

One of the greatest difficulties in preaching through books of the Bible, is knowing how many verses to consider at a time—while it's important to maintain the unity of a passage, some verses simply demand single treatment...

Thus, before I come to v15, let me suggest it's relation to the immediate context—from vv1-14, our Savior has provided several reasons for His disciples, not to let their hearts be troubled—He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house—He reminds them they know the way there (Him)—He reminds them that He and the Father are one—He then reminds them He Himself will do greater works, by His Spirit, through His Church...

And then, right after our text (vv16-18), our Savior begins to describe a dominant theme of this discourse—the promise of the Holy Spirit—and yet, right in the middle of all these encouragements, our Savior exhorts His disciples to evidence their love for Him by obedience to His commandments—in other words, one grand purpose of all His work, is that His people would honor and glorify Him by their works—glorify Him by their obedience...

"I'm leaving to prepare a place for you in heaven—I will send the Holy Spirit to empower you—here's a summary of what you need to do—love Me and thus obey Me"—this really is the whole thing—love Christ and obey Him...

- I. What is Love to Christ?
- II. What are Christ's Commandments?
- III. What is Keeping Christ's Commandments?

I. What is Love to Christ?

1. I think most of us would agree, that fewer concepts have been more distorted in our day, than the meaning of LOVE (and unfortunately, much of this confusion is shared by many Christians)...
2. For example, some have reduced love to a mere feeling (or delight), while others to mere actions (or doing)...
3. But, as we shall see this morning, true love includes the whole soul—the mind, the affections, and the will...
4. Thus, I suggest love is best described as—an affection, that results from the understanding, and regulates our actions...
5. [1] Love results from the understanding—by this I mean, it results from a proper understanding of who Christ is...
6. By nature, man does NOT love Christ, and the reason being, they see NOTHING lovely or beautiful in Christ...
7. Satan has blinded their minds so that they are unable to see the glory of God, as made known in the face of Christ...
8. But this changes by grace, for in regeneration, our eyes are opened to behold the glory and beauty of Christ...
9. And it's because of this, every Christian loves Christ—they love Him because they now see Him as lovely...
10. For example—I love my wife—and I love her because I know her—the more I know her the more I love her...
11. There is something in or about her that I find beautiful—outwardly beautiful, yes, but even more so, inwardly...
12. So too—Christians love Christ because they know Him—they see in Him a Being of perfect moral beauty...
13. This is at the very heart of what love is—love delights in its object, because it beholds infinite moral beauty...
14. Joseph Bellamy—"A spiritual sight of God (or of Christ), and a sense of His glory and beauty, begets love..."

15. Song 1:3—"Because of the fragrance of Your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love You (5:9)..."
16. Here Christ's person (or name), is described as "ointment poured forth"—that is, as perfume giving a delightful odour
17. It's as if a knowledge of Christ's name (person), is like the pleasant aroma of a box of ointments, opened to the senses...
18. Every person who has their spiritual senses awakened by the grace of God, sees and knows Christ for who He is...
19. "Therefore, the virgins love You"—that is, because of His moral beauty, the virgins (true Christians) love Him...
20. Man by nature does not love Christ, and the reason being, he has no ability to spiritually smell His moral beauty...
21. Thus, all true love for Christ is rooted or grounded in the understanding—you see Christ as altogether lovely...
22. [2] Love is an affection—by "affection" is meant—a movement or motion of the soul—an arousal of the heart...
23. This movement or motion of the soul is expressed in desire—a longing to communion and fellowship with Christ...
24. Desire is at the very heart of love—those who love God, desire God, they long for God, they yearn for God...
25. Thomas Watson—"Love is an expansion of soul, or the inflaming of the affections, by which a Christian breathes after God as the supreme and sovereign good..."
26. At times, people will use the words "emotion" or "feeling" as synonyms for affections, but I prefer the word "affection..."
27. The reason being, an "affection" is deeper than a mere feeling or emotion, but is rooted in our understanding...
28. It's because we see and know Christ as He is, that our hearts long for Him, and desire to fellowship with Him...
29. For example—the more I know my wife, the more I love her, and the more I love her, I desire to be with her...
30. All true love, in some extent, desires or longs for its object—love for Christ yearns or desires for Christ Himself...
31. Ps.63:1—"God, You *are* my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water..."
32. This is the language of love—because David loved God, he desired God—he longed to fellowship with God...
33. He had right thoughts of God which led to strong affections for God—strong longings and desires for Him...
34. This is at the very heart of love for Christ—to love Christ is to have strong desires to fellowship with Christ...
35. [3] Love regulates our actions—that is, because we love Him, we love His commandments, and desire to obey them...
36. Fundamentally, love desires the good of the person loved—because I love my wife, I seek to provide for her...
37. Now, the way in which we desire good to Christ, is that we long to see His glory advanced throughout the earth...
38. This includes, in part, that we obey His commandments, and that we bring Him joy and glory through obedience...
39. Joseph Bellamy—"If we love God supremely, we shall live to him ultimately; if we love him with all our hearts, we shall serve him with all our souls..."
40. Thus, those who love Christ, love Him with all their being—they love Him with their mind, heart, and will...
41. Lk.10:27—"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself..."

