

Welcome and Announcements – Brendon

Good morning, Emmanuel. Welcome to our service for the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, or the thirteenth Sunday of ordinary time. Hey, wasn't that a tremendous thunderstorm and rain shower that we got this past week? I trust that whatever your week has held, you've had some sense of the presence of God the Father, Son and Spirit with you, speaking encouragement and peace and hope to you.

We gather each week to imagine what our lives could be like because Jesus is Lord, and we believe he is at work in our world making all things new. So we gather to be reminded of who Jesus is, King of kings and Lord of lords, of who we are as his beloved children, and who together we can be as a community seeking his kingdom and pursuing his righteousness and justice in our world. I pray that our times together will help to form and shape us into people who delight in Jesus and his kingdom and who are seeking to live out his righteousness and justice in all spheres of our lives.

The big news this week is that we are planning to return to in person gatherings in two weeks time, on September 13, 10:30 am. As I mentioned in the email on Friday, a slight majority of those who responded to the survey indicated a willingness to return to in person gatherings, so we decided to pursue that. All of the guidelines we outlined will be in place, including registering before you come so we know how many to plan for, since seating will be limited, and wearing masks, which we consider an expression of love for others. You will receive more details about that in a follow-up email this week.

We are planning to live-stream the services online, so it will be accessible for those who choose not to return at this time. It will also be recorded and the video posted online for those who can't access it on Sundays.

Please pray for us as we make all the necessary preparations. I am grateful that we can regather and so looking forward to it, even with all the restrictions. But I want us to be prudent and responsible to ensure the safety of everyone who gathers with us.

Tomorrow is the deadline to help us celebrate our 90th anniversary as a church by sending us a video or audio clip with your response to the question, "What do I appreciate about Emmanuel Baptist Church?" Your response could be a word, a phrase, or a single sentence. Those will all be combined into a video collage to celebrate our 90th anniversary as a church on September 13. Thanks to all who sent in responses thus far. If you're planning to do so, you have until midnight tomorrow, August 31. The email address is 90years@ebap.ca.

And a final reminder as well about the need for one or two persons to serve as elders. This is a great way to serve our church family and support the leadership of our church. If you would be interested in serving in this way, or know someone you'd like to see serve as an elder, give them a nudge and get in touch with the nomination committee through the church office. Send an email to info@ebap.ca.

As always, you can find more information on our website, www.ebap.ca, about ways to connect. Simply click on the banner that says "New Ways of Connecting @ EBC". You

can also find a lot of that information in the weekly email that Jan sends out on Mondays. And remember to check out the weekly bulletin for prayer concerns and other information about our church family.

Now, let us lift our hearts in joyful praise and grateful thanksgiving to Jesus, our Lord and King. May we awaken to his presence with us and in us. May we worship with awe and wonder the God he has revealed to us as Father, Son and Spirit - Unity in Trinity, Trinity in Unity. Amen.

Song – Emmanuel Musicians

Praise the Father

Who is the one to whom you belong
who in your weakness has made you strong
who fills your heart with joyful song
is the Lord your God

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in One
Who was and is and is to come
All praise and honour and glory and power
O praise His name forever

Who is the One with whom you will be
from highest mountain to darkest valley
who is the One who in you dwells
it is the Lord your God

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in One
Who was and is and is to come
All praise and honour and glory and power
O praise His name forever

Gord Johnson

Kids Moment - Beverly

Hi everyone, today I will be reading from the Jesus Storybook Bible written by Sally Lloyd Jones., It's a called, How to Pray, and it's about Jesus teaching people about prayer, from Matthew 6. Let's listen.

In those days there were some Extra-Super-Holy People (at least that's what they thought), and they were called "Pharisees." Every day, they would stand out there in the

middle of the street and pray out loud in big Extra-Super-Holy Voices. They really weren't praying so much as just showing off. They used lots of special words that were so clever, no one understood what they meant.

