

For The Love – John 15:9-17

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John 15:9-17. We're studying the book of John that we may believe and live. Fully live. It's the purpose of the entire book, and the purpose of chapter 15.

Jesus and the disciples just left the upper room on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane, and along the way he pours out his soul. Starting in v1-8 by telling us to abide and bear fruit. Stay connected to Jesus, remain in fellowship with Jesus, and draw near to Jesus – abide – in order to do things that advance the Kingdom of God. That was last week.

This week, in v9-17, he extends the metaphor and connects it to love and obedience. Abide, to bear the fruit of love and obedience in your life. Abide, for the love.

Intro

John 15:9 – *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. [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.* (ESV)

We talk about love so much I fear we're numb to it. Calloused and tired of it. If that's you, I hope God uses this passage to reinvigorate you. Maybe even convict you.

Because love, as Jesus uses it here, is the sap that runs through the vine, and fills the branches with life, in order to bear fruit. No love, no fruit. That's the point. "Abide in my love, to bear my fruit."

And why wouldn't we? It's the very love of *God*. The same love the Father shows Jesus. V9 again – *As the Father has loved me* [Jesus said], *so have I loved you*. Just like God loves Jesus, Jesus loves us. How so? How has God loved his Son? Perfectly, completely, fully, and eternally.

Perfectly, because he's God. Completely, because there's nothing *lacking* about it. Fully, because God *withholds* none of it. And eternally, from before time began and forever after. That's how God loves Jesus, and how Jesus loves us.

No wonder he says abide in it. It's the sap of life, it comes from the heart of God, and it's the key to bearing fruit.

But you have to obey. Did you catch it?

If you want to enjoy the love of Jesus, you have to obey Jesus (v9-10)

V10 again. *[10] If you keep my commandments* [if you obey], *you will abide*; *abide in my love*. As in, remain in it and enjoy it. Soak it up and experience it. If you obey, you will abide. If you don't, you won't.

Not that Jesus' love for us is ever in question as one of his own. But that the key to it – the means of resting in it, and reveling in it, and enjoying it – is obedience.

If you want to enjoy the *love* of Jesus – if you want to immerse yourself in it and revel in it – you have to *obey* Jesus. You have to do what he says; live like he wants. Just like he obeyed the Father and abides in *his* love; enjoys his love.

It's like a family with a swimming pool in their backyard. It's always there and always available, but if the kids don't do their work, or do what they're told, or disobey, they can't enjoy it. They can't experience it. They can't have fun.

But if they obey, if they actually *live* according to their parents' guidelines and desires, they can swim all summer long. Virtually live in the pool.

Same for the love of Jesus. If you want to enjoy it – not get it or earn it; but enjoy it – you have to obey. *If you keep my commandments* [he said], *you will abide in my love*. Love that he's already given and already extended. Perfectly, completely, fully, and eternally.

It's a glorious pool with beautiful water, and the day you were adopted into his family, the day you were saved, it was yours to enjoy. If you only obey.

By the same token . . .

• **If you want the joy of Jesus, you have to abide in Jesus (v11)**

That's v11 – *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full*. Praise the Lord! We're not saved to be Debbie Downers or Moody Mikes. We're saved for joy unspeakable, full of glory.

But what are the *things* Jesus spoke to ensure it? *These things I have spoken to you.* (11a)

Well, at least everything from chapter 13 on. The last supper 'til now. *"If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."* (13:8b) *"I go to prepare a place for you."* (14:2b) *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* (14:6) The Holy Spirit will help you. (14:26) *"Peace I leave with you."* (14:27) At least those things.

Not to mention the things he said here in chapter 15 about abiding. *"Abide in me, and I in you,"* v4. "Abide and bear fruit," v5. Abide in my words, v7. *"Abide in my love,"* v9. Embrace *those* things, do those things, abide in Jesus, and joy will follow.

And make no mistake, it's not just the external joy of good times and good company. Or the fleeting joy of passing circumstances. Rather, it's the internal joy of Jesus himself.

The joy of knowing he loves you and always will. The joy of knowing he's got you and always has. The joy of forgiveness and purpose. Assurance and freedom. Wonder and truth. No matter what the circumstances. That's the joy of Jesus.

