



SCRIPTURE:

John 14:15-31

INTRODUCTION:

We'll be continuing in the book of John, chapter 14:15-31, if you want to go ahead and turn there. While you're getting there, let me set the scene a little for you. A few weeks ago we began this discourse that Jesus is having with His disciples right before His death. We'll be in this discourse for the next several weeks. I want us to really feel that before we read our text. These men have given up their lives to follow Jesus. Even when they were wrong in their expectation of how He would fulfill His role as Messiah – thinking He was there to bring the physical kingdom, overturn the Roman establishment and restore prosperity to their land – even then they were willing to let go of everything to follow Him. For three years these men had not just been His students, but His friends. For three years they'd eaten the same meals together, slept on the same floors together, done ministry together, fished together, sailed together, they'd lived life together. If any of you have ever been on a short-term mission trip, think back to how close you got with your team. In a week or two, strangers become best friends. That closeness comes from being together 24/7. This was Jesus and His disciples, but for three years. They have put everything on the line to be with Him.

And now, He says He's leaving.

I can't imagine what this must have felt like, what must have been going through their minds. "What do you mean you're leaving? You haven't brought your kingdom. What about us? What do you expect us to do? What about everything we've left behind? What about all the things you've promised us? How can you just leave?" He tells them that if He leaves, then He will come back for them. That He's going to prepare a place for them. That they know the way to where He is going because He is the way and they know Him. But it doesn't change the fact that He's leaving.

And that's where our passage picks up.

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me. 25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

There are a series of imperatives that Jesus gives leading up to this moment in the upper room.

- In 13:15 He tells them to follow His example in serving one another.
- In 13:34 He tells them to love one another, even to love one another in the same way that He has loved them.
- In 14:1 He tells them not to let their hearts be troubled.
- In 14:11 He tells them to believe, to believe that He is in the Father and that the Father is in Him.
- In 14:13-14 He tells them to ask in His name and they will receive.

Now in verse 15 He says, if you love me, you’ll keep my commandments.

We're going to come back to this idea of the relationship between love and obedience later, but I want you to see it in its context here. I want you to get the tone of the text. He has loved these men to the utmost. He has even displayed that love by humbling Himself and washing their feet. We'll see later that He calls them, not servants, but friends. It is in this context that He makes the statement, "if you love Me, you will keep My commandments." This tone changes everything. This is not the condition of a harsh God, but the appeal of a loving Savior, Teacher, and Friend who is getting ready to depart.

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This is one of the three themes that I want to draw out of this passage with you this morning. This is a portion of scripture rich with theology and we will not be able to mine all of it today. So, what we will do is take these three prominent themes, break them down and then see what they mean for us today as we walk with Christ. I'm also going to cover these in a specific order, the reason for which will become apparent to you later, I think.

Here they are:

- 1. God with us, God in us, by the gift of the Holy Spirit is the most precious treasure we possess.**
- 2. Christ gives us His Spirit because He loves us.**
- 3. It is His love that motivates us to love and obey Him.**

1. God with us, God in us, by the gift of the Holy Spirit is the most precious treasure we possess.

We often treat the Holy Spirit as some add-on that God gives us when He saves us. Like it's our holiness turbo boost when we need it. We think of His leading and conviction in our lives more like Jiminy Cricket from Pinocchio. This gift of the Holy Spirit that God gives us when He places us in Christ is so much more than that. In fact, it is one of the key elements of God's provision in the New Covenant.

26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekial 36:26-27

The gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is promising in John 14 is nothing short of miraculous. He is telling His disciples, the same thing that Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Joel and even Moses prophesied – that in this New Covenant, God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh and that God Himself would not only change us, but take up residence inside us. The promise of making all things new, of giving us eternal life, of uniting us to Himself are all connected to this – that He will send His Spirit to fill us and live in us.

