



8/24/26

We're starting this new series, Kingdom Outpost. Our church is a Kingdom Outpost, a representative of the Kingdom of God on earth. I'm looking forward to seeing how John 15:12-17 gives us a picture of how He wants our Kingdom Outpost to represent His Kingdom.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

John 15:12-17

Before I jump into vs. 12, I want to remember what led up to these verses. Jesus told the disciples that He is the true vine, and we are the branches. The only way we can bear fruit (never make fruit) is by abiding in Him, the vine. He calls us to abide in Him, to let His word abide in us, and to abide in His love. The evidence of us abiding in His love is that we will keep His commandments. By this abiding relationship with Jesus, we will have His fullness of joy.

So... what IS His commandment?

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." This is how the Kingdom Outpost represents the Kingdom of God. We love one another in the same way Jesus loved us. Just a few chapters earlier, on the same night, Jesus said in John 13:35, "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have LOVE for one another." Not just love for Him, but love for each other. 1 John 4:8 explains, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

That means that I'm commanded to be patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not rude, not arrogant, not selfish, not irritable, not resentful and other selfless things toward ALL believers according to the definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13. Yikes! Patient, which means macro suffering? Toward all believers? That sounds hard! Yes, because that is the kind of supernatural love found in Jesus. He is calling me to love others AS HE HAS LOVED ME. He is the perfect example of what He wants me to do.

Well, how much does Jesus actually love me? "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." The thing is, Romans 5 says that Jesus didn't just lay down His life for His friends. He laid down His life for us while we were still sinners, weak, and ungodly... enemies of Jesus. He does MORE than model what He wants me to do. I cannot out give Him.

"You are My friends if you do what I command you." He laid down His life for more than His friends, but He wants me to be His friend. The evidence of friendship with Him is obedience to Him. The evidence of abiding in His love is obedience to Him. It's not... be obedient and then I will be your friend and then I will love you. It is this... When I am truly abiding in Jesus I will WANT to obey Him because I'm so grateful for His love and friendship. By abiding in Him I will be so sure of who He is and what is good, right, and true, that I will want to obey Him.

Jesus wants a deeper relationship with His people than us just doing what He wants us to do. He wants to pour His love and friendship into our hearts. He said, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you." He doesn't just want us to serve Him. He wants to communicate with us, to be in relationship with us. He wants to reveal the truth to us. What is the most relationship deepening thing a person can do to love someone? Share his heart. That's what Jesus has done. That's what the Father has done through Jesus.

Jesus has made known the Father's compassion, His love, His mercy, His grace, His wisdom. He makes Him known SO THAT we can abide in Him, let His word dwell in us richly, and abide in His love, and experience His deep joy. I would say obedience to Him is totally worth it.

Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you." Jesus chose us. He pursued us. It is no accident that I belong to Jesus. He not only chose me, but He gave me a purpose. He wants me to bear fruit that lasts... starting with the fruit of the Spirit... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. No other fruit can ABIDE if it doesn't stem from the fruit of the Spirit. With the Spirit making this fruit in me, it's not a come and go fruit. It's not me just trying to hold it together and then falling apart. It's a fruit that lasts.

God WANTS to bless me. He wants me to ask for His help. In context, does this mean that I can ask for anything and He should just give it? No. First, I'm called to ask "in Jesus' name." That means that what I ask for aligns with the heart and motivation of Jesus. Some might say, "That seems kinda like a bait and switch. Ask whatever you want, as long as you ask for what I want." But I think of it this way... If I'm not asking according to what God wants, I'm asking for something that is not good for me... even if it seems to me like it is. I don't have the whole picture. He does. Everything God gives is for His glory and my good. If I'm not asking in the name of Jesus, I'm asking for something that is ultimately not for my good and not for His

glory. The first thing I need to ask is for God to help me only ask for what will glorify Him and bear fruit for Him. He will answer that prayer.

This is a change in the way I pray. If I pray like this, I no longer ask for what will be easy and comfortable. I will ask for Him to prune me and change me to be more like Jesus, even if it hurts. And it will hurt. I will pray for Him to do a work in me so that I take joy in obeying Him... but that He will give me the strength to obey even when my feelings want something else... that I will say like Jesus, "Not my will, but Yours be done."

Ultimately, whatever I ask will help me to glorify Him, bear fruit for Him, obey Him, and love other believers. Jesus said, "These things I command you, so that you will love one another." This is a Kingdom Outpost reflection of the Kingdom of heaven... abiding, God glorifying, word aligned, obedient, fruitful love. Ask for this. God will bless it.

O Lord, please help me to ask for this. I know that means pruning. Pruning hurts. But it will be so worth it. Let me never forget that You have poured Your love into my heart. You call me Your friend. Serving You is not a distant thing. It's a friendship, a relationship. You choosing to love me first. Please stir this desire in our church, so that we together can be a Kingdom Outpost. Help us to love as Jesus loved. Help us to abide in You. Help us to celebrate You.