And it's ours every minute of every day of every year, if we only abide. He didn't save us to live a life of doom and gloom. He didn't redeem us to remain a slave. He didn't rescue us for dutiful drudgery. He saved us to live a life of joy. His joy. Supernatural joy.

But you have to abide. That's v9-11.

Then, in v12 – after saying in v10, "If you keep my *commandments*" plural – he zeroes in on a particular one. *[12] "This is my commandment* [singular], *that you love one another as I have loved you*. Which ought to sound familiar.

Because he just said the same thing in **John 13:34** – *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*

Having just said that an hour or two earlier at the last supper, he reiterates it on their way to the garden to connect the dots.

If we're going to enjoy the love of Jesus, we have to obey Jesus. And . . .

If we're going to obey Jesus, we have to love each other (v12-13)

We have to. It's a command. *Love one another*. No love, no obedience.

And there's no getting around it. No matter how much we don't like somebody. No matter how offended we feel. No matter *how* much we rationalize it in our heart. And no matter how much we love God. There's no getting around this command to also love each other.

1 John 4:20 says – *If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother* [“I love Jesus and can't stand my sister, my sister in Christ”], *he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen*. Cannot.

We can't live in disobedience by holding a grudge or thinking ill of someone, and truly love God. We can't. It's oil and water.

If we're going to truly love and obey *Jesus*, we have to love each other. *We* do. Right here. At Coram Deo Bible Church.

And Jesus doesn't leave it up to us to define what it *means* to love one another. Notice the last five *words* of his statement in v12 – “*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you*. That not only *defines* love for us, but raises it to a whole new level.

If we're going to *obey* Jesus, we have to love . . .

• **Just like Jesus**

Just like Jesus loves us. No matter what. We have to give of ourselves, for the sake of others, whether they deserve it or not, expecting nothing in return. That's love. At least this kind of love. Agape love. The love *Jesus* refers to and shows.

We have to give each other our attention. We have to give each other the benefit of the doubt. We have to give each other grace. Grace *upon* grace.

And we have to love each other . . .

- **Actively, not passively**

Is that not how Jesus loved us? Did he not put his feelings for us into action? Did he not take the initiative and *come* to us? Did he not teach us his ways and show us how to live? Did he not actively die for our sin? He did.

He didn't wait until we *deserved* to be loved. He'd still be waiting. He didn't wait until *we* took the initiative. We couldn't and wouldn't.

When Jesus says, “love one another as I have loved you,” he means do so actively. Reaching out when you don't want to. Extending grace when it's not deserved. Taking the initiative instead of waiting. Anything *but* passive.

Second, if we're going to love just like Jesus, we have to love . . .

- **Personally, not remotely**

In the flesh and close up. Like Jesus did when he took *on* flesh. And dwelt *among* us. Love like that he says. Personally.

And notice who he refers to. He didn't say, “Love the nations.” Though that's true. Or “Love the world,” though *that's* true. He said, “*Love one another*.” Referring to our brothers and sisters in Christ. The ones sitting next to us. Just like the disciples were next to each other.

One of the most deceitful tools of Satan is getting us to project our love on those across the ocean, while casting our hate on those across the aisle. Thank you C.S. Lewis. It's the exact opposite of the way *Jesus* loved, and the way *we* should love.

And third, we should love each other . . .

- **Sacrificially, not barely**

V13 – *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends*. There's no greater love than to lay down our lives for someone.

In one sense, Jesus established this as the *standard* for our love, love one another sacrificially; and in another sense, he's foreshadowed his death. He set the standard, and then met it.

If we're going to love and obey like Jesus, we have to sacrifice like Jesus. That doesn't necessarily mean we have to die for someone; though it could. But it sure does mean we have to give up our desires, wants, and needs sometimes.

It doesn't mean we should love each other with the *minimum* of what we have – the *minimum* amount of time, talent, treasure, and effort – but the maximum.

It's like John said in **1 John 3:16** – *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers*. Not just barely, but sacrificially.

Three ways to *love* like Jesus, and thereby obey Jesus.

And given the next verses, why wouldn't we? Why wouldn't we obey? Because . . .

Obedience to Jesus leads to friendship with Jesus (v14-16)

[14] *You are my friends if you do what I command you*. [15] *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*.

What a stunning statement. What a level of familiarity and relationship. Reserved *up* to this point, for only Abraham and Moses. But here, Jesus calls us all friends. At least those who are his. Those who are saved.

And yet, once again, it depends on obedience. [14] *You are my friends* [he said] *if you do what I command you*. In two main ways. Friendship with Jesus depends on obedience to Jesus in two main ways.

First is **the obedience of faith**. Believing in Jesus in the first place. When we believe, when we put our faith and trust in him, God adopts us into his family. No longer slaves

but children. No longer servants but friends. Just like he said. So obedience to Jesus, the obedience of faith, leads to friendship with Jesus.

Second, hand-in-hand with the first, is **our obedience in life**. Leading to an even *deeper* friendship with Jesus. Like the 11 Disciples had. Because over and over again they did what he said and drew ever closer.

And the same is true for us. When God saves us and redeems us, he delivers us from the servitude and slavery of darkness, to a kingdom of freedom and light. A kingdom where Jesus considers us friends instead of servants. A kingdom in which we obey him and follow him, instead of defy him and ignore him.

And the more we do, the more we obey, the closer we get. And the closer we get, the more we're friends.

And notice how he characterizes it here. It's a friendship where first of all . . .

- **He informs us of his plans**

15b – *I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.* Friends keep friends up to speed. In the loop.

And Jesus is no different. Having received an abundance of truth and insight from God the Father, Jesus relayed it first to the Disciples, by speaking; and then to us by inspiration. So friendship with Jesus means first of all that he informs us of his plans.

Second . . .

- **He includes us in his ways**

He doesn't just tell us what *he's* doing in the kingdom, he tells us what *we* should do. Like he says in v14 – *You are my friends if you do what I command you.* If you do what I tell you.

And when we follow through, when we obey, our friendship grows. Our partnership deepens. Our relationship strengthens. He includes us in his ways.

And third, from v16 . . .

- **He chooses us for his work**

[16] *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.*

In other words, our entire life and ministry is due to Jesus. He chooses us to be saved, he appoints us to go, and he sets us up to bear fruit. Preparing works beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10) In other words, it's all him. Start to finish. *"I chose you and appointed you."* (16)

An amazing statement. Full of truth. A statement that not only affirms our election, but his sovereignty over our entire lives. And as such, it's meant to assure us that he's fully in control and has a plan. Even in the face of uncertainty. Especially in the face of uncertainty.

Which means there's no room for boasting given whatever influence we might have; there's no room for worry given the obstacles we might encounter; and there's no room for fear given the opposition we'll face. None.

We've been chosen and appointed. Chosen to go. Chosen to bear fruit. Chosen, so that whatever we ask in Jesus' name, God will give it.

What blessing. What a privilege. What a responsibility.

And what a friend. If we only obey. Obey in faith, and obey in life.

And then last . . .

Obedience to Jesus leads to love for others (v17)

It *leads* to it. From v17. The other side of the coin of v12.

In v12 he says – *This is my commandment, that you love one another.* (12) And in v17 he says – *These things I command you, so that you will love one another.* (17) You think he's trying to tell us something?

If we're going to obey Jesus, v12, we have to love each other. It's a command. And the more we do *all* that he says, v17, the more we'll love each other. *These things I command you, so that you will love one another.* (17)

The question is, once again, *what* things? What commands?

Same as before. *Abide in me and I in you.* (4) Abide and bear fruit. (5) Abide in my *words*. (7) *Abide in my love.* (9) Obedience in *those* things, leads us to obedience in others. Namely, loving each other.

It's all for the love. The more we fill our soul with the life-giving sap of Jesus, the more we'll overflow with the fruit of his love. So that *obedience* to Jesus, leads to *love* for *others*.

Prayer – Lord, how grateful we are for your words, and encouragement, and commands. Impress them on our heart to live them out. Actually change the way we think and interact with one another. We want your joy, and we want to enjoy your love.

You Are Loved