

# PREACHING FROM THE BIBLE

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## Abide in the Church

Dear brothers and sisters in \*Christ,

In Biblical Greek, μένω (G3306) is a very special verb. It is transliterated into English as "menō," pronounced as "me'-nō," which means "To continue to be present, not to depart; to remain as one, not to become another or different; to wait for." Let's apply this word to the following admonition and topic of this article: Abide in the Church!

To "abide in the Church" means to "abide in \*Christ" because the Church is the body of \*Christ. Abiding in the Church is crucial as it was a command from \*Christ to his disciples:

*"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."* (John 15:4-5).

To be inducted into the Church, a person must first sincerely repent and completely believe in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ to have all their sins immediately forgiven by \*God; their sins will be washed away by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit will give them the authority, power, and gifts to live a new life in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, they need to obey the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized in the name of God, the Eternal One.

Becoming a member of the Church is a relatively simple process, but it is not a privilege \*God grants to everyone. Not even the saints of \*God before and during the times of the Old Testament, from Adam to John the Baptist, nor the saints of \*God during the Great Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom have this privilege for two of the following reasons:

- The Church was founded by the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament; therefore, the saints of the Old Testament cannot be members:

*"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:18).

- The Church will be raptured by the Lord Jesus Christ before the end of the world; therefore, saints of the Great Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom cannot be members:

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:3).

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-

17).

*“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”* (Revelation 3:10).

As promised in John 14:3 and expressed by the Holy Spirit in I Thessalonians 4:16-17, the Lord Jesus Christ will remove the Church from the world. Revelation 3:10 reveals that the rapture is an event that will occur before the seven years of the Great Tribulation. Therefore, only those who believe in God from the day of Pentecost in the year 27 [1], which is the day the Church was founded, to the impending rapture belong to the Church by the will of \*God.

It is one thing to have the privilege of becoming a member of the Church, but the real challenge is to abide in the Church. If one does not choose to abide in the Church, they must leave the Church. If they leave the Church, then they also leave the Lord because the Church is the body of Christ. If they leave the Lord, then they will be in a state of eternal death, forever separated from God and locked up in the lake of fire.

*“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”* (John 15:6).

If one chooses to abide in the Church but do not obey God's commandments, their spirit will not bear fruit and \*God will cut them off from the Church. According to the Scripture, if one chooses to stay but does not live up to the Word of God to be fruitful, \*God will prune them.

*“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”* (John 15:2).

Before moving on, let's clarify what the “fruit of the spirit” is. Here is how the Bible describes it:

*“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* (Galatians 5:22-23).

Please note that “the fruit of the spirit” mentioned here in Galatians 5:22-23 is the fruit of one's spirit when one lives according to the Word of God. Some misunderstand the word to mean the fruit of God the Spirit.

To sum it up, if one does not change after God's correction, even after being inducted into the Church, then the Lord will give them up:

*“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”* (Revelation 3:16).

"Cold" represents ignorance, neither believing in God or following the Lord. "Hot" represents knowing, believing, and devoutly following God; it is loving and wholeheartedly living the Word of God. "Lukewarm" represents knowing and believing in God without the earnest devotion to follow Him. Let's explore some examples of each type of person who voice their allegiance to Christ.

A good example of someone whose faith is “hot” is a martyr. The original meaning of the word “martyr” is “witness,” and it was used to call someone who suffered persecution and death for witnessing the Gospel. During the nearly two thousand years of the Church's history, tens of

millions of martyrs wholeheartedly kept the Word and were willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of faith. They did not die for any religion; the martyrs were slaughtered by the world because they refused to give up the will of God, their knowledge of God through the Bible, and their faith in the Gospel of Salvation. Ironically, most of the martyrs were killed by "churches," or organizations that bore Christ's name, rather than by unbelievers [2].

A "lukewarm" person can be someone in the Church who believes in God's salvation but does not live according to the Word of God unlike the martyrs and other true believers; as a result, that person cannot bear fruit. Reasons for their weakness may be that they cannot withstand suffering in the name of the Lord, are still distracted by the idle matters of the world, are too anxious about their needs in life, or lack faith. Consequently, those who are not dedicated believers are cut off by \*God.

Another type of "lukewarm" believer is one who is enthusiastic when one first comes to God but shortly after falls and retreats in faith because of the lack of intimate fellowship with the Lord. Without properly reflecting on the Word of God, the "lukewarm" believer lacks His power. Such believers had the God-given privilege to be in the Church but failed to abide in it.

Someone with "cold" faith acts as if they are Christ's saints but never truly repented their sins. They confess their faith with their lips to be active in and take advantage of the Church when in reality Jesus Christ would deny them in front of the Father. They were never grafted into the Church due to their hypocrisy. Among them are pastors, elders, and deacons appointed by religious organizations! Those hypocrites with doctorates in Theology and Divinity circle like vultures for vulnerable believers, absurdly continuing to train people to be like them as "the blind lead the blind"! They brag about being a "reverend," a title of God that they took for themselves (Psalms 111:9). They boast of their toxic ministry just as Jesus Christ prophesied about them:

*"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew 7:22).*

However, the Lord Jesus Christ will say to them:

*"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:23).*

The root of everyone's stumbling is arrogance. Arrogance manifests as considering oneself to be more respectful than others, despising others, and not apologizing for one's mistakes. Misguided self-love is also a form of arrogance. Whether one has "hot," "cold," or "lukewarm" faith, once they identify and are ready to dispel their arrogance, large strides in improvement and be achieved with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Church of God is not a religious organization or any denomination that carries the name of God; although, admittedly there are some genuine people of God in those organizations or denominations. Rather, the Church of God is the unity of all repenters and full believers in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ regardless of race, language, locality, social status, education, age, etc. To have an idea of how big the Church might be, let's briefly look at these statistics: according to statistics from 2015, the total number of people who identify as Christian worldwide is about 2.3 billion. At present, there are about 41,000 religious

organizations in the world bearing the name of Christ. On average, about 160,000 people are killed each year for being the disciples of \*Christ [3].

