

John 15 (Part 1) :1-9 • Abiding in Jesus

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John chapter 15. We're going to take, I have no idea how long this chapter will take us to get through. I think there's a better chance that Jesus will return first before we get through it but of course, I've always kind of believed that. But we're going to get through the first 9 verses this morning, so let's go ahead and read. I'm reading out of the ESV so follow along with me as I read.

Says, "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 does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love." (ESV) I'm going to have you stop there, let's pray.

Heavenly Father we come before you with a spirit of humility this morning and an open heart asking you, Lord God, to open our spiritual ears and eyes. Lord, let us hear and see what you would have us to see from this passage. Teach us today, O Lord God, for your servants are listening. We ask it in the name of Jesus, our Savior and King, amen. Amen.

You might have noticed, that this passage that we're looking at here this morning contains the last of the seven "I am" statements of our Lord that are given to us through the Gospel of John, and yes, they are the ones that you see printed all around this auditorium on the walls there. If you see eight of them, that's because we stole one from Revelation, but the rest of them are from the Book of John. Each one of them, as we have gone through and looked at these statements, has boldly declared the deity of Jesus Christ. These "I am"

statements are absolute in their declarative truth that Jesus is God in human flesh.

But once again, you'll notice as we get into these first 9 verses, you'll see that Jesus is using the language and the imagery of agriculture; particularly the growing of grapes in a vineyard. Something that would have been completely common and understandable to the people of that day.

But He speaks of the vineyard and He begins by saying, *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser."* And you know, it would have been completely understandable if Jesus had simply just said, I am the vine and left it at that. But you'll notice He included another word, He said, *"I am the **true** vine,"* and He added that word very purposefully and He said, *"I am the **true** vine."*

And to understand why Jesus put that word in there, it's important to know that a vine or the vineyard, if you will, is a common symbol, frankly, in the Old Testament for the nation of Israel. And what's really interesting is that whenever Israel is talked about in the Old Testament, and this picture or this imagery of the vineyard is used, it's always describing the failure of Israel to bear fruit. Isn't that interesting? Always. When God speaks of Israel as a vine, His vine, the vine that He planted, He's speaking of it as a fruitless vine.

Let me give you an example on the screen from Jeremiah, it's from chapter 2. This is God speaking through Jeremiah, He says,

Jeremiah 2:21 (ESV)

Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?

God says, I planted you, I know what I planted was good, how is it that you turned out the way you did? How is it that you became corrupted and polluted? And frankly, this is the message again and again throughout the Hebrew scriptures. The Lord confronts the nation of Israel for their inability to produce fruit.

Well, now we come to the New Testament and we come to this contrast that Jesus begins to give related to the vine, and He says, *"I am the true vine,"* all right. *"I am the true vine,"* and by that statement, He boldly declares Himself to be the one to whom Israel pointed. He boldly declares to be the one who brings forth good fruit, unlike the nation of Israel.

He boldly declares that He is the one who fulfills the Jewish law and the Jewish feast. He speaks with an authority greater than Moses and He declares to you and me that the very focus of all that came before is found in Him. That's why I say that these seven "I am" statements of Jesus recorded in John, if you really walk them through and understand the implications of each of them, they declare His deity, pure and simple.

And here's what's really interesting, there's actually one of the Psalms that uses the imagery of the vineyard and it connects it to the Son of Man. It's actually Psalm chapter 80, let me show you the select verses from this Psalm. It says,

Psalm 80:7-9, 12, 17-18 (ESV)

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved! You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved! You brought a vine out of Egypt; (there's that imagery of the nation of Israel) you drove out the nations (meaning all that lived in Canaan) and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!

Isn't that incredible? So the Psalmist laments the vine that God planted, but that God has been cutting back. And yet the Psalm ends by saying, "let your hand be on and the man of your right hand," we know that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the majesty of heaven, the Son of man. So this interesting connection, which further buttresses and understores Jesus's statement, "I am the true vine," right? It's not the nation of Israel that could not bear God's fruit, it is Jesus Himself.

Then Jesus said, "and my Father (He said, my Father) is the vinedresser." The Greek word properly means farmer. That's why some of your Bibles, if you have a different translation, simply says, "my Father is the gardener" and that's completely appropriate.

In verse 2, He says, *“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.”* So here Jesus speaks of you and me and all believers as the branches of the vine. He says, *“I am the true vine,”* and you are the branches. And you'll recognize in this verse, verse 2, an important relationship. We all know that the branches would be nothing without the vine, they have to stay connected to the vine in order to stay alive. Once a branch gets severed from a tree, it's you know, not going to live very long.

