

## He Who Loves Me

John 14:19-24

What is love? That's actually a pretty complicated question, isn't it? What is love? Is it the euphoria of a happily engaged or newly married couple? Is it a romance, or the settled commitment of a husband and wife married more than 50 years? Is it an emotion or a feeling, or devotion and duty? Is it something you experience when it happens to you, or is it something you choose? Can you decide to love, or not to love? Or is it something you just "fall into?" Is it something from which you fall out just as easily as you fall in?

Is love at first sight? Does it happen quickly, or does it develop and mature? Can it be commanded? Can it be controlled? And above all of that, can it be defined?

I'm not sure I can answer all those questions this morning, but I can answer the last one. Love can be defined. Jesus defines it quite clearly. But actually, I chose another word for my first main point. Because love is not merely defined for us in our text today, but it is embodied.

This definition might be of some surprise to you. It isn't the sort of thing ordinarily associated with love as a definition, but the Bible does it often. Namely, obedience.

### I. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW EMBODIES LOVE FOR JESUS.

John states it clear enough, doesn't he?

v.21

And again, to repeat,

v.23-24

Go back a few verses, too.

v.15

I believe that's even better translated, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." They go together, such that love is embodied by obedience. Love is made evident, it is made real, it is demonstrated by obedience. Real love, true love for God, in its outward expression, is nothing other than obedience.

And let me turn that around as well. True obedience, sincere and genuine obedience, is supposed to be a testimony of love!

We read more about this same idea in,

1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

Similarly,

2 John 6 "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments."

The Bible is as clear as it can be. Jesus is as clear as he can be. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

#### A. Obedience is the definition of love.

Too often we think of obedience only in terms of legalism, only in terms of the mere duty and merely external performance of that obedience. And that's something very different than what I'm stressing. My point is that you who profess to love God, you show that love, you embody that love, you define that love, by obeying his law.

And you obey with the motive of love, with the motivation of love, as a demonstration of love. They go hand in hand, such that,

## **B. Obedience is the active demonstration of love.**

Therefore, love is a choice. Love is a commitment. Love is something that you have to learn to do. Love is not something that you “fall into.” It is something that you practice. It is something that you demonstrate.

That is certainly true for marriage, and anyone who thinks that a marriage can be sustained by some experience of love that you merely ‘fall into’ will be greatly disappointed. Love is hard work, because it is patient. It suffers long. It is hard work to be patient. Love is hard work, because “love bears all things.” “Love endures all things.” That’s hard work!

It is hard work to love other people, and it is hard work to love God! Because we are so often tempted, so easily tempted. Our flesh is weak. And Satan is eager to bring about our destruction.

So we are often exhorted to love, we are exhorted to obey the law. It is the same exhortation!

Heb. 12:1 “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

My point is simple, and let me repeat it for emphasis. You who love God, it is your calling as a Christian to love God. And your love for God is intensely practical. It is demonstrated by your obedience.

So we read this in,

Col. 3:1 “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him

in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.”

That’s obedience. And here are the things we put off, the disobedience we must turn away from.

Col. 3:8 “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”

Beloved, that’s love!

So, do you love God? Let me ask that question deeply and personally, to every one of you. Do you love God? If you do, then demonstrate your love by the way that you live your life. Embody your love with your behavior. With your obedience.

And there is a warning to be given as well, even with the encouragement of the gospel.

1 John 2:3 “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

And so I exhort you to obey. Obey the law, not to earn your salvation, but obey as the active demonstration of your love for God. And I must warn you, “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar.”

Let's move on to my second major point. It's similar, but an important distinction for us to make. Up to now, the focus has been on our love for God, but what about his love for us. Does God love you? You might think, "Does God love everyone?" And if not, how do you know who he loves and who he doesn't love? So who are the objects of God's love?

## **II. OBEDIENCE IDENTIFIES THE OBJECTS OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.**

Go back to,  
v.21

So it is not accurate to say that God loves everyone equally. He's never mean or evil in relation to anyone, but his love is bestowed upon those who love Jesus. Again, as we see so often in this gospel of John, the Father and the Son work together. They are unified in purpose and work. So, "...he who loves Me will be loved by My Father."

