

The ABCDEs of Abiding: Who are you Yoked to?"
January 20-21, 2024

Welcome to our Abide series, week 3. Abiding in Christ is our theme for the year at NHCO, a journey into understanding God's amazing love and living a richer, more fruitful life in 2024. And today, we dive into the "ABCDEs of Abiding: Who are you Yoked to. Why this emphasis? It's the key to knowing God's love for us and expanding our capacity to love others. Abiding in Jesus is the secret sauce for a more fulfilling life in 2024. You guys ready for hear more about this secret sauce?

And today, I get to give you another picture of what Jesus is asking us to do to live a GOOD life, a mo betta life in 2024, in all areas of your life, your finances, your career plans, in your health (mental and emotional), and how about in your relationships? How many of you wanna do mo betta in these areas in 2024, raise your hands! The rest of you, what you wanna live da same oh, same oh life? Of course not, and that's why you are here today. Or maybe you're here to support your family members who are dedicating their keiki. That's alright.

Pastor Mark kicked off this series by giving us a picture of Baptizo, being fully immersed, fully drenched in and thereby being transformed by Jesus. Being like our Korean sister, Kim Chee and not like our Chinese braddah, Luke Warrm.

The picture I wanna leave with you Today is Jesus Yoke and learning about how his yoke helps us stay close to Him. And this YOKE isn't just a Sunday thing – we're focusing on our Mondays too. I hope to give you next step practical tips on becoming a solid follower of Christ in all aspects of your life. You ready!

But before we start, last weekend we had, the Lees? Not the Chinese Lees, but the Kiwi Lees. It was da bomb dot com. We could spend this whole service having people share how God showed up in power to heal, restore, encourage them to abide in Christ even more. I was sick and had to take it in online. I'm so grateful for our online Spark ministries. But somethings gotta be taken in LIVE.

They spoke powerfully about Abiding with another powerful picture. Remember? It was to stay under the shadow of, under the wing of our Almighty God, staying so tight to God that we fall under his protection. That's a great picture of us abiding under the power and presence of God. That was so good.

But the main picture that we want you to never forget is the picture that Jesus himself uses in his best teaching of ABIDING and that's the picture you see in our graphics. The vine and the branches. And if we abide in the vine, that's Jesus, as we are the branches, then there is a promise that we'll bear fruit. As another local theologian said, there will be fruitation!

This is our theme scripture for the year in John 15:5.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5 NIV).

So how are we gonna evaluate in December how we did this past year? We all going be Fruit Inspectors. You can look back and see if our lives had fruitation. Did you grow in Christlikeness? Did your fruit bearing life rub off and influence others to bear fruit as well? Are we becoming more like Jesus in character, more loving, caring, kind, patient, hopeful, victorious in every area of our lives?

If you get anything today, this is it. You ready: the proof is in the fruit, so if you like fruit, you gotta take root.

You get two choices: You either, going strive or abide, what you going do fo **thrive.**

OG Discussion Qs:

How well have you been embracing the concept of abiding in Christ in your daily life? Are there areas where you've been relying more on your own strength than staying connected with Jesus?

Share with the group your personal experiences in trying to abide in Christ. Discuss any challenges faced and strategies employed to stay connected with Jesus in various aspects of life.

I like share with you another word picture of ABIDE. And I'm a simple guy, and I like make things simple fo me come smart. Don't you like that too. Make um simple. And if you can catch this, this basic idea of ABIDE, then this will set you on the right course this year. You ready?

Ok, and going rhyme too. "If you like ABIDE. You gotta put Christ inside, everything". The problem with Abide is you get "u" in the center of everything, Take the "I" outside so and replace "U" with Christ. You can't abide cuz get too much "u" in abide. So instead of Abiding, you Abuding. Tell the person next to you, No abude, you gotta Abide, by putting, Christ inside everything.

And that's the AB"C"DE basics of Abiding. **(KEYNOTE Presentation 12 slides)**

Fo thrive, in everything, you gotta put Christ inside with every stride, if you like thrive. And if You like yoa life show fruit, you gotta take root.

And now I want to share with you another picture of Abiding, staying tight with, putting Christ in the center of everything. And this is a picture that Jesus himself uses in his teaching of abiding. Pastor Mark referred to this, but I'll remind us again. (KEYNOTE).

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28 – 30 NIV).