Not only this, but a major problem for the people of God all throughout the OT was that they had to go to a certain place or see a certain person in order to encounter the presence of God. God would manifest His presence in the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, in the tabernacle or the temple, in the cleft of the rock or on top of Mt. Sinai for Moses. But everything about the New Covenant is better, the book of Hebrews says that it is better because it is based on better promises. What Jesus is promising is huge. He's saying, 'you will not have to go and seek the presence of God, because He will not only dwell with you forever, but IN YOU forever.' Listen to prophecy from Ezekiel again:

My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people. Ezekial 37:27

And Paul in Colossians and 1 Corinthians:

26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:26-27

6 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16

Paul also says that we have this treasure in jars of clay, earthen vessels. These broken bodies, wearing out and dying by the minute are filled with the presence of the living God. Oh, how we undersell and underappreciate this blessing.

This is what Jesus is promising.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

- Who is the Spirit?
 - The third person of the Trinity. He's not an "it" or a "what" but a who. The Holy Spirit is not merely a force that emanates from God. He is just as personal as the Father that you pray to and the Son that came and died for you. This is who Jesus says that He and the Father send to the one who believes in Him.
 - When Jesus says, "another helper" He is saying something very specific. In the Greek, there are two different ways to say "another" in this context. In English we typically use the word both ways without any distinction. One word means "another of the same kind" while the other means "another in addition to or in place of."
 - For example, if you were to say "we bought another car" my first assumption is not that you bought the exact same color, make, model, and year as the one you already possess. But if you said, "would you pour me another glass of tea" I know that you mean another of the exact same kind.
 - The word used for "another Helper" in this context is the word for "another of the exact same kind." Jesus is not telling the disciples that He is sending them a replacement Helper. He's telling them that He's sending another Helper that will be to them everything that He has been to them in these last 3 years – and more, as we'll see.
 - What has Jesus done for them all this time?
 - Taught them
 - Protected them
 - Loved them
 - Comforted and encouraged them
 - Revealed the Father to them
 - This other Helper will do all of this for them but in an even better way because He will do it from within them.
- He is the Spirit of Truth.
 - It's interesting to note that truth is associated with all 3 members of the Trinity over and over again.
 - The Bible says that Jesus is the truth.
 - That He came to testify to the truth.

- That Jesus is full of truth.
 - And that the truth is in Him.
 - That the Father's word is truth.
 - The Father is called the God of all truth.
 - Here the Spirit is called the Spirit of truth.
 - Who leads us into truth.
- In John 8:32 Jesus said that it is the truth that sets us free from our slavery to sin. How does this happen?
 - By the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to open our eyes, to unblind us, and to show us the truth of the Gospel.
- Speaking of unblinding us, this is why He says that the world cannot receive Him. The world is not looking for Him. The world does not desire Him. The Spirit Himself must do a work in a person's heart before they can receive Him.
- The disciples know Him. How do they know Him?
 - Because He has been with them in the person of Christ. Again, more of this Trinitarian language. Jesus has already said that if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. Now He's saying if you know Me, you know the Spirit.
- Has been with you but will be in you.
 - Just as we've mentioned, this is nothing short of Jesus promising the unimaginable – that the very presence of God would live in us by His Spirit. Not only that but look at verse 23.

23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

- Who is the "we" in this verse? The Father and the Son. Jesus has just told us that the Triune God of the universe will come to us and make His home with us. Do you see how badly we let our eyes glaze over and read right past these things?
- He goes on to say, "because I live, you will live also". Why is that?
 - Because Rom. 8:11 says, If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies **through his Spirit who dwells in you.**
 - Your hope of resurrection is not only bound up in the resurrection of Christ, but in the fact that the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead lives in you.

This gift of the Spirit gives us life, promises us resurrection, changes us, causes us to walk in His ways, mediates the presence of God to us, gives us power, as it says in Acts 1:8 to be witnesses for Him.

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God with us, God in us, by the gift of the Holy Spirit is the most precious treasure we possess.