In fact, Sue and I were sitting out on our back porch here just about a week and a half ago, something like that, when we had one of those wind storms, you know, kind of come through. And we had this pasture beyond, just beyond our fence, our backyard, and we were sitting there and kind of watching the trees blowing and we suddenly heard this loud crack. And we saw this huge branch, you know, hit the ground and it sat there on the ground, looking like all of the other branches that were connected to the tree, at least for a while.

But leave that branch sit out there for about 24 hours, and it begins to show that it is disconnected and then eventually those leaves that look very green, even after the branch hits the ground, begin to turn brown, and they begin to wither, and they begin to fall off the branch, and the branch looks very, very dead. And that's because it's no longer connected to the tree because that is where it receives its life from, and that's the first relationship I want you to see. If we're the branches and Jesus is the true vine, we have to understand our relationship to Him, to stay connected to Him, that we might have life, that our life might be in Him.

Well, now that we've seen the relationship between, you know, the branches and the vine, there's also this interesting statement that we're given in this verse that reminds us that we, the branches are the ones that produce fruit. You ever think about that? Jesus says, *“I am the true vine,”* but you are the branches, and that's where the fruit's going to be, that's where my fruit is going to show up on you. Had you ever thought about that?

We always think about bearing, us bearing fruit, you ever think about the fact that we're bearing fruit for Him? It's His fruit because we receive our life from Him, our ability to grow fruit and bear fruit comes from Him, so it's His fruit. There is a relationship here. We draw our life from the vine, we give our life back to the vine in the bearing of fruit for the vine. It's really a beautiful sort of relationship.

Now let's look at what Jesus is saying here as we go on. He says, *“Every branch in...”*, here again in verse 2, *“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,”* And that simply means an unfruitful branch is cut off and removed and this is an important truth to understand, but it's also a truth that we must be very careful to interpret correctly. Because you see, if we're not careful and a lot of people have not been careful, you come away with the idea or the belief that what Jesus is saying here is that salvation is something that you earn by bearing fruit.

And a lot of people have concluded that, even people who have been taught correctly will read this verse and they will conclude wrongly. Because they see here that Jesus said, *“Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away,”* but Jesus is not making a statement here about how a person is saved.

The fact is, when Jesus saves you, you will produce good fruit, you will, and you don't have to sit and worry about it. And I find that Christians worry a lot about their lack of fruit and we'll talk about that in just a minute. But that's not to be your main concern, your main concern is to stay connected to the branch, or to the vine, as a branch. You need to just stay connected, that's all you need to do, and you will bear fruit. You may not even be aware of it, but you will.

Let me show you a passage from Matthew 7, I like this out of the NIV. It says,

Matthew 7:16b-18 (NIV)

“Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”

“Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, (I don't think so) or figs (do they get them) from thistles? Likewise, (look at this) every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. (but look at this, He goes on to say it another way) A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”

Guess what? He planted you, you're a good tree, you will bear fruit. Don't worry about it, stop stressing about it, ah. It makes me tired sometimes just talking to people who are stressing over these issues. And so, but what does Jesus say about bearing fruit? He says, well, you can't do it without me, so just stay in me and that's how you bear fruit, stay connected to the vine.

Notice He goes on to say in that same verse, verse 2, *“and every branch that does not bear fruit, he prunes, (so) that it may bear (more) fruit.”* You know what pruning is, I assume. It means to cut back the branches so that they will

flourish and become even more fruitful. And the purpose, of course, of Jesus telling us this, is to show that all true Christians will have some measure of fruit and fruit is the mark of a genuine believer, and that's all good and fine.

But here's the problem, and I've already talked about this, but now here's where we're going to get into it. We are pathetic at judging our own fruit, in fact, we stink even at judging other people's fruit, I'll just say that. We're not good at either one, either one. But we're especially bad at judging our own fruit, we are bad at judging other people's fruit because we often make wrong judgments.

Let me ask you a question, have you ever seen a tree that's just been freshly pruned? Let me show you a picture of one on the screen.



Let me ask you a question here, does that look like a fruitful tree to you? Looks dead to me. I know nothing about trees, but it looks dead. I would go by that tree and go, well, you ought to cut that down. Because I, you know, personally, I don't really know better but that is a tree that has been pruned. And the reason it is pruned is because it did bear fruit and the pruning will make it even more fruitful.

