

Commentary by Christy Anderson:

Looking at John 15 in particular, we note that right before the first command of Jesus when he states, “abide in Me,” (in John 15:4) Jesus first says a curious and often overlooked thing...

*John 15:3 “You are already **clean** [katharos, 2513] because of the Word which I have spoken to you.”*

Of the two Greek words used for “clean/unclean” in both John and Acts, we note that this particular “clean” is the type that is like a Levitical declaration by the priest when he declares something or someone is clean or unclean and is also used in the sense of the commandments of God where God Himself declares certain things clean or unclean, such as certain animals which are declared by God clean and fit for human consumption while others are declared unclean and not fit for human consumption. The other type of “clean/unclean” used in the Greek is one that is ritual in nature, and is a result of contamination of some sort like coming into contact with death or something that can make someone ‘ritually’ unclean.

For example, in Peter’s vision in Acts 10, God tells Peter to quit calling gentiles “common/unclean” (i.e. ritually unclean) [koinoo, 2840] when God has declared them “clean” (spiritually by declaration of God as in the case of John 15:3) [katharizo, 2511] see Acts 10:14-15.

I believe the statement in John 15:3 is an important prerequisite for “abiding in Christ.” We must **first** be declared **clean** by Jesus Himself (**as our High Priest** before the Father), and have our sin’s forgiven because of our faith in the Messiah.

Only then can we properly “abide in Christ” (and **continue** to abide in Him daily) just as He abides in the Father.

The context begins back in John 14, as Jesus is explaining and reiterating numerous times HOW we are to abide in Christ through obedience to God’s commandments.

John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will **keep My commandments.**”

John 14:21 “He who **has My commandments and keeps them** is the one who loves Me; and he who love Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

John 14:23-24 “If anyone loves Me, he will **keep My Word**; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and **make Our abode** with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My Words; and the **Word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.**”

John 15:10 “**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.”

I don't know how much more clear Christ could be (both in Word and personal deed), and John even gives us the full effect in his text by choosing to repeat what Christ must have likely said on numerous occasions (i.e. "keep my commandments") and very likely Christ said this even more times than that which John records here.

It is obvious to me that when a believer "keeps God's commandments," he/she is enabled to continue to "abide in Christ;" however, this process **MUST** start from a position of faith (salvation) having been declared *clean* by Christ, otherwise our efforts to abide will end up in legalism, manipulation or distortion of God's commands, and/or all manner of religious mumbo-jumbo that counts for nothing.