People walking by would stop and stare, which might sound rude – except that's exactly what the Extra-Super-Holy people wanted. They wanted everyone to say, "Look at them. They're so holy. God must love those people best."

Now, you and I both know they were wrong –God doesn't just love holy people. But the people walking by weren't so sure. Perhaps you did have to be really clever, or good, or important for God to love you. Perhaps you had to know lots of difficult, clever words to speak to God.

So one day, Jesus taught people how to pray. He said, "When you pray, don't pray like those Extra-Super-Holy People. They think if they say lots of words, God will hear them. But it's not because you're so clever, or good, or so important, that God will listen to you. God listens to you because he loves you.

"Did you know that God is always listening to you? Did you know that God can hear the quietest whisper deep inside your heart, even before you've started to say it? Because God knows exactly what you need even before you ask him," Jesus told them.

"You see, God just can't wait to give you all that you need. So you don't need to use long words or special words. You don't have to use a special voice. You just have to talk.
"

So when you pray, pray in your normal voice, just like when you're talking to someone you love very much.

Like this...

Dear God,
We want to know you.
And be close to you.
Please show us how.
Make everything in the world right again.
And in our hearts, too.
Do what is best – just like you do in heaven,
And please do it down here, too.
Please give us everything we need today.
Forgive us for doing wrong, for hurting you.
Forgive us just as we forgive other people,
When they hurt us.
Rescue us! We need you.
We don't want to keep running away
and hiding from you.
Keep us safe from our enemies.
You're strong, God.
You can do whatever you want.
You are in charge.
Now and forever and for always!

We think you're great!
Amen!"

You see, Jesus was showing people that God would always love them – with a Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love.

So they didn't need to hide anymore, or be afraid, or be ashamed. They could stop running away from God. And they could run to him instead. Hmm, just like we can.

Have a great week, everybody.

Song – Emmanuel Musicians

What A Friend We Have In Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus
all our sins and grief to bear
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer
O what peace we often forfeit
O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations
is there trouble anywhere
We should never be discouraged
take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share
Jesus knows our every weakness
take it to the Lord in prayer

Are we weak and heavy laden
cumbered with a load of care
Precious Savior still our refuge
take it to the Lord in prayer
Do thy friends despise forsake thee
take it to the Lord in prayer
In His arms He'll take and shield thee
thou wilt find a solace there

Charles Crozat Converse
Joseph Medlicott Scriven

Community Prayer – Jane

Good morning all. This is Jane McPhee and I'm going to lead us in our time of prayer this morning, and as I do so, I imagine all of your faces and the fact that we are worshipping together, whether it's here or in our own home. So let's begin with our Prayer of Confession.

We confess to you, Lord, what we are:
We are not the people
we want others to think we are;
We are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depths of our souls
But we do not want to hide our true selves from you.

(Silence)

We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us.
Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge;
Teach us to respect ourselves
and affirm our uniqueness and worth;
give us the courage to put our trust in your guidance and power.

(Silence)

We confess to you, Lord, the unrest of the world,
to which we contribute and in which we share.
Forgive our reliance on weapons of terror,
our cold indifference to the needs of others,
our discrimination
against people of different races
our preoccupation
with material standards.

(Silence)

Forgive our being unsure
of the good news about you and from you,
and so unready to tell it, share it and live it.
Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and energy
of forgiven people.
And for those who through long habit find forgiveness hard to accept
we ask you to break their bondage and set them free through Jesus Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Our Beloved and Abiding God, we come to you this morning in gratefulness for the beauty around us, for our homes, our families, our friends, for all your provision for us. It is so easy in these strange times to forget that all of this comes from you, from your love for us. We cannot really fully understand, but we ask for more and more understanding and wisdom to see your hand at work around us and to experience abiding in you.

Thank you for the teaching and for the teachers over the past weeks as we learn more about abiding in you. It has been wonderful to hear from others in Our Emmanuel family over these weeks, as they have shared their experiences of abiding in you. May each of us seek your face and continue to find ways to know you and abide in you.