But again, you walk by that tree just after it's been pruned, you're going to go, oh, that's too bad, that's terrible, right? Do you know what? It's exactly what we do to some Christians. We go, we walk by them after the Lord has pruned them, and we're like, I don't see any fruit on your limbs and we're looking at a freshly pruned tree. And yeah, there might not be any fruit just, but you know, we don't even have the patience to wait and we make that kind of a mistake often when looking at others.

I want you to notice what Jesus says to his disciples in verse 3. He says, *"Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you."* He made a statement similar to this back when He was washing their feet, right, during the Last Supper. He talked about the fact that He said, you are already clean all of you, well except one, and you know he was referring to Judas. (John 13:10) But there is, we find from these 2 passages about cleansing, there is a natural, should I say a supernatural cleansing ability that is found in the Word of God. The Word has a cleansing aspect, I guess, for lack of a better word. Now, that cleansing doesn't always come easily. Being cleansed by the Word is quite often a painful process, sometimes even a messy process.

I've got to be honest with you. I drive up here on a Sunday morning and I'm surprised every week that you guys keep coming back to church and one of the reasons I'm surprised is because, the Word of God, don't you find it intrusive? I do. Don't you find the Word of God often troubling? I do, I find it distressing. It regularly rains on my parade, it regularly intrudes on my natural fleshly desires and it puts me to shame. And it convicts me and it exposes what's really in my heart and we keep coming back for more, it's the weirdest thing, isn't it?

Because the Word of God meddles in our lives, you know, by revealing just how far off base we've gotten and I don't know about you, but I deal with a lot of that. It's kind of like a hovering parent, always asking those questions. Didn't you hate that? Your parents always, what are you doing? Why are you doing that? It's like, leave me alone, but the Word of God won't leave us alone and I'm so thankful for it. But there is a cleansing aspect to the Word of God when we embrace, when we embrace what the Word is doing in our lives, it makes us clean.

Jesus says in verse 4, *"Abide in me, and I in you."* The word abide there is the Greek word men-o and it is also translated, remain or stay. Remain in the NIV, I'm not sure where stay is found, but that's a very accurate meaning of the word. He says, remain in me, stay in me, abide in me. He goes on to say here in verse 4, *"As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."*

And again, that idea of the severed branch bearing fruit, we all know that doesn't make any sense, it's a ridiculous idea. How can you be severed from Jesus and bear fruit? You cannot and Jesus is calling upon this kind of imagery to emphasize the absolute necessity that we need to understand here.

He's telling you and me, you must stay connected to me in order to bear fruit. He is our source, He is our life and this is repeated in verse 5. Look at verse 5 again, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, (and here He says it) for apart from me you can do nothing."* It is essential, we must remain, we must abide.

He says in verse 6, *"If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers;"* What are the branches used for? Well, they're just gathered up, tossed into the fire and used for fuel. Once again, people, be very careful here, Jesus is not trying to convey a theological understanding for how a person is saved, He's giving us warnings here. Sober warnings about the danger of not abiding and that brings me to my final point.

I want to, kind of, by the way, we're going to do communion. You probably noticed our tables around the auditorium, so, we're going to do communion this morning. So, I want you to, you know, be preparing your heart for that. But, I want to kind of finish up here this morning, before we do that, by asking the question that we will put up on the screen here. And that is,

What does it look like to abide in Jesus?

Because, you know, if we don't talk about the practical aspect of this whole thing, we can say, abide in Jesus, abide in Jesus, abide in Jesus all day long. But if somebody walks away going, I don't really know what that means, then what have we done? What have we gained? And the answer to that question, I believe, is found in keeping in mind the answers to 3 sub questions, I'll call them critical sub questions. And, whoops, that's not it, Jane, it's, there you go.

What does it look like to abide in Jesus?

- What is the Gospel?
- Who is Jesus?
- Who and what am I?

First of all, What is the Gospel? Second of all, Who is Jesus? And thirdly, Who and what am I? And those are incredibly important questions. The world is constantly trying to chime in on these questions to give you their answers. But I'm here to tell you, if you begin to lean toward the world in the answers that they have to these questions, you will begin to move away from abiding in Christ.

But if you stay on a biblical path to these simple questions. Let's start with the first one. What is the gospel? You know, this is so simple. You say, oh, come on, pastor, give me a break, everybody knows what the gospel is. Maybe so, but I am fully convinced after watching a lot of people's lives over 40 some years of ministry, that it is very easy for a Christian who once embraced the gospel to drift away from the simplicity of it, I am convinced.

