

# The Gospel of John

## Love One Another

### John 15:12-17

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

For many weeks now, we have been experiencing the night before Jesus died on the cross for our sins. That's because God's Word puts a great emphasis on this night, all the way from John 13 to John 18:27.

We all respond to different things hundreds of times a day. For most people, it starts with the alarm clock every morning. Then we respond to text messages, phone calls, email, and all kinds of conversation.

We respond to heat and cold. We respond to hunger and pain. We respond to music and news. We respond to humor, anger, love, respect, and fear. We respond to victories, disappointments, and setbacks.

But how we respond makes a big difference. Chuck Swindoll once said, "I am convinced that life is 10% of what happens to me, and 90% of how I react to it."

How we respond makes a big difference, and this is especially true when it comes to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing is more important than how we respond to the love of Jesus Christ.

In our scripture text this morning, Christ and His disciples have left the upper room where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and they are on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. During this journey, Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for what lay ahead of them by teaching them that they (and we) must love one another. When we love, we are promised privileges that come with that love.

#### **Stand and Read Scripture**

##### **John 15:12-17 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends.

<sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. <sup>17</sup> This I command you, that you love one another.

#### **Prayer**

#### **BODY:**

## **I. TO BE A FRIEND OF JESUS.**

### **John 15:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

Jesus introduced his disciples to this love earlier in John.

### **John 13:34-35 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all *people* will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."

You may wonder, how is this commandment new? To love people? That's not new. Isn't that in the Old Testament? Yes it is!

### **Deuteronomy 6:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

### **Leviticus 19:18b (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> ...you shall love your neighbor as yourself;...

So why is it new? It is new, first of all, because the disciples haven't figured it out yet. It has to be new to them because all they are doing is arguing with each other about who among them is going to be greatest in the kingdom.

Jesus was talking about a whole new dimension of love here. It was new in the sense that this kind of love had never been fully seen by man, but they were about to see it on the cross. This Godly agape kind of love was unconditional and sacrificial. It was infinitely beyond anything else that the world had ever seen. And now, He is on the brink of offering His life as sacrifice for sin, and that is love at the highest degree.

### **John 15:13-14 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do what I command you.

People give gifts and money to express their love. But no one would give their only child to die for the sins of someone else. God gave the greatest price possible for the salvation of mankind. Jesus is going to die on the cross for "His friends". Then He continues by telling them that they are a "good branch" on the vine if you obey His commands. True love is not revealed by empty words but through deeds and real sacrifices.

He had revealed this kind of love before to the disciples.

### **John 10:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> "I am the good shepherd; **the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**

Peter may have been recalling this parable when he promised that he would lay down his life for Jesus.

### **John 13:36-38 (NASB)**

<sup>36</sup> Simon Peter \*said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” <sup>37</sup> Peter \*said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? **I will lay down my life for You.**” <sup>38</sup> Jesus \*replied, “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.

Peter truly believed that he would lay down his life for Jesus if the opportunity presented itself. You have to give him credit, he did try. Remember when Jesus was confronted by the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees at the Garden of Gethsemane that night? A cohort generally consisted of 600 men. I am sure that Peter recalled what he had promised to Jesus, that he was willing to die for Him. And what did Peter do in front of all them? **(Pause)** He cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. So he was bold, but he did not understand what was happening.

And later that night he denied knowing Jesus three times and then the rooster crowed.

During our walk with Christ we , like Peter, will make some mistakes. But we are to try to live like Christ as best we can based upon His example. We are to abide in Him and He has promised to abide with us. This is accomplished by loving God and loving our neighbor as yourself.

## **II. BECOMING A FRIEND.**

### **John 15:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

God loved us so much that He sent His Son to earth to teach us the ways of God. Many times throughout the gospels Jesus reminded the people that what he said he had heard first from the Father. He told them the things he did, He saw His Father doing. He expressed on several occasions that He was there to do the work that His Father gave Him to do. This intimate relationship in the Trinity is expressed to us in a way we can understand, the Father/Son relationship. **Jesus was not God's slave** because a slave does not know what the master is doing. **Jesus is God's Son and the Son has the full rights, privileges, authority, knowledge and counsel of God.** Everything Jesus heard from the Father, he has made known to us.

It is our responsibility to study God's Word in order to understand what is expected of us. When you love Christ you will obey His commands and become a friend. A friend with many privileges.

### **John 15:16a (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me but I chose you,...

Jesus explained how that works earlier in the Gospel of John.

### **John 6:44 (NASB)**

<sup>44</sup> No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Now we are going to get into the recipe that Jesus gives on how we receive our faith from God and how Jesus provides spiritual security.

