

Title: If Ye Love Me
Text: Jn 14: 15-24
Date: June 5, 2022
Place: SGBC, NJ

John 14: 15: If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16: And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17: *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18: I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19: Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20: At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22: Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23: Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24: He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

We are not going to look at this passage verse-by-verse. But we will focus on the promise the Lord is making. We will see it repeatedly in the next several passages as the Lord repeats it. What is the Lord promising here?

Proposition: Our Lord is promising his apostles and each of his saints (us here today) that as we obey Christ's commandments, he, by the Holy Spirit, will keep us comforted and assured in our heart that we are his and loved of him.

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John 14: 18: I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19:...because I live, ye shall live also. 20: At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

John 14: 21: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 14: 23: Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

In his first epistle, John repeated what our Lord declares in this passage several times:

1 John 3: 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

1 John 3: 23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24: And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Our Lord is not teaching us to look at our obedience for assurance. He is declaring that as we obey the Lord's commandments, the Spirit of God, even God the Father and Christ himself, will comfort our hearts and assure us that we are his and abide in his love.

The Lord told Abraham to offer up his only son Isaac who he loved. By God's grace and Spirit, Abraham obeyed the Lord. In his heart, Abraham sacrificed Isaac that day. But just before he slew Isaac, the Lord appeared.

Genesis 22:12: And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

It was not that the Lord did not already know Abraham feared God—the Lord had created the new heart in Abraham and given him a fear of God. It was by the Spirit of the Lord that Abraham believed the Lord and obeyed him in the first place—so it will be with all who obey him. But the Lord was assuring Abraham, in Abraham’s heart, that Abraham really feared God and the Lord knew he feared God.

That assurance and comfort is by the Lord making us behold Christ more as all our salvation. We see it in that, immediately, Abraham looked up and God provided a ram caught in a thicket to die in the place of Isaac. This comfort and assurance given by the Spirit of God is by the Spirit making us behold more of Christ our Substitute who took our place under the wrath of God, who is all our Righteousness before God. Christ is the comfort wherewith the Holy Spirit comforts us and assures our hearts as our Savior promises in our text.

John 14: 18: I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19:...because I live, ye shall live also. 20: At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

As the Spirit of God makes us behold Christ, he assures us that all spiritual blessings are ours in Christ for Christ’s sake.

Genesis 22: 15: And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, 16: And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*: 17: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18: And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

This itself is the Lord’s command to each one he calls. No sinner loves the Lord by nature. Our hearts are enmity against him by nature. We only love and obey the Lord when born-again of God. “Love is of God and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 Jn 4: 7).

The difference between law/legalism and true obedience to the Lord is love for Christ that God creates in the new heart. God seeth not as man seeth, God looks on the heart. God sees the motive—the love he has created in the heart. When we love Christ we want to obey him. It is the desire of our heart to please him. We obey willingly. Love for Christ makes his commandments not grievous but a joy

When born of God, this command of our Lord is personal from the Lord to the one he has called, *‘If YOU love me, keep my commandments.’* Peter had said that he loved the Lord more than the other apostles. The Lord told him he would deny him three times. Peter said, “No I want.” Then after he did so, the Lord came to him and restored Peter from his fall, the Lord asked Peter personally, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest THOU me more than these?” Three times the Lord asked Peter, “Lovest THOU me?” Then Peter saw John walking up and said, “Lord, and what shall this man do?” “Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to THEE? follow THOU me” (Jn 21: 22).

Galatians 6:4: Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself [within his own heart], and not in another.

And it is a certainty that all who born of God, love the Lord and keep his commandments.

John 14: 21: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:...23: Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.

WHAT ARE OUR LORD’S COMMANDMENTS?

Our Lord's commandments are everything he said when he commanded his saints when he walked this earth. The apostle John gives us the Lord's commandment.

1 John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

The Lord had just commanded them to not let their heart be trouble but believe him.