2. Christ gives us His Spirit because He loves us.

I mentioned earlier that we need to consider the tone of this passage. Brandon has this quote that he picked up from Kevin DeYoung that I really like. “You have to preach the tone of the text.” He says, you can’t preach Psalm 23 and say “the Lord wants to be your shepherd, but you sheep just don’t want to go!”

So it is with this passage, which is why we’ll be talking about our obedience last. Why is He telling His disciples that He’s sending another Helper?

Because they’re troubled and He doesn’t want them to be troubled. Look at verse 27, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

This idea, fear not, do not be afraid, do not be dismayed, let not your heart be troubled appears hundreds of times throughout scripture. And often the fear is remedied with the presence of God. Listen to this relationship between the elimination of fear and the presence of God.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.” Isaiah 41:13

Here’s a familiar one, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

When God calls Moses, “don’t be afraid, I will be with you.” When He calls Gideon, “don’t be afraid, I will be with you.” The Great Commission, “I will be with you.”

Here’s what we need to see. Why does God care if we are frightened or discouraged or troubled in our hearts?

Because He cares for us! And His solution to this is that He will be with us. He will be with us in such a way that we can’t be any nearer to Him than we are right now. We can experience more of that nearness by abiding in Him. But He sends His Spirit, not just to go with us, but to dwell in us! And He does this because He loves us. He is comforting them. This promise is a promise from His love. He says,

18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. And, And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

Christ gives us His Spirit because He loves us.

3. It is His love that motivates us to love and obey Him.

If you take this verse, “if you love me, you will obey my commands” and rip it out of its context, it would be really easy to use it as a club to hit someone, or even yourself, over the head with. It would be really easy to look at every sin and mistake and say, “see if there really was love for Jesus, you wouldn’t have done that.” Or worse, as some heretical systems do, you could take this and turn it into a works-based acceptance. As if your obedience is what merits God giving you His Spirit.

We love because he first loved us 1 John 4:19.

Hopefully, with the work we’ve done unpacking the text, you can see that that’s not what this verse is saying at all. This is not giving qualifications for who merits the Spirit. But, rather, it’s giving indicators of the ones who receive the Spirit. Who receives the Spirit? The one who loves Christ. Who is the one who loves Christ? Well, we see from Ezekiel and many other places, it’s the one whose heart is changed by God. And how do we know which ones those are? They obey His commands.

Obedience from love is completely different from compliance to a set of rules or standards.

The most important command that God gives us is not to bow before Him in fear, though that is appropriate, but to love Him. And not only to love Him but to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We understand that we are saved by grace, that there is nothing we can do to earn our right standing with God that all our best works are still imperfect and yet some still cringe at the word obedience – as if seeking to be obedient is synonymous with legalism or some form of performance based standing with God.

To the one who loves the Lord, His commandments are not burdensome.

He says that obedience is better than sacrifice. Meaning, seeking to please Him from the heart is better than even adhering to the religious system that He ordained.

This is not a set of conditions where we might think that Jesus is saying that we earn His love and the Father's love through being good enough. What He is saying couldn't be farther from that. In fact, we can't merit His love by loving and obeying Him because He loved us while we were still His enemies. We love Him because He first loved us.

What is in view here is this:

- The one who loves Him will obey Him.
- The one who obeys Him is the one loved by He and the Father.
- The one loved by He and the Father will receive the gift of having the triune God make their home with him.
- The one who loves Him will be given everlasting peace.

So, who is the one who loves Him? The one who has a new heart.

26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekial 36:26-27

It's not, "if you obey you can become my disciple", it's "if you are truly my disciple, you will obey."