42. We are to love Him with all our mind—that is, we love Him as we have right thinking and thoughts about Him...
43. We are to love Him with all our heart and soul—that is, we love Him as our affections are stirred toward Him...
44. We are to love Him with all our strength—that is, we love Him when we spend our strength to honor and obey Him...
45. Thus, in summary—to love Christ is to behold in Christ the greatest moral beauty, that causes our souls to delight and desire Him...
46. This results in us, giving our lives for Him, and living in a way consist with His holy and righteous commandments...

II. What are Christ's Commandments?

1. "If you love Me, keep My commandments"—what exactly does our Savior mean by—"My commandments..."
2. To put it simply—Christ's commandments, are one with the moral law as summarized in the TC, with some additions...
3. Most of you are aware, of the distinction between moral and positive law—moral law is eternal and never changing (it's summarized in the TC)...
4. By "positive law" is meant, those temporary laws that where specific applications of the TC, to a particular people (the ceremonial and dietary laws of the OC)...
5. Thus, in defining what our Savior meant by His commandments—let me suggest they are one with OT moral law with NT additions...
6. [1] His law is one with OT moral law—that is, fundamentally, our Savior's commandments are identical to the TC...
7. There's only one moral standard, Old and New Testaments—God never changes and His law never changes...
8. Matt.5:17—"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill..."
9. Christ came to fulfill everything the OT foretold and demanded—He came to fulfill the law FOR us and IN us...
10. He came to perfectly obey the law in our stead, and, He came to change us so that we can live lawful lives...
11. And what law does He enable us to obey—well, He continues in the Sermon on the Mount to expound the TC...
12. Matt.5:21—"You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder...But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment..."
13. Here our Savior is clarifying Moses, or the TC, from the Pharisees who interpreted the law merely externally...
14. He isn't teaching a new law, one that's internal, but He's merely interpreting the old law in a proper manner...
15. [2] His law has NC positive additions—that is, Christ's law has been stripped of the OC positive additions...
16. These all have been fulfilled by Him—thus, Christians are not bound to obey that which was typical and temporary...
17. But—Christ then adds to the moral law, His own NC positive additions—first day Sabbath, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper...
18. [3] His law comes with His own perfect example, Jn.13:34—"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you..."
19. Thus, the newness of the "new commandment" is that Christ Himself, has given us a perfect example to follow...
20. Christians now, not only have the written law (as summarized in the TC), but they have a living law to imitate...
21. It's for this reason, Christ can command His people to keep His commandments, and to follow His perfect example...

22. Are Christians to obey Christ's commands, or are they to live as He lived—both, because these are one thing...

III. What is Keeping Christ's Commandments?

1. What does our Savior mean when He says—"Keep My commandments"—well, the Greek word rendered "keep" means two things...
2. [1] To cherish or guard—the word rendered "keep" literally means—"to carefully watch over"—to guard because you cherish...
3. People "keep" those things they cherish—because we love Christ, we cherish and guard His word (of which His law is a part)...
4. Rom.7:22—"I delight in the law of God according to the inward man"—that is, he cherished it with the new man...
5. [2] To observe or obey—again this word carries with it the idea of "careful observance"—to observe to obey...
6. To keep His commandments means—to give careful watch of them, so as to observe or obey them personally...
7. Now, obviously our Savior is NOT saying, that if we love Him we will keep His commandments perfectly...
8. And yet, as we read through Scripture, there are several attributes of obedience, that is true for every Christ lover (they obey His commandments, cheerfully, longingly, universally, and continually)...
9. [a] Cheerfully—that is, we obey His commandments with our whole hearts, not grudgingly but willfully and gladly...
10. Ps.119:34—"Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart..."
11. [b] Longingly—by this I mean, Christians long to obey His commandments, even though they often fall short...
12. Rom.7:15—"For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do..."
13. [c] Universally—by this I mean, Christians keep ALL of His commandments—they don't pick and choose...
14. Ps.119:5-6—"Oh, that my ways were directed To keep Your statutes! Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments..."
15. [d] Continually—by this I mean, Christians walk in His commandments, as the general pattern of their lives...
16. Ps.119:111-112—"Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end..."
17. Obs.1—Love is an active and motivating grace—love makes a person do things—it energizes them to do great things...
18. For example—it's love for country that causes many men and women to lay their lives down on the battlefield...
19. It's love for a newborn that causes the mother to stay up all night, feeding and tending to the needs of her child...
20. It's love for a wife and family, that causes a man to rise early in the morning to labor all day in difficult circumstances...
21. And so too, why do Christians obey Christ—why do they risk life and limb, in obedience to Him—but because of love...
22. Thus, let me suggest this important application—those who obey Christ MOST, are those who love Christ BEST...
23. It's rather easy to claim we love Christ—but what accurately reveals our love for Christ, is obedience to Christ...
24. Husbands—do you want to know how much you love Christ—then ask this question—how much do I love my wife...
25. Children—do you want to know how much you love Christ—then ask this question—how much do I obey my parents...