God not only purposed to send His Son, He purposed what His Son would accomplish when He arrived. We see this in **verse 37**. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me **I will certainly not cast out.**" **Verse 39**, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me **I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.**"

**Verse 44.** "**No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.**"

And this is consistent with Old Testament prophecy. **Verse 45**, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me

Are you starting to see the plan? God sends the Son, and then God draws certain people to Himself. Then they are given to the Son. The Son **receives the people** and **protects them**. He will then raise them from the dead to fulfill the Father's plan. This is crystal clear.

**This is not a plan to begin something.** It is a plan to **complete** it.

#### **John 10:27-29 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and **I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.**

<sup>29</sup> My Father, **who has given them to Me**, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.**

**WOW! What a promise for our faith to grab hold of!**

How did they become God's? By divine election. He chose them before the foundation of the world and wrote their names in the Lamb's Book of Life. In time, He draws those who belong to Him by His own sovereign choice. He gives them to Christ. Christ receives them, Christ keeps them, and on the last day there is a physical resurrection with glorified bodies.

### **III. PRIVILEGES OF BEING A FRIEND.**

#### **John 15:16b (NASB)**

...and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain,...

Do you realize, as a Christian you are a branch plugged into the vine and the very life of Christ is your life. When there is fruit hanging out on the end of you, it is because the very life of Christ and the power of Christ has been surging through you!

You are plugged into Him and the very flow of His energy comes through you and He actually bears fruit in your life. You grow together with Him. You get all your strength from Him. You're filled with His life, His energy; He produces fruit through you. What a fabulous concept. Now this is the analogy our Lord chooses. He says, I want you to be real branches. I want you to be branches through whom I can bear fruit. I want you to

remain faithful and continue to bear fruit. I don't want you to become fruitless branches where there is no commitment and there is no life.

### **John 15:16c (NASB)**

...so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

What does that mean? Does that mean if you ask anything and say, "In Jesus' name, Amen," that **whamo**, Jesus does it for you? NO. Our request must be consistent with His will.

### **1 John 5:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us.

God has promised that, **when we ask for things that are in accordance with His will**, He will give us what we ask for. We pray for a lot of things. When we talk to Him, He has promised to listen and respond. His answer may be some variation of "yes" or "no" or "wait, not now."

Keep in mind that prayer is not our way of getting God to do what we want. Our prayers should be focused on things that honor and glorify God and reflect what the Bible clearly reveals God's will to be. God's wisdom far exceeds our own, and we must trust that His answers to our prayers are the best possible solutions.

## **CONCLUSION:**

There should be no doubt that God loves every single one of us. **John 3:16** is one of the most well-known and loved verses in the whole Bible. There Jesus said...

### **John 3:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

We can only make it to Heaven because "God so loved the world." And God wants us to appreciate His love! Jesus talked about His love for us back in verse 9 where He said, "**As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.**"

The Father and Son are one. No love could be stronger. No relationship could be closer. God wants to be just as close to us as the Father and Son are to each other! God Himself wants to be our Father and Best Friend! That is how much Jesus loves us.

It is God's desire that everyone would repent and turn to Him. We do that by obeying His commands. When we truly love one another, we are in effect loving God. "If you love me keep my **commandments.**"

### **John 15:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> This I **command** you, that you love one another.

**Verse 12** completes this by saying " **This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.**"

Jesus blazed the trail of love for us when He came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross for our sins. Now He wants us to follow His example. How are we going to do that? How are we going to resemble the love we see in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

We surely cannot do it in our own strength. We must abide in Him. We must abide in His love.

The more we abide in Jesus, the more we will be like Him. And the more we abide in His love, the more we will love like He loves.

Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross to rescue us from our sins. He didn't have to die for us, but Jesus willingly laid down His life to save everyone who will trust in Him.

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

If a large ocean liner stops in the middle of the Atlantic, the passengers can't get out, get behind the boat, and push. And if you are drowning, you can't save yourself by grabbing your hair and pulling yourself up!"

That almost sounds too obvious to mention. But people all over the world are trying to climb their way up to Heaven by keeping religious rules and doing good works. The rescue of salvation for us can never come from within. Our salvation only comes through Christ.

Think of it this way: The person who jumps halfway across the Grand Canyon winds up just as dead as the person who only jumps eight feet out from the edge. They both fall a mile to the bottom.

The love that led Jesus to the cross is the only thing that can rescue us from sin and death. Without Jesus Christ, we are trapped by Satan in spiritual darkness and death. But Jesus came to rescue us from this darkness and death!

All that He asks of us to read and believe His word, abide in Him, love God and others as He loved us, and obey His commands.

**He is Lord.**