As many people as there are who call themselves Christians, only those who live according to the Word of God and obey His commandments will bear fruit and remain in the Church. Therefore, the Church is only a small group of people the Lord Jesus Christ calls the "little flock". The Church of God has no name other than the ones used by the Holy Spirit in the Bible [4].

*"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* (Matthew 7:13-14).

*"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12:32).

How do people from all over the world participate in the Church? The term "the Church of God" conveys the unity of the people having fellowship and worshiping God together in their own locality. The true people of God will often meet in each locality at any time, especially on the Sabbath according to the Word of God. Ignoring the meeting on the Sabbath is an act of rebellion against God's command, which is clearly stated in the Bible. The Bible never commands the people of God to worship together on other days of the week except the seventh day and the Sabbath days of the holy festivals. Please note that we are not Seventh Day Adventists, who keep the Sabbath but have false teachings.

*"Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings."* (Leviticus 23:3).

*"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* (Hebrews 10:25).

Those who truly believe in the Lord but lack the knowledge of the Word, notably how to properly observe the Sabbath, due to being led astray by "churches" that teach false doctrine will not thereby perish, but they will lose much of God's blessings in this life and the next. In even worse shape are those who were given the opportunity to learn, read, or hear about the Sabbath but did not spend the time to pray and examine the Word to worship the Lord in truth will fall from the grace of God; they despise and ignore the opportunity the Holy Spirit brings to them.

As for the fate of the Church of God, it will be mysteriously united with the Lord Jesus Christ at the Lamb's Wedding and will always be by His side. With Him, it will rule over the inheritance of God forever.

*"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* (II Corinthians 11:2).

*"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should*

*be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” (Revelation 19:7-8).*

*“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:” (II Timothy 2:12).*

To deny Jesus Christ is to deny His redemption. A person denies Jesus Christ when they do not obey the commandments of God, living a life in violation of the commandments of God. Here is the tragic truth: every single member of the Church was a sinner who violated the Ten Commandments of \*God listed in Exodus 20:1-17.

A misconception about the Ten Commandments is that it only applies to the Israelites since it was handed down to no other groups through Moses. The Ten Commandments are actually used as the standard to judge all people, not just the Israelites. If the Ten Commandments were only applied to Israelites, then what standard would \*God use to judge other people? Is it possible that the Israelites alone were condemned for violating \*God’s law but not the others?

Another misconception is spread by false teachers who say that the Ten Commandments do not count anymore now that we are living in the New Testament. The Word of God affirms:

*“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:18).*

*“And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” (Luke 16:17).*

Heaven and earth have not yet passed, so how can the Ten Commandments go away? Sadly, too many people believe the words of false teachers rather than the Word of God!

The good news is that every one of us is forgiven by \*God and \*Christ, who cleansed all the sins of true repenters and full believers of His atonement. The Church enters the New Covenant with \*God through the Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator who used His own blood to make the covenant. The law of God is written by the Holy Spirit into the hearts and minds of all believers.

*“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” (Hebrews 9:15).*

*“Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;” (Hebrews 10:15-16).*

Remember, the laws of God include the Ten Commandments of God, the New Commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 13:34), the Holy Commandment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:29), and the punishment for breaking the commandments (Hebrews 10:26-29); they apply to everyone.

### **Hebrews 10:26-29**

*26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there*

*remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

*27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

*28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:*

*29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

Anyone who repeatedly violates even one of the Ten Commandments of \*God, such as the fourth commandment of the Sabbath, denies \*Christ's redemption.

*"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* (James 2:10).

Dear brothers and sisters in \*Christ,

We implore you to self-reflect. Are you truly in the Church, that is, in Christ? Are you being fruitful? If so, we would like to congratulate you. If not, repent before it's too late; repent before death or the coming of \*Christ. We send this admonition to you: Abide in the Church!

In closing, abiding in the Church is to live the Word of God with all your heart and to keep the commandments of God.

By the grace of God, let us abide in the Church as we await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, not leaving the Church nor changing the status of holiness that \*God gave us.

May the love, grace, and fellowship of God envelope you all, preparing each of you to be blameless before \*Christ. A-men!

**Pastor Timothy Christian Huynh & Priscilla Christian Huynh**  
**Edited by Grace Christian Huynh**  
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**Notes:**

[1] <http://www.preachingfromthebible.net/dates-of-the-lords-resurrection-and-pentecost/>

[2] <https://od.lk/d/MV82Mzi2MTQxNV8/EstimatesOfTheNumberKilledByThePapacy.pdf>

[3] <https://www.thoughtco.com/christianity-statistics-700533>

[4] These are the Biblical names of the Church:

- Church of \*God (Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; I Thessalonians 2:14).
- Church of \*Christ (Romans 16:16).

- Church of the Saints (I Corinthians 14:33).
- Church in \*Christ (Galatians 1:22).
- Church in God the Father (II Thessalonians 1:1).
- Church of God (I Timothy 3:5).
- Church of the Living God (I Timothy 3:15).
- Church of the first born which are written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
- Church of the elected (I Peter 5:13).
- Church of (name of the locality), example: Church of Ephesus (Revelation 2:1).