Lord we ask your grace in these times of learning new ways to be together safely. We pray for all the teachers, and principals, and parents and students and other school staff as children begin to return to fall routines. Give us wisdom and patience, and calm our spirits as we seek to make the best decisions for everyone's physical, mental and spiritual health.

We pray for those in our church family who are struggling - with health concerns, with grief, with loneliness, with spiritual battles. Help us to come alongside, even through our new ways of doing this, but give us hearts to care about and see the needs of others and reach out to meet those needs. We thank you for so many on our staff and in our church family who are already reaching out and helping, and we ask that you continue to sustain them and give them your heart for people.

Lord God we ask that in this time when we see so much conflict around us, where situations in the world seem to overwhelm, be it weather crisis, war, disasters, keep us focussed on the fact that you are still in control. As the old hymn says;

“Oh God our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast
And our Eternal Home.”

And as we head into a season of elections in our province and in our city, give wisdom and courage and help us to be people of peace.

Bless our church, our leaders, our Board, and let us be seen in our community as people who care for each other and love one another deeply.

We pray with grateful hearts in the name of your son Jesus, Amen

Scripture Reading - Karrian

Good morning. I am Karrian Banton-Brown. Today's Scripture reading is from John 15, 1-17:

“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are

gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! ¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Song – Emmanuel Musicians

Come and Listen

Come and listen
 come to the water's edge
 all you who know and fear the Lord
Come and listen
 come to the water's edge
 all you who are thirsty come

Let me tell you what
 He has done for me
Let me tell you what
 He has done for me
He has done for you
 He has done for us

Come and listen
 come and listen to what He's done
Come and listen
 come and listen to what He's done

Praise our God for He is good
 praise our God for He is good
Praise our God for He is good
 praise our God for He is good
He has done for me
 He has done for you
 He has done for us

Come and listen
 come and listen to what He's done

Come and listen
come and listen to what He's done

David Crowder

Abiding Reflections - Christina and Jan

(Brendon) Please join me in prayer: Triune God, Father, Son and Spirit, thank you for your love for us and for this life that you have drawn us into. Grant us the grace to pay attention to you and to all that you are doing in us and among us as we walk with you and live in you day by day. Speak to us now by your Spirit and help us to hear from you those things you want to say to us now. We ask in your holy name. Amen.

We are almost at the end of our summer series called “Abide” in which we’ve been exploring the invitation from Jesus to abide or remain in him, as he abides or remains in us. And as we’ve been doing, let’s hear from a couple more people in our church family as they respond to the question: “What does abiding in Jesus look like in your life?” Today’s reflections come from Christina Ling and Jan Smith:

(Christina) So, “What does it mean to abide in Christ?” I had been pondering this question for a long while and Pastor asked me again while we had a short visit. And what I feel is abiding in Christ for me is practicing the art of *eucharisto*. I was introduced to that word by Ann Voscamp a few years back when I was doing some more regular journaling and devotional reading, which is something that I am currently not able to do. Currently, I find that it’s hard to carve out such extra little bits of time. I feel my daily responsibilities are often more than my available energy. And yet, there is this one thing that I still do, where I feel I do abide in Christ. So to me, abiding in Christ is practicing *eucharisto*. Currently, this looks like giving thanks nightly with my kids. My kids and I do nightly bedtime prayers, and I ask them what they are thankful for. And I really am always pleasantly surprised by the answers, in the ways that we are always surprised by kids. And it helps me also reframe the day. Looking at the day through their eyes as well. I am able to carve out some more things that I am thankful for.

Eucharisto has root words in joy and grace. And this art of practicing thanksgiving in the small moments of the day helps us all find a place of joy that leaves room for us to experience grace or give grace. So currently, that is how I am able to abide in Christ. Despite everything feeling busy or often overwhelming, we have those small wee bedtime prayer, times that we can say thanks to God and find the joy in the day, and hopefully bring us to experience his grace or give grace to one another.