How many of you know what Jesus’ yoke looks like? Jesus’ audience 2000 years ago would surely know the picture. It was an agrarian society, or agricultural society, farming. So everyone could relate. Keynote (Show four separate slides)

Individual yoke: <https://images.app.goo.gl/i7vCDfxV7GTHgBM79>

Individual yoke with ox: <https://images.app.goo.gl/Ek6pJrsPzMJ1BJ3z7>

Double yoke: <https://images.app.goo.gl/fY4mvheQ3agPLRkE6>

Double yoke w/oxen: <https://images.app.goo.gl/vvLHRACifG8K7ZaT9>

Why do farmers use this. A yoke is a wooden beam used to help carry or pull heavy objects by distributing the weight evenly on both shoulders and can be used by humans and animals alike.

- A yoke is a wooden frame by which two animals, such as oxen, are coupled at the neck for the purpose of pulling a heavy load.
- Two animals work side by side in order to carry a load that one can’t do alone. If the load is not heavy, a yoke is not needed.
- A yoke makes independence impossible. You can’t go your own way.
- Typically a young, untrained ox is yoked with an older, trained ox. The younger learns from the older.
- If a trained ox can pull 5,000 pounds and an untrained ox can pull 2,000 pounds, together they can pull 10,000 pounds—much more than the sum of the two.

- Over time, the untrained ox becomes trained and the two begin to walk in-step with each other. Then they can pull 15,000 pounds.

(Pulling our heavy load ourselves) Jesus is giving us a picture of what we do in our lives. We live our lives managing our different important parts of our lives dependent on our own strength, wisdom, experiences. We pride ourselves in managing our destinies. The world says, no abide in nobody, but yourself. But eventually, we get real tired and lose strength, and get weighed down, flat tire by some of these areas of our lives.

But Jesus comes and invites us into an abiding relationship with him by asking you to take up, put on, his yoke. This is Jesus' yoke. His yoke is easy and burden light!

And when you do, your ear is next to his and you in the best posture to hear his voice and learn from Jesus. Allow yourself to be yoked to Jesus. He's not gonna force himself on you. He's asking you to take his yoke. And what does he promise about his yoke. When you put it on, Jesus becomes the head ox.

And Jesus, he no "joke" with you, "but he like yoke with you" if you're willing.

Why do you wanna carry all your burdens yourself? How has that been working for you? Jesus is so patient with us. Sometimes it takes us to get stuck, come to our end before we take up his yoke. Jalike some how some oxen can be stubborn, we can be the same. But gotta get yoked up with Jesus.

OG Discussion Qs:

Consider the analogy of Jesus' yoke. Reflect on the burdens you've been carrying on your own. Are there specific areas where you need to yoke up with Jesus and invite His guidance and support?

In your ohana group, discuss practical ways to encourage each other to take up Jesus' yoke in different aspects of life. Share insights on how this can lead to a more fruitful and fulfilling life.

That's why I'm asking you, are you allowing Jesus to be at the center of your finances, many are learning to do this at FPU, and they started last wk, but I'm sure if you serious, they'll yoke up with you.

How about your health? How about your career? Have you placed Jesus in the center of that situation? A big one, is your relationships. We see it all the time. People come buss up to church cuz they get flat tire, stuck cuz something hamajang in their relationships, whether it's their marriage, dating, with their kids, dealing with a breakup, a lot of our challenges and trials comes from not learning from Jesus in those areas.

The rest of the year, we'll be teaching about spiritual disciplines, practices, routines, stuff fo do to make each of us abide even more with the vine and open up the pathway for our seeking Faddah God to show up in our lives. And much of these practices, these routines, are individual actions we adopt in our lives. We are engaged with some even right now.

Attending a weekend service is one, worship is another. Many of us are fasting, that's one. And some of you have been doing daily devos, being on the same page spiritually as a church ohana. That's so good! I've been moved by some of your postings.

Bible study, prayer, I could name plenny more.

I wanna highlight one right now that's so important and often times neglected that we fail to emphasize as a huge part of abiding, by putting Christ inside.

So how to abide again? **Fo you abide, gotta is to take the “I” outa abide and put da Christ inside, everything.** No foget!

I wanna highlight one of the greatest disciplines to adopt. You guys ready to hear this? I’m gonna give you some gems of truth? You’ve seen that Christ wants us to yoke up with him. And that’s the first step you need to do. Get yoked up with Jesus. Then, yoke yourself with other abiders.

