

Staying in the circle of God's love

We keep going back to this: “How to claim your ground in Christ, and stay in the abiding place of God's love”. We repeatedly emphasize the covenant of the blood and name of Jesus, and the power of the Word of God in our mouths and hearts to push back the pressures of our mind or the devil that rob us of peace and joy. It is a topic important to everyone, we think. It is found in Psalms 91 as “dwelling in the secret place”, or in John 15 as Jesus' words “Abide in Me”.

How are you doing in this? Where are you dwelling? Have you learned that there is an abiding place in the Lord, a secret place, a place of refuge that is yours in Christ? It is possible for you to live in that place, just like Jesus said — abide in Him. It seems that life would pull us out of that place, and we can too easily live in reaction to what is going on around us — “abiding” in fear, resentment, confusion, depression — or just following the rat race of our high pressured western culture. But the Lord is a refuge, a shield, a shelter in the time of storm. It is He who said “in Me you have peace”. There is, as the old hymn says, “a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God”. It is a life lived in the awareness of God's constant and abiding love, His unending grace, His mercy which is new every morning. It is a realization of the continuity of His unmerited favor based on the shed blood of Christ on our behalf, and the confidence that comes with the overriding reality of that blood sacrifice. In Hebrews, it is spoken of as living at the “throne of grace”, and “drawing near” to God Himself with confidence that Jesus has made the way for us. This abiding place is a gift of God's love to you. Receive it!

Sometimes it is a fight, or a wrestling match to stay in our abiding place. The verse in Ephesians 6 concerning our wrestling with powers of darkness refers to a Greek wrestling match. A circle was drawn on the ground, and the opponents were in the circle. The object of the wrestling match was to get your opponent out of the circle. And so it seems that our spiritual opponent, the enemy of our soul, does his best to get us out of the circle of the love of God.

Here then is the fight of faith which we are called to fight. The reality of God's covenant love for us, through the blood of Christ, is found in Romans 8:38,39: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor depths nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” The reality is that Satan has no right to get us “out of the circle of God's love”. But he does try to deceive us, to convince us through circumstances, thoughts and emotions that we are separated from God's love.

How then do we fight this fight? How do we wrestle and stand our ground in the circle of the love of God? How do we stay in our “abiding place”? More than anything else, Jackie and I have found over the years that the staying power is in the Word of God...the covenant Word, which is the written guarantee of God's unchangeable love for us. Speaking the word, shouting it, singing it, meditating on

it, praying it, believing it and obeying it...most of all, receiving it! It may sound oversimplified, but this is the only way to stay in the abiding place of God's love....

John Matthews