

REMAIN:

Trusting Jesus When Life Is Hard

Following Jesus is sometimes presented as the easy road, a path of safety and happiness. Read the New Testament, and you'll see a much different story: following Jesus is a narrow road that is often marked by pain and persecution. On the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus gathered with his disciples for the Passover meal so he could prepare them for what was to come. In the face of suffering and death, Jesus said, *Do not let your hearts be troubled* (John 14:1), and in the following four chapters he taught his disciples how to trust and abide in Him when life hurts the most. Every Sunday in March we will be encouraged by Jesus' words as he teaches us how to remain in him.

March 22, 2026 - PART 3 - Abide

John 15:1-8 - "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain [abide] in me, as I also remain [abide] in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain [abide] in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain [abide] in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain [abide] in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain [abide] in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain [abide] in me and my words remain [abide] in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Would you say that you are securely connected to the vine?

How does one become securely attached?

And what does being clean have to do with branches and vines?

Καθαρός — Greek | Pronunciation: kah-thah-ROS

Katharos definition: Clean, pure, clear, innocent, exempt, pruned, purged

"Blessed are the **pure** [katharos: clean, pure, innocent, pruned] in heart, for they will see God." (Matthew 5:8)

"You are already **clean** [katharos] because of the word I have spoken to you." (John 15:3)

John 13:1-12 - It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.

Do you understand what Jesus has done for you?

1 John 1:5-9 - This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Motivated by a desire to remain close _____,

He invites us to remain close _____.

God _____ branches that _____,

But He _____ those that _____.

Is there any spiritual fruit growing on the laurels of your life?

Which areas of your life lack fruit in this season?

Are there things that you can cut off right now so that our Master Gardener, The Vine Dresser, doesn't need to do it for you?



Serve on Easter Weekend

As we expect larger crowds on Easter Sunday, we need your help to greet guests and make everyone feel welcome. Visit thestory.church/easter to sign up to serve at one of our services - it's a great way to serve together as a family!



Become a Mentor for the Champion Project

We are seeking 5-6 more adults to become mentors for our partnership with The Champion Project! Training and background check is required before serving. Learn more & connect with our team: thestory.church/serve



Annual Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4!

Kids of all ages are invited to our annual Egg Hunt at The Story - **Saturday, April 4 from 10am to noon!** Read more about the event & reserve your free tickets to attend on our Events page. We also still need dozens of volunteers to help run the event - sign up on thestory.church/easter