(Jan) When I think about abiding in Jesus, I visualize the routine of each day ... the pattern of my week ... the habit of my life as a whole. Beginning each day with Jesus & in turn, ending the day with Him has become an essential focus for me. My time in the morning is typically brief but very intentional. I spend time with Jesus reflecting on a short devotional & asking for His guidance for the day ahead. At the end of the day I try to recall the many different things that I encountered - whether it is special moments spent with people or noticing God’s creation around me. Then, I endeavor to articulate

(to myself) how grateful I am for each of those things. In between, I have tried to surround myself with reminders of Jesus. You should see my office! ☺ I am most fortunate to be able to work at Emmanuel surrounded by Godly men & women whether it is my co-workers or other congregants. The conversations we have & their examples of sharing Jesus' love on a daily basis helps to keep me grounded. When my kids were young, we were involved in a vibrant small group all experiencing similar things as our families grew up together. They were an amazing source of encouragement & Christian love. Recently, I have been involved in The Journey course which, at it's core, is committed to helping people grow up into maturity in Christ. Also, although I am not into social media in a big way, I have chosen to follow a number of Christian people (well known & not-so-well known) in order to be exposed to a wide variety of evangelical views ... usually demonstrated in their every-day practices. I often ask myself, "What would Jesus do or What would Jesus think about this particular situation?" Ultimately, I try to emulate Jesus ... to follow in His footsteps. I look forward to being in His presence 100% of the time. It is an uphill battle but thankfully He is full of grace.

Ephesians 5 (The Message) "Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that."

Teaching - Brendon

Thanks, Christina and Jan. As I've said before, I would love to hear from others how you abide in Jesus. What does abiding look like in your life? Please send me an email with your response.

I want us to continue thinking about fruitfulness as the result of abiding in Jesus. As I noted last Sunday, Jesus speaks frequently in our text about producing fruit. It is an emphasis that is woven throughout his discussion on abiding. There are at least eight references to fruitfulness in these seventeen verses.

Abiding in Jesus results in fruitfulness. When we abide, we produce fruit. Jesus speaks of fruit and more fruit, much fruit, and lasting fruit. Both gardener and vine are looking for fruitfulness from their branches. They are anticipating an abundant crop.

Last Sunday, I suggested three areas of fruitfulness for us to consider - the fruit of our character, the fruit of our witness, and the fruit of our work. Having looked at character last week, I want us to think together today about the fruit of our witness.

When we abide in Jesus, we become like him - we live like he lived - rooted in God's love; we act like he acted - with humility and gentleness and compassion; and we do what he did - we participate in God's mission to the world. The fruit of our lives point to the source of our life. If the life of Jesus is flowing within us, and active among us, it will result in fruit. And part of that fruit will be our participation in the mission of God through our witness to Jesus. Simply put, we will bear witness to Jesus as the one who came to

reveal God to the world, as the one who reconciles us to God, as the one through whom the entire creation is being renewed and restored.

The mission of the Trinity, the mission of the Triune God in which we participate and to which we bear witness, is to rescue God's creation from its bondage to Satan and the corruption of sin and death and to renew and restore it to God's original design. That mission has been unfolding since God's gracious promise, to the first rebels in the garden, that "the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent" (Genesis 3:15). As it winds its way through the story of the Bible and through human history, God's mission advances ever so slowly from our perspective. But God keeps his own time and sets his own schedule.

Some of the advances in God's mission are marked by covenants between God and people - Noah in Genesis 9, Abraham and his family in Genesis 12, 15 and 17, the people of Israel at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19-24, and with David as Israel's king in 2 Samuel 7. Each of these covenants moved forward God's mission to renew and restore his creation by choosing a people through whom God and his ways would be known and honoured so that the rest of the world would be drawn back to God.

