

# The Loving King

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Preacher: Rob Patterson

[ 0 : 00 ] If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper, to be with you forever. 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. I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

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.

[ 1 : 14 ] Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? 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.

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. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

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.

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. 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.

[ 2 : 27 ] And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming.

He has no claim on me, 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.

This is the word of God. All right, good morning. If you have your Bibles, if you could turn them open to John chapter 14, going from verse 15 to 31 today.

In our society, love is a feeling. Love is expressed as an emotion. I have to say with feeling, for example, I have to say with feeling, I love you, Joe.

Not only is love expressed as an emotion, but it's actually pursued as an emotion. I have to feel in love with Joe before I can actually say, I love you, Joe, sincerely. Love is expressed as an emotion, pursued as an emotion, and is actually interpreted through our emotions as well.

[ 3 : 40 ] So, Joe says back to me, I love you too, honey. Or she might say, well, I don't really feel loved at the moment by you, so I can't say it back. In our society, love is a feeling, primarily pursued as a feeling.

But in God's society, love is much, much more than that. The main Old Testament word for love is hesed, and it means steadfast or loyal love, unfailing kindness, covenant faithfulness, commitment and affection fused together, beautifully fused together.

It's self-giving in nature. Love, in God's way of relating, is affection that is steadfast. It's actually based, and you can probably pick it up from those different descriptions I've given you, that it's based on a prior existing relationship.

A relationship where one person is committed to the other. Like, for example, marriage. And love has responsibilities and benefits, just like marriage does.

It has commitment and feeling. Now, this part of Jesus' teaching that we're about to delve into is about living in a loving relationship with him, the Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Spirit.

[ 5 : 02 ] And we see each of them come to the fore in this passage. This loving relationship has history in the context of this meal that Jesus is sharing with his disciples. In chapter 13, verse 1, the meal begins with Jesus' expression of love to his disciples.

We read these words. Chapter 13, verse 1. Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world, to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

John recognizes in Jesus, as he looks back to these events, he recognizes in Jesus, Jesus as the ultimate, steadfast, and loyal lover. