing” like Jesus is consistent with our “being” like Jesus.

Discipleship is about working on the gap
between being like Christ and doing like Christ.

3. Abiding in Christ ensures becoming fruitful like Christ.

John 15:4-5 (NKJV) **Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

Note these phrases – “...cannot bear fruit ... unless you abide...”
“...without me you can do nothing.”

Do we really believe we can do nothing without Christ?

The qualifications of a disciple – foolish, weak and base.

1 Corinthians:26-31 (NKJV)

²⁶ **For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to**

shame the things which are mighty;²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”

Paul is reminding the disciple in the context of the Kingdom and Kingdom economy we are foolish, weak and base. Outside of Christ there is nothing we can do that would have Kingdom impact.

Matthew 19:23 (NKJV) **Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”**

The story of King Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel 4

This testimony by the King himself reveals to us the challenges one experiences when they have everything they need and has little need to depend on God. Nebuchadnezzar, in a position of great earthly wealth and power, failed to see the favour of God upon his life that enabled him to be in the place where he was. As soon as the Lord removed his favour, the King lost his mind. Note the significant shift from “I” to “He” in Nebuchadnezzar’s language before and after his mental breakdown.

John 15:4 (NKJV)

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. Without Christ we can do nothing

I ask again: Do we truly believe we can do nothing without Christ?
If we do not believe this we will not abide in Him.

How do we abide in Christ?

John 15:9-10

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ 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.

There is a direct link between “**keeping**” Christ’s commandments and abiding in Him.

In the original Greek, the word translated “keep” is *teros*, which means to guard from loss or injury by keeping an eye on, to attend to carefully.

The only way we can stay connecting to Christ – abide in Him – is to have His words and His teachings close to our hearts and minds on a regular and consistent way.

You cannot **hear** if you are not listening.

You will not **do** if you don’t agree with what you are listening to.

- **Take time to hear Him daily.** You cannot keep Christ’s teachings if you do not hear His teachings. Hear Him through His Word.
- **Embrace what you hear, and seek to adjust your life accordingly.**
Look for opportunities daily to put into practice what you have heard from God.

As you read the Bible daily, ask the Holy Spirit:

- What are you saying?
- Then ask again – What are you saying to me?
- Then ask again – What are you saying to me today?

Then embrace it – say, “Yes AMEN.” and seek opportunities throughout the day to put into practice what God has spoken to you each day.

- **Discipleship is about working on the gap between being like Christ and doing like Christ.**
 - **Disciples are totally dependent on Christ because without Christ we can do nothing.**
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