God's mission reaches its highpoint in Jesus. Jesus came as God's agent, as God's representative, to engage in the work of rescue and renewal, of reconciliation and restoration, on God's behalf. In his life and ministry, Jesus confronts the forces of darkness - the devil and sin and death - with the news that he had come to set free those whom they had held in bondage, that he was here to rescue and redeem those whom they had been tyrannizing and oppressing. Jesus announced that God and his kingdom were present in him - Jesus - and that those who aligned themselves with him, those who repented and changed their ways of thinking and acting and embraced his way - the way of his kingdom - would become partakers and participants in God's eternal life. They would receive God's gift of salvation - forgiveness of sins, deliverance from unhealthy and unwholesome ways of living, and the capacity to live as they had been created to live, under the loving leadership of God. They would be reconciled to God, renewed by God, and restored to their rightful roles as heirs and stewards of God's good creation.

Throughout his last evening with his closest disciples, in the conversation recorded in John 13-17, Jesus anticipates the fulfillment of his mission by laying down his life on the cross. That would be the ultimate act of his obedience to his father in whom he abided, an act that would produce the greatest fruit. Jesus himself had said sometime earlier, in John 12:24, "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives." Now, on the eve of his death, he speaks of entering into his glory (John 13:31), of going to prepare a place for his disciples (John 14:2), of going to the Father (John 14:12, 28), to the one who sent him (John 16:5). All of these are references to his crucifixion and death, which he anticipates will happen shortly.

It is worth pondering that Jesus links his crucifixion and death with entering his glory. The cross will be his moment of exaltation and enthronement. In his crucifixion, he will be lifted up and enthroned as Lord of the Universe, and his death will produce a harvest of new life in the billions of followers who will submit to his lordship and receive his life.

It is in anticipation of his fruit-producing death on the cross that Jesus says to his disciples in verse 16 of John 15: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit.” After his resurrection, when he meets his disciples in the upper room, he says to them, ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you’ (John 20:21). Those who were the first recipients of, and participants in, the salvation Jesus came to bring were given the task of also being witnesses to it. They were to go and announce the good news to others and to invite them to receive it and participate in it.

Matthew’s version of this commission goes like this: “Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

And in Luke’s account, in the book of Acts, Jesus gives his disciples this promise: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Chosen and appointed to go and produce fruit; Sent as he was sent; Told to go and make disciples; and promised power to be his witnesses throughout the earth. That was how his disciples, his vine-clinging abiders, would participate in his great mission and continue his work.

And they did. One just has to read through the book of Acts to see how the first disciples bore witness to Jesus in word and deed. As Eugene Peterson observes, “they praised and preached and prayed the living Christ into and around the world” (*Under the Unpredictable Plant*, 195).

In the power of the Spirit, they proclaimed the good news about Jesus. Those who responded were baptized and joined the disciples in a growing community of faith. They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to prayer, to fellowship and to breaking bread together (Acts 2:42-47). They became a community of love, and the combined witness of their lives and their lips was appealing and compelling to many others. They told the story of Jesus, of his life, death and resurrection, and they lived into that story as a community, as a church family. And the result, the fruit, was that many were attracted to Jesus and embraced the salvation he offered.

Now, the commission to go and produce much fruit, to be witnesses and make disciples, has been passed on to each succeeding generation of abiders in Jesus. Each of us is called, personally, to abide in Jesus and to go and bear fruit. Together as a family of faith, we are called to abide in Jesus and to go and produce fruit. As branches on the vine, our lives are intertwined, and we participate in the ongoing mission of Jesus by bearing witness to him, personally and corporately.

Michael Gorman notes a creative tension in the commands, “to abide or remain” on one hand, and “to go” on the other. On one hand, we are told to remain in Jesus, to make our home in him; on the other hand we are told to go and produce fruit. Gorman addresses the tension by reminding us that vines are mobile, creeping plants. They are

always extending their branches and tendrils outward. Disciples or abiders in Jesus, he observes, “constitute a *mobile vine*, a community of centripetally oriented love [love that pulls us inward toward each other] that shares that love centrifugally [it pushes us outward toward others] as they move out themselves, all the while, abiding in the vine, the very source of their life, love and power to do” (*Abide and Go: Missional Theosis in the Gospel of John*, 101).