26. Pastors—do you want to know how much you love Christ—then ask this question—how much do I feed His sheep...
27. Some of us need to stop deceiving ourselves—we claim to love Christ, but we fail to keep His commandments...
28. Thus, what you need, what all of us need, is not more obedience to Christ—that is not the answer to your problem...
29. What you need is more love to Christ, because remember, the more love you have the more obedience you render...
30. The reason you don't obey Christ very well or often, is because you don't love Christ as much as you think...
31. Thus, the question becomes—how can a Christian, whose love has grown cold, rekindle and strengthen that love...
32. [a] Repent from all known sin, Rev.2:4-5—"I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works..."
33. [b] Fixate yourself upon Christ's beauty—remember, knowledge of Christ is essential to true love for Christ...
34. The more we know about Christ, the more we will love Him, and the more we love Him, we will obey Him...
35. For example, think of an old steam train—the train ran on steam that was caused by a fire, that was fed with coal...
36. So too, the better who know Christ, who He is, what He has done, and what He is doing, the more we will love Him...
37. [c] Meditate upon God's love for you in Christ—"We love Him, because He loved us first"—the more we know His love for us, the more we will have love for Him (knowledge of His love begets love for Him)...
38. Obs.2—Love and law are friends and not foes—many Christians believe these two are not compatible with each other...
39. Love, no longer law, is what God is concerned with—it's as if these two are water and oil, and they never mix...
40. Well, certainly brethren, you can see from our text, that our Savior viewed these two (love and law) as close friends...
41. Love shows itself in obedience to the law—the law, enables love to express itself in tangible and concrete ways...
42. You can claim to love all you want—but if your "love" does not align itself with God's law—it is NOT love...
43. For example, I wasted 30 minutes yesterday, watching the Women's Protest, that took place in Washington DC...
44. One of the women, who was an unashamed and open sodomite, spoke about what she called "radical love"...
45. She claimed to fight for true love that accepted all—she led the masses to chant—"We are an uprising of love..."
46. But let me ask you—was she actually a champion for love—was she truly leading an uprising of true love...
47. No—she was not, and here is why—because what she was advocating was at odds with the holy law of God...
48. True love always runs within the path of law—or put another way—law is love's eyes, without which she is blind...
49. Love would be blind without law—love always acts within the boundaries of law—lawless love is not love...
50. For example, go back to my illustration about the steam train—more coal, produces more heat, and thus more steam...
51. But is the train free to run wherever it wishes—no, it runs the fastest when it moves along the two tracks beneath it...
52. And this is true of a Christian—the more we love Christ, the more we will move along the tracks of His law...

53. It really doesn't matter, how much heat and steam is generated, if the train isn't on the tracks for which it was intended...
54. Furthermore, it doesn't matter how much passion a person has—the lady I heard yesterday, had plenty of passion and steam...
55. But because she lacked a true knowledge of Christ, she failed to love Christ, and thus, she failed to obey Christ...
56. Obs.3—Love is a sure evidence of true religion—that is, love that shows itself in obedience to His commandments...
57. Many translations render our text, not "if you love Me, keep My commandments" but, "if you love Me, you will keep My commandments..."
58. In other words, our Savior, according to this translation isn't commanding us to obey Him, but is asserted we will obey Him...
59. If we truly love Him we will keep His commandments—thus, keeping His commandments is evidence that we love Him (and everyone who loves Him, beloved to Him)...
60. Now—let me close by reminding you—nobody has ever become a Christian because they loved God in Christ...
61. We are saved by love, but not our love—we are saved because God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...
62. It's Christ's love for me, and not my love for Him, that saves—and it's because He loves us, that He will ensure we love Him...