You know, it's one of the reasons the we take communion. We remind ourselves that our salvation is all about what Jesus did when He bore our sins on the cross. We are reminded of that with the bread, He bore our sins on His body, and then we take the cup and we're reminded that it is through His blood that we've been redeemed, purchased from death unto life.

But we, you know, Jesus said, or we're told in the Word, as often as you do this, do this in remembrance, do this to remember. Why is that so important? So you don't drift away, so that you don't drift off. Let me ask you another question. If somebody were to ask you, how do you know that you are a born again Christian and how do you know that you are a child of God?

Can I just tell you this? If you begin to respond to that person using the words, I or me, you've missed the point of the gospel. The gospel is always about Jesus and what He did, it's not about you.

You are a recipient by the mercy of God, but it's not about you, it's about Him, it's about what He did. The word gospel means good news and it's good news because of what He did. He bore your sin on the cross, He died to pay the penalty of your iniquity, that's good news if you embrace it, right? People, I believe we have to preach the gospel to ourselves every day or we're going to forget.

We're going to begin to look, because something's going to come along and shine the light on some problem in your life or some weakness in your life or some sin issue in your heart and it's going to begin to shine that light on what you got to do to stay saved. And pretty soon, we're laboring under a burden of

what I've got to do and that's not what the gospel is about. And that's why I say that abiding in Jesus is remembering what the gospel is about, remembering that it's about what He did for you.

You know, you can find this out by, if you ever picked up your Bible and decided to do a simple word study on the word boast or boasting, you would find that there is ample evidence in the New Testament to just remind you of what Jesus did, because what does the word boasting mean? It means calling attention to myself, right? It's focusing on my, you know, abilities, my actions or something like that. So where does boasting come in as it relates to the gospel? 3 interesting verses all in the same slide, look at this,

Romans 3:27 (ESV)

...what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded.

Galatians 6:14 (ESV)

...far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

...by grace you have been saved through faith...so that no one may boast.

(Romans 3:27)...*what becomes of our boasting?* (as it relates to salvation?) *It is excluded.*

(Galatians 6:14)...*far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...*

(Ephesians 2:8&9) ...*by grace you have been saved through faith...so that no one may boast.*

You see, you look at these verses and it tells you, very clearly, there's no boasting when it comes to the gospel, that means it's not about you. So somebody says to you, so how do you know you're a Christian? How do you know for sure that you're a Christian? Because I've seen you, I've watched your life, you're not perfect, as if they're telling you something you don't know. But I've watched your life, yeah, you can slip up from time, so how do you know you're going to heaven?

Let me tell you what Jesus did, that's it, that's where you start, that's where you stop. Let me tell you what Jesus did, right? That's the gospel and that's the first part of what it looks like to abide in Jesus.

The next part, let's highlight the next one for you here. Who is Jesus?

What does it look like to abide in Jesus?

- What is the Gospel?
- **Who is Jesus?**
- Who and what am I?

Well, you know, good grief, even just up to this 15th chapter of John, we've been exposed so many times again and again and again to the answer to that question. Remember it began in the opening verses of this gospel account, let me put it on the screen just to remind you. John told us,

John 1:1-4 (ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

In the beginning was the Word, (the Word is Jesus by the way) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, (in other words, He's the creator) and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

There's so much, you know, just in those first few verses of the gospel that we began to study here that told us who is Jesus. And as we've gone through this book, it just has continued, you know, layer upon layer, upon layer, who is Jesus? He is the Word of God, He is God in human flesh, He is the source of all life, He is the creator of all things. And then we remember even later in chapter 1 of John, when John the Baptist gave his testimony, he said,

John 1:29 (ESV)

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Who takes away the sin of the world? Jesus, the Lamb of God. This is what it means to abide in Him, to remember who He is, to abide in the truth. And you know, we've seen this, we started off talking about the fact that, contained in this chapter is the last of the seven "I am" declarations of Jesus. Let's put them on the screen so we can see them all.

"I am the bread of life." (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

“I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12)

“I am the door of the sheep.” (John 10:7, 9)

“I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25)

“I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11, 14)

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)

“I am the true vine.” (John 15:1, 5)

So you see, keeping all of these declarations, all of these I am statements close to our heart, close to our understanding, that's what it means to abide in Jesus. If you abide in me, Jesus said, you will bear much fruit, remembering who Jesus is.

And finally, we have to understand and keep close to our hearts the answer to the final question, sub question, of what does it look like to abide in Jesus, and that is, Who and what am I?

What does it look like to abide in Jesus?

- What is the Gospel?
- Who is Jesus?
- **Who and what am I?**

This is where the world is really trying to speak to us. We have watched over the last couple of decades as the self-movement has gained popularity in the world. Everything is about me, everything is about self and it magnifies and glorifies self.

But our understanding of the gospel begins with Romans 3:23 up on the screen.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

...for all of sinned and fall short...

And that's not an easy thing to hear. I don't know if you ever took a test where you fell short, it's a very disappointing experience. When I was 15 years old, I wanted desperately to get my, well, it's hard to even describe today because it's all been done away with but, I only ever wanted to be in broadcasting radio. That's what I wanted to do from one of the earliest memories. So when I was about 14, 15 years old, I found out what it would take. And in most cases to get a job at a radio station on the air, you had to hold a license to be able to do

things at a radio station, which had to do with the transmitter, and so you had, I had to take a test.

My dad had to run me up to St. Paul, Minnesota, where I would take a test to get my third class broadcasting license and I failed it like 2 or 3 times before I finally passed. And it was full of all kinds of algebraic equations, I never took algebra and I slept during math class, so, it was very difficult for me to learn. And so, and I kept failing, I kept falling short. You had to reach a certain percentage of getting the questions right and I kept falling short and I remember I was so disappointed as a young boy.

Well, now along comes God, and He looks at you and me, and He says, with all the love that He can muster, you have fallen short. And we say, fallen short of what? He says everything, everything.

But certainly the most important, and that is the righteousness of God. There is a righteous standard that God has established in His Word and revealed to us through it and we've all fallen short. None of us has measured up to it, not one single person that I'm looking at has measured up, you've all fallen short. And if you don't keep that in mind, you will begin to drift away from true abiding in Jesus, because it's not about your goodness. You cannot be good enough to be saved.

All God wants you to know is you've fallen short. Again, it's a hard thing to hear. You know, back when I fell short of my broadcasting test, my natural inclination was, I got to try harder and that's the way we often approach God. I just need to try harder, I know, God, I haven't lived the way I should, I just need to try harder. I know, Lord, I really failed last week when I did that thing, you know, but I'm going to try harder, I'm just going to keep trying harder.

Guys, it's not about trying harder and the reason is, without Jesus, and this is the really hard thing to take, you have no personal goodness. And this is something else that Jesus said and it's in Mark chapter 10 on the screen.

Mark 10:18 (ESV)

"No one is good except God alone."

Now you might think that Jesus is making a statement about God, and He kind of is, but He's really making a statement about you, and He's telling you that you're not good. You don't have any goodness in you apart from God. Now that doesn't mean that we can't emulate goodness, even an unbeliever, an unbeliever knows what goodness is, did you know that? You know why? Because Adam

and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and so even sinful man has a knowledge of goodness and he can emulate goodness.

And that's what people, they always get hoodwinked. They think, they say, well, I know some unbelievers that are really good people, no, you don't. You know people who know how to emulate goodness, right? That's what you know and what Jesus said is true, *"No one is good except God."*

Wow, what a smack, huh? I mean, what a smack in the face. But do you know how critical this is to remember? To stay on course, to abide in Christ? We have to learn, we have to learn to be humble. You know, remember what Jesus said right here in John 15, I'll put it on the screen just so it's easy.

John 15:5 (ESV)

"...apart from me you can do nothing."

"...apart from me (He said) you can do nothing."

You can do nothing, nothing, and nothing means nothing. And that's why the apostle Paul wrote what he did in Philippians 2:13, when he said,

Philippians 2:13 (ESV)

...it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

...it is God who works in you, both to will and to work (or to work out) for his good pleasure.

It's God working in you. If you're able to please God in any way, it's God working in you. Both to will to do it, that means to desire to do it. The very desire comes from God and then the ability to walk it out, that also comes from God. It's like, oh, pastor, you're smacking me in the face here. No, actually, it's God's Word doing it, but you have to remember these things. You have to keep these things in your heart. We have to stay humble, we have to stay humble.

You know, there are times in our lives, if we're struggling to stay humble, God will allow us to see just how much of a failure we can be. And I'm willing to bet that there are several people, if they had the guts, they could stand up here at the time and probably give a testimony of God showing them just how big of a failure they could be, lovingly so. So that they might never have to deal with these issues of struggling with the fallacy of their own personal goodness that the world wants to try to convince you about. These are the things, you hold fast

to these things and you will abide in Christ, right? What is the gospel? Who is Jesus? Who am I?