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
John 8:31-32

What if you don't obey as well as you should? You believe you're a true disciple but you look at your life and say, "but I don't always obey." Well, first, you won't always obey. Fighting against the sin that remains in us is part of sanctification. Don't get comfortable with sin or give yourself a pass to sin, but be honest with yourself. You will fight and fall and fail until the end. But what do you do to increase your obedience? Try harder? Hate yourself more? What motivates obedience in this passage? Will power? Resolve? Our good character? No, what motivates obedience in this passage is love for Christ. You don't have an obedience problem, you have a love problem. A married man who struggles with desiring other women must put wise barriers in place to keep him from falling into that sin, but that is not the root of the problem. That is merely a symptom on the surface. The problem itself is not his wandering eyes, but his lack of love for his wife. If that man wants victory over that sin, those barriers will only hold for so long. He must cultivate love for his wife. Loving his wife better will produce genuine faithfulness to her. This is the same in our relationship with Christ. You want to be more faithful to Christ? Figure out what is keeping you from loving Him like you ought. It's not any lack in Him. He is altogether lovely. Are you seeking Him in prayer and the word? Are you meditating on His greatness and the love that He has for you? Are you training yourself to be more aware of His constant presence and care for you? This is how you increase your love for Him, by seeing Him. And that love will lead to obedience.

It is His love that motivates us to love and obey Him.

There is much more to be said about this portion of scripture, but I believe what we've focused on this morning is what the Lord had in store for us.

I have 3 application points for you this morning that correspond to the three themes we pulled out of our text.

Don't underestimate the gift of the Spirit in your life.

- Seek more awareness of His work and presence within you. Seek to be continually filled with Him. Seek to become more dependent on Him.

Receive Christ's love for you.

- Not the cheap "Jesus says I am enough" pop culture feel-good garbage. That stuff is empty and powerless. Receive the love that purifies and changes you. The love that drives you to your knees and causes you to cry out "what am I that you would be mindful of me?" Receiving the true love of Christ will make you hate sin.

If you love Him, obey Him.

- Test yourself. Listen, John says later that if you claim to know Him but you don't obey Him you're a liar. The Bible is clear. Obedience is the identifying mark of a true believer. If your life is not characterized by a sincere desire and effort to live in a way pleasing to God from a heart of love, then you may need to reassess your standing with God today. If you want Jesus today, you can have Him.
- And if you do love Christ and you're struggling under the weight of what you think is obedience, it's probably not obedience that you are seeking – it's probably approval. His commands are not burdensome. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. If you love Him but you are trying to earn His love back by your obedience, you're missing it. You've got it backwards. You become more obedient not by trying harder, but by loving Him more. Quit trying to earn His approval and instead, by faith, accept His approval through the finished work of Christ. It is only then that obedience will flow from your heart. A heart bound by the Law can never fulfill it. But a heart freed by grace loves the Law and keeps it by the power of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS:

1. How did you view the Holy Spirit before hearing this sermon?
2. What did Jesus mean by another helper in verse 16? Why is that significant?
3. The Holy Spirit is associated with titles like: Helper, Counselor, Advocate, Comforter, Truth. Spend some time discussing how the Holy Spirit living in us does all these things for us by thinking about what Jesus did for His disciples when He was physically with them. (examples Luke 22:31-32 and Romans 8:26 - John 14:5 and John 16:13).
4. How is obedience from love completely different from compliance to a set of rules or standards?
5. In verse 23 Jesus says, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." Discuss what you can do practically to become more aware of this reality.
6. How does knowing you have the Holy Spirit in you give you hope? (Romans 8:9, Acts 2:38, Luke 11:13, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Ephesians 1:3, Romans 8:11, Romans 8:26, John 14:26, 16:13, Isaiah 11:2, 1 Corinthians 2:13, John 14:15-16, 16:13, Galatians 5:22-23, Acts 1:8, 4:31).

PRAYER TOPICS:

- TJC Pastor: Nick Judd - Kids Pastor
- NAMB Church Planter: Joshua Stone - Brunswick, OH - *Cuyahoga Valley Church*
- Unreached People Group (UPG): **Karekare** in Nigeria
 - Population: 403,000
 - Christian: 0.3%

- Evangelical: 0.2%
- Primary Religion: Islam
- Primary Language: Karekare
- Status: **Unreached**