John 14: 1: Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2: In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

Again, he commanded believe me or else believe me for the works sake. Faith in Christ and love for Christ are united. There is no true obedience to our Lord unless we believe Christ is truly our only Righteousness and do what do from a heart of love for Christ. It is only through faith in Christ that we establish the law given at Sinai, even as Abraham did years before the law was given. Christ was his Surety. So through faith in Christ, God imputed the righteousness of Christ to him.

It is only true obedience to Christ when we do what we do out of love for him. Anything else is a mercenary spirit. Seeking to be saved by our works or seeking rewards is from a legal motive. Love obeys because we love Christ.

Love is created of the Spirit in the heart when we behold, "Not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn 4: 10). The rich young ruler came to Christ asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. He told the Lord he had kept the commandments for him youth up.

Luke 18: 22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

If the Lord Jesus said that to you who are born of him, you would not hesitate to obey him. He is the Lord Jesus your Righteousness, your eternal Life, your All. The apostles obeyed! Why? He created a love for Christ in their heart which was greater than their fishing boats and nets and anything of this world.

Also, the love of Christ creates in the new heart makes us willing to confess him even when it means rejection from those we love. He commands us to confess him before all in believer's baptism, to take up the cross of persecution and follow him. God-given love makes us willing to obey.

Matthew 10: 32: Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33: But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35: For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36: And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. 37: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38: And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

The Lord had just commanded them to love one another.

John 13: 34: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

1 John 5:1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

The Lord commanded them to love one another by washing one another's feet.

John 13: 13: Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. 14: If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15: For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

If we love Christ, we obey him when he says, Do not sin. He says that if thy right eye offend thee pluck it out; if thy right hand offend, cut it off (Mt 5: 29). Christ's love constrains us to strive against sin. In our heart, we do not want to sin. So we make every attempt to avoid sin.

But none of God's saints keep Christ's commandments as we would. Though we do not desire to, we do sin. But the Lord will not take the Spirit from us—*"he shall be with you."* But the Spirit makes us know in our heart that we have disobeyed.

1 John 3: 20: For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

The Lord promised that who he loves he chastens. He does not love everyone. But who he loves he chastens. Opposite to the joy in obedience, when he chastens, the Spirit makes our heart condemn us. But our Savior is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. He knows you for whom he died, redeemed, and regenerated and he shall keep the feet of his saints.

When Peter denied knowing him the third time, the Lord looked at him and Peter's heart smote him and he went out and wept bitterly. But the Lord came to him and restored him. Remember what he asked, three times, "Peter, lovest thou me?" What did Peter answer, "Lord, you know all things; you know I love you." The Lord said, "Peter, if you love me keep my commandments. Feed my lambs. Believe me and love your brethren" (Jn 21: 17).

When we sin he commands us to come to him and confess our sins to him. By the Spirit, we go to him and confess our sins as he commanded. As David cried, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight; Create in me a clean heart; Restore in me the joy of thy salvation" (Ps 51). That is Christ's commandment, too. So as he promised, Christ our Advocate cleanseth us within and restores peace in the heart and gives power to put off the old man.

So, knowing our own propensity to sin, we know this about one another. So we are to do as Christ does for us and wash one another's feet. We are to speak the gospel of Christ to a stumbling brother and bear one another's burdens. We are to be merciful and restore one another to Christ. We remember that Christ loved us and washed us when we did not love him but hated him. When we were ungodly.

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Just look at how Christ is loving his apostles that night. They were so full of unbelief. Unbelief is the worst sin there is. They were doubting, questioning him. Yet, he kept washing their feet, assuring them they were his. Assuring them he would not leave them orphans but would send the Comforter who would keep all his sayings in remembrance. He promised, *"Because I live ye shall live also."* The Lord promises that the Spirit shall assure our hearts and comfort us as we obey the Lord's commandments. That is why he said,

John 14: 16: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17: If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

That is what our Lord is teaching us in our text. Happiness is the assurance of the Spirit in the heart as we obey the Lord because we love him. The Spirit of God assures us in the heart that we are his. Making us behold more of Christ and the sure blessings we have in him.

Amen!