As we abide in Jesus, we are sent to bear witness to God’s life-giving love for the world, revealed and demonstrated in Jesus.. Our witness to Jesus is the fruit of our abiding in Jesus.

What is a witness? Witnesses are people who have had an encounter and are willing to tell about it. They have seen or heard or had some experience that they are willing to share. To be a witness generally involves using our lips to talk about our experience, to describe what happened, to explain what we heard or saw.

Christian witness is all that, but it is also more than that. We witness with both our lips and our lives. The salvation that Jesus gives to us through the Spirit, the life that he draws us into through our union with him, is comprehensive. It is intended to renew and transform every aspect of our lives. We are renewed in our minds and begin to think new thoughts about God, new thoughts about ourselves, new thoughts about the world at large. Our imaginations are renewed and we come to see the world through different lens. We enter into this new reality called the kingdom of God and it provides us with new images for understanding our lives and our world. Our hearts are renewed and we develop new affections and attitudes and passions. As we co-operate with the Spirit, our wills are also renewed and we are able to make different choices. All of these transformations happen internally, but they are expressed outwardly through our bodies; they are lived out in our bodies.

We embody the good news of Jesus and the salvation he brings to us and we express it in our living. We embody the fruit of his character, the fruit of the Spirit that we spoke about last time, and we express them in our interactions with others. We become living examples and walking enactments of the good news of Jesus. The fruit of our lives tells the story of our transformation through abiding in Jesus.

We witness to Jesus and his love as we embody his love in our interactions with others. We witness to his compassion by our compassion for others, to his generosity by our generosity, to his kindness by our kindness, to his gentleness by our gentleness, to his faithfulness by our faithfulness.

We do this personally, but also communally. We embody Jesus’s love together and become a community of love. We work at being a family of believers who are living in the love of Jesus and learning to love one another. As we embrace the life of Jesus within us and among us, as we embody his love in caring for each other, in serving one another, in bearing each other burdens, in forgiving one another, in encouraging and admonishing and building up one another, as we demonstrate the reality and power of the gospel among us, we become credible witnesses and the greatest advertisement for the gospel. Unless the Christian community is healthy and attractive, the good news we share will not be credible. Lesslie Newbigin says that the church, the family of God, is the greatest means by which the gospel becomes credible.

So we embody the good news, we take it into our minds and imaginations and hearts and wills; we allow it to work its way into us and then out of us through our hands and feet and ears and eyes and lips. We bear witness to the transforming power of Jesus and the Spirit in our lives. That is the fruit of our abiding in Jesus.

And we witness with our lips. We learn to tell the story of Jesus as we have encountered it in the gospels and as we have experienced it in our lives. We tell of God's love for his creation and his determination to rescue and restore it by coming as one of us, entering into the brokenness and messiness of his creation to bring healing and renewal to it. We learn to tell the story of life from the perspective of Jesus.

Sometime ago, I came across a fresh way of telling this story that I want to share with us this morning, as one example of how we might tell the story of Jesus. It's by a Brit named Glen Scrivener, and it's called "Life According to Jesus in 3, 2, 1." I thought I'd let Glen tell it:

(music) "What do you make of Jesus? He spoke as the King of heaven, but he served like the lowest slave. He claimed to be the hope of the world, yet he gave up his life on a cross. Have you ever wondered how Jesus saw the big issues – God, the world and you? Here's life according to Jesus, in 3, 2, 1.

Three – God is a loving union of three. I don't know how you picture God, but according to the Bible, Jesus is our picture of God. He's called the image of God, the Word of God, the exact representation of God. To know God, we should look at him. And what do we see? A loving union of three.