Same idea in,  
v.23

And just to emphasize that the Father and the Son are on the same page with respect to their love, we read,  
v.24

In other words, what Jesus teaches us, the Father is teaching us. What Jesus teaches is from the Father. Never are they at odds. Never do that have different purposes.

### **A. The Father loves those who are shown to be his true people.**

And they are shown to be his true people because they love the Son.

So do you love Jesus? That's really the question.

### **B. The Father loves those whom Jesus loves.**

Jesus has come to earth and lived as a man. He took to himself the fullness of a human nature. We saw him. There are witnesses, and a faithful testimony in his word of what he said. So, do you love Jesus?

Only by that love are you shown to belong to Jesus. "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word." "He who does not love Me does not keep My words."

With this encouragement to the one who does keep his words. "My Father will love him."

So it is worth asking, "Does the Father love you?" Perhaps that question comes to you in form of thoughts about the assurance of your salvation. Do you know that the Father loves you? How can you gain such assurance?

That's really the point of this whole text, Jesus seeking to give his disciples such a confidence. Remember the occasion. He is leaving his disciples behind. He will die, and leave them. But they will have this assurance.

v.19-20

We're all together in that picture, we who love Jesus. Jesus is in my Father, united to him in the perfect fellowship of the trinity. And you disciples are in me, Jesus says. Marvelous that such fellowship we have with Jesus would be described in the same way as the fellowship between the Father and the Son. And Jesus then says at the end of verse 20, "I am in you."

The Father is in the Son. The disciples of Jesus are in Jesus.

And Jesus is in them. Such perfect, amazing fellowship. And where does that come from? How is that fellowship established? How can you obtain such fellowship, and how can you preserve the assurance of it?

### **III. OBEDIENCE ESTABLISHES FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.**

We're right back where we started.

Let me emphasize. It's not that obedience earns fellowship with God. It's not that obedience is the means by which we gain that fellowship. But rather, obedience embodies that fellowship with God, just as it embodies our love for God.

Let me simplify all that just a bit. How can you experience fellowship with God? By loving Jesus. By obeying Jesus, as the testimony of your love.

Look back at verse 21 now, the whole verse.

v.21

Manifest means to show yourself. Jesus shows himself to those who love him. Jesus shows himself, manifests himself, in terms of communion and fellowship, to those who walk with him in obedience to his commands.

#### **A. Jesus reveals himself to those who love him.**

v.21

That prompted a good question from one of the disciples,  
v.22

So what's the difference, Jesus is asked? What is the difference between your relationship to us as your disciples and your relationship with the rest of the world? What is the

difference? Whether or not you love Jesus. So Jesus answers the question,

v.23

What a marvelous, marvelous promise. What a warm and encouraging hope. "We will come to him and make Our home with him."

Those are words of fellowship, communion. Those are words of relationship. Personal relationship. And that relationship, that fellowship comes as a gift of God to those who love Jesus!

And that's the goal, isn't it? Fellowship with God. Communion with God, whom we don't see, whom we cannot see. But real fellowship nonetheless. Built upon the promise of Jesus to reveal himself to us, to make himself manifest.

Let me emphasize again and again, this is not bare, cold, external obedience here. There is nothing that could be called legalism here. Rather, here is the fellowship of those who love each other. We who love God. And God who loves us. And in that context,

#### **B. Jesus gives the assurance of life to those who love him.**

Life! That's what this text is all about.

v.19

I'm going away, Jesus says. I'm leaving you. In other words, I'm going to die. Surely the disciples would have understood that implication of what Jesus is saying. That's what it means to depart. And in that context, he promises life! "Because I live, you will live also."

And that promise of life, that hope of life, is where all of this emphasis upon the trinity goes.

v.20

You will have life. That same promise is given to us today, too, isn't it? That is the ultimate promise of the gospel.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

So that is, of course, my question to you this morning. Do you believe this?

And with that question, to you who earnestly and enthusiastically say yes, they the question becomes, "Will you love me?"

Will you love Jesus? Will you show your love by your faithfulness to him, just as any wife or husband shows such love to their spouse. Will you be faithful to Jesus, and serve him only? Will you obey him, and walk according to his commandments, as a demonstration of your love?

To you who will do so, this, then this is the encouragement, that you show yourselves to be those whom God loves!

v.23 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."