Yoke yourself up with other abiders! Jesus set this as a model for ministry. He recruited a rag tag bunch of followers and Jesus had them each yoke up with him in relationships. Show pic (Keynote).

Instead many of us yoke ourselves with those going opposite from God’s best. It may feel good, look good, look like what everybody else is doing, but you’ve yoked yourself with the wrong people.

Paul says this about yoking ourselves with people who are pulling you in a different direction. (KEYNOTE)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14 NIV)

Show pic (Keynote). <https://images.app.goo.gl/8BAz2wSqcnpLe2Xq9>

Don’t be yoked with a donkey! And some of us are. Don’t make that mistake!

Where do you hear this truth applied to mostly? In marriage relationships? But this warning is for all areas of our lives. Paul is instructing us to avoid yoking with those opposed to God’s ways. So choose your yoke wisely in relationships, business, in your career, and even in your leisure. Yes, we are called to be light, salt shakers, flavoring those around us, but don’t yoke yourself with those who take you away from Jesus.

OG Discussion Qs:

Think about your relationships and associations. Are there individuals or influences in your life that might be pulling you away from God's best for you? How can you make intentional choices in yoking with those who share your commitment to Christ?

Small Group Discussion: Share with your group any realizations from your self-reflection. Discuss strategies to surround yourself with people who align with your faith and values. Encourage one another in making positive changes in your social circles.

Illustration: All you guys know that I'm a great kayak fisher right? That sounds arrogant yeah? Well, it's because I've yoked myself with some great Kayak fishers. Guys who know where to go, how to fish, how not to fish, what kind of gear to use, what techniques to use. I've been a student of these experts. No shame to learn. In fact, I've gotten a reputation, as A.A. The Aggressive Angler. But to get even better, gotta bring along others who are less skilled than you, why, so you can teach others what you know and thereby get better yourself. **SHOW PIC**

Keynote attached photo (Kayak fishing hui)

Likewise, yoke yourself up with other abiders. Who are you yoked up with?

If you have kids that you wanna raise in the ways of Jesus, do what? Yoke yourselves up with other parents and youth who are yoked up with Jesus. Where's that happening on this here? **SHOW PIC Keynote attached photo**

I'm yoked up with other married couples because I wanna abide better with Christ inside my marriage. My Ohana Group is great and my leaders are a great couple as well. Yoke yourself with other abiders, not abusers, but abiders, those with Christ inside. **Show PIC Keynote attached photo**

On our website there are the different OGs listed. And if you are looking to yoke up with others, there are OGs, Hope on Mondays have groups, T.As classes meet all around a specific theme, like FPU. There is a marriage class offered soon.

OG Discussion Qs:

Evaluate your engagement in spiritual disciplines mentioned in the sermon, such as attending services, worship, fasting, and daily devotions. Which disciplines have you found most beneficial in abiding in Christ?

Small Group Discussion: Share your experiences with the group regarding spiritual disciplines. Discuss the impact these practices have had on your relationship with Jesus. Explore opportunities to incorporate new disciplines into your spiritual journey.

If you leave here the same way you came and not hear from our Lord, that would be sad. I hope Christ's invitation to yoke up with him and yoke up with others rang loud and clear today. And if the HS whispered for you to take next steps, then don't delay. As delayed obedience is delayed blessing.

We pray for God to show up in our lives, well this is what Jesus in John 14:21. And I quote from memory. There is a premise and promise. Trust and obey, there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

End with an illustration: On Monday, it was MLK Day. It was a nice day. Tuesday was not so good. And I so wanted to catch a yellow fin tuna for you guys fo show I not mouth. I was so tempted to go myself. None of my kayak fisher hui were available. But the HS whispered, don't do it. Ok, so I got desperate and texted this guy who like join our hui, and asked if he was going.

Lesson, you could have gone alone, but pity you if something happens and it did. Those guys came to my rescue, no questions asked. My lesson, No make tantaran.

Jesus is saying, you can do life alone, but I'm offering you me and my yoke. I promise to never leave you, I'll carry you through. And don't forget I'll bring other yoke bearers, abiders, to you.

Invite people to put on Christ yoke.

Review: those phrases:

Don't miss next weekend when PGlenn shares with us the Promise of Peace that comes with our abiding.

So no foget, Fo Abide, put Christ inside, No Abude, but Abide. Bearing Fruit, by taking Root. Yoking up with Jesus and other abiders! And that's no Yoke!