Here's one picture of it from Matthew chapter 3: Jesus was standing one day in the river, the Holy Spirit hovered over him like a dove, and the Father called from heaven, "You are my son who I love! With you I am well pleased."

According to the Bible, this family of love predated and produced the world, and there's good news: The Son of God has come to invite us in.

Two – The world is shaped by two representatives. The Bible begins with the story of Adam. Adam is a name that means humanity. He is a representative. In the beginning, he turned from God, turned in on himself and plunged the world down into death and curse. This is the life we know, the life of selfishness and death.

Jesus though, is the second Adam. Where Adam and all of us fail, the Son of God took charge. He lived the life that we should live, then on the cross, he died the death that we should die. On Easter Sunday, he rose again to new life, and this life is ours if we are one with him.

One – You are one with Adam, be one with Jesus. We are all a part of the selfishness of Adam and we all feel the curse of his broken world. But Jesus offers us new life. If we trust in Jesus, we become one with him. We can give him our selfishness and sin and he deals with it on the cross, and in return, he gives us himself forever. Connected to him, we enter the family of God and now, together, we can know his Father as our Father, his Spirit as our Spirit and his future as our future. You see, Jesus will come

again to raise up this world the way he was raised, to eternal life and peace. On that day, God will judge the world, confirming his “No” to Adam and his “Yes” to Jesus.

That’s life according to Jesus! What’s our response?

Right now, the Son of God offers you life, hope, forgiveness, and eternal love in the family of God. Call out to him. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).”

You can find the video for that as well as other resources at www.three-two-one.org, and there’s an extended version in Glen’s book, *3 2 1: The Story of God, the World, and You*. For those of you who may want to explore this further, I have a few copies of his book in my office that I would be happy to share.

Abiding in Jesus draws us into the life of the Trinity and into the life of their community. We receive his love and rest in it; we behold his glory in the Scriptures and in worship, and are transformed by it. We produce the fruit of character.

But we are also sent to go and produce fruit. Our abiding in Jesus also pushes us outward into the lives of others. As we spread our branches outward, we share his love with others through our deeds and our words, through our serving and our speaking, through loving and listening and through telling his story and its impact on our lives. We embody his life and love and we tell others about his life and love. We witness through our lives and our lips.

Will there be resistance and opposition to how we live and what we share? Most definitely, Yes! Jesus warns his disciples about that several times during his last conversation with him. That’s something I am planning for us to explore this fall - the resistance and opposition that we experience as we seek to live for Jesus and bear witness to Jesus. But Jesus promises to be with us, and with his help and in his power, we can abide in him and be faithful and fruitful witnesses to him.

So, how are you abiding in Jesus? And how is your abiding producing fruit?

Let’s pause now and ask Jesus to help us to pay attention to whatever he has been saying to us, and to give us the grace to respond as he invites us to.

Lord Jesus, in your love, you laid down your life for the sake of the world; you were the kernel of wheat that died to produce much fruit. Help us appreciate that abiding in you means joining you in your death so that your fruitful life can come alive in us. Help us to so live in you, Lord, to so embody your life, that we are faithful and fruitful witnesses to you. May our lives and our lips be ever active and engaged in telling your great story, for your great glory. We ask all this in your holy name and we pray now as you taught us:

Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

If you'd like prayer for anything, I, or one of the other staff would be happy to hear from you. We would love to pray with you and do what we can to support you in your ongoing journey of abiding in Jesus. May we abide in Jesus and become fruitful witnesses.

Song – Emmanuel Musicians

Abide With Me

Abide with me fast falls the eventide
the darkness deepens Lord with me abide
When other helpers fail and comforts flee
help of the helpless abide with me

I need Thy presence every passing hour
what but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be
through cloud and sunshine abide with me

Henry Francis Lyte
Justin Smith

Benediction - Brendon

May we go now, dependent on God, rooted in Jesus and led by the Spirit, to fully love God and all people for God's Kingdom, pleasure and glory. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
