

Lean in and Listen. Jesus has a Message for You
 Notes Week Four
 A Message of Joy Part 2
 John 15:12-17

Jesus continues to teach and speak with the disciples as they journey toward the Garden of Gethsemane. He has just talked with them about abiding, and bearing fruit.

Bearing fruit is the primary purpose of believers. Fruit is anything that honors God and if it honors God, Jesus is the source. In order to bear fruit---any fruit—the believer must abide in Christ and Christ in the believer. Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is not a silent resident. He speaks and we must listen. **Obedience is always connected with abiding.** (John 14:21, 23, 24 & John 15:10)

Jesus continues in the context of abiding and bearing fruit.

I. The Explanation

A. Bookends of Love.

Verse 12 and 17 say basically the same thing. Love one another is a command that we must obey. 1 John 5:2-3 and 1 John 4:19 concur: We do not obey to earn the love of God. He already loves us. Our obedience is proof that we love Him.

We are to love ONE ANOTHER. Jesus is talking to believers about other believers. We are to love other believers in Christ. He will eventually tell us about our relationship to the world and those who are not believers—but for now He is saying, “Get this right amongst yourself—love one another!”

How can Jesus command love? He is speaking of Agape love agapeo. This is a love of the will. It has little to do with how we feel. In fact, feelings may or may not accompany agape love.

God is where agape love originates. God is love! He is not simply the dispenser of love—it is who He is. He has demonstrated agape love toward us and we in turn show that love to others—because we can. Christ lives in us, equipping us to love through the power of His Holy Spirit. Our ability to love is directly tied to our abiding in Christ and abiding in His words. We can NOTHING apart from Christ (John 15:5).

B. Servants and Friends

Jesus seems to use words that contradicts each other. So we must understand what He means

Jesus speaks to the disciples as friends. They/we have a unique relationship with Jesus. We are close to him. He no longer calls us servants or slaves because we are closer than that. And yet verse 14 seems confusing. "You are my friends if you do what I command you." Typically, we do not think of commanding friends! So, what does Jesus mean?

The word *friend* is the Greek work for "*friend at court*" It is almost exclusively used to describe those in the inner circle around a King or Emperor. The inner circle is close to the King. They know His likes and dislikes. They know His plans. But there closeness does not negate their obedience to the King. They are still subject to the King. They must obey him. Friendship and obedience, as Jesus speaks of them, do not contradict.

C. Grace and Purpose

Being in a close inner circle has the possibility of making us arrogant. After all, the disciples had just been arguing about which one them is the greatest. We can get arrogant too. Or we can certainly take our relationship with Christ for granted. So, Jesus reminds them of a few things.

This close relationship is based on grace. We did not pursue Jesus, He pursued us. We did not pick Jesus, He chose us. He chose us when we were sinners unable to even respond to His love and grace. He made us alive by grace (Ephesians 2:4-5).

He saved us for a purpose:

1. To bear fruit
2. For that fruit to remain-reproduce
3. For us to pray and ask for more fruit

Jesus ends the passage (verse 17) with Love One Another! Do you think He want us to get this?

So, what does loving one another look like in the everyday life of a believer?

II. Examination

A. Why is love so important anyway?

1. **Love is a command.** It is not a suggestion, or a rule, or a random remark by Jesus. Love is the character of God and He expects us to demonstrate His character because Christ lives in us.

2. **Love is proof.** John 15:10, 1 John 4:20-21. Love proves we are abiding and obeying.

3. **Love is a distinguisher.** It says we are different than the world. John 13:35-
“By this ALL men will know you are my disciples”.

4. **Love is possible.** Colossians 3:14 says “put on love” It implies we have a choice in the matter. It also implies we do not wait until we FEEL like loving. Love is possible because the Holy Spirit is at work in us, giving us the desire to love as well as the ability to love (Philippians 2:13, Galatians 5:22).

B. What does Agape love look like?

James 2:12 and Colossians 3:17 speak of our words and our deeds. We demonstrate love in both what we say and what we do.

Our words

James 3:8-10—The tongue is full of evil. It must come under the control of the Spirit. We cannot speak both good and evil and claim to belong to Christ.

Colossians 4:6 Our speech is to be with grace. Grace is giving that which is not deserved. Our speech is also to be seasoned with salt. Salt preserves, makes tasty, and causes thirst. Our words should do all three as well. Preserving also speaks of truth. We cannot separate truth and love. We must speak truth in love. Love without truth is fluff. Truth without love is cruel. We need both in our speech. Ephesians 5:4 No filthy speech, course jesting, useless talk (gossip, critical talk,) Ask yourself before you speak, Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

Titus 2:8 Sound speech which is beyond reproach

Ephesians 5:19-20. Paul writes we are to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and the after-effects of His control is joyful, uplifting, thankful speech.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 our words are to be encouraging and have the ability to build up others.

Our Deeds

Love is an action word. 1 John 3:18 says we are not just to speak words of love but we are to engage in acts of love.

Galatians 5:13 --serve one another through love.

Philippians 2:3-4. We are to serve with the same attitude of Jesus. Sometimes we are afraid we will be taken advantage of if we serve too often or to a great degree. And yet, if we are abiding in Christ, He will give us wisdom, direction, and discernment in our serving. He will help us establish healthy boundaries that enhance love instead of distorting it.

Galatians 6:1-2 Restore with gentleness. If someone has fallen into sin, and they are repentant, restore them with truth and grace. Bear one another's burdens. Meet their physical need, encourage them, pray for them.

Ephesians 4:32 BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, tenderhearted and forgiving. This verse is full of truth. Forgiveness is not void of truth and wisdom. Forgiveness has Biblical perimeters and responsibilities.

1 Thessalonians 5:11-13. The focus of this verse is encouraging other believers and Paul specifically includes those in leadership in the church. They need our encouragement. They carry burdens we know nothing about. Pray for your leaders, encourage them, and build them up in Christ.

We will never have any impact in the world until we LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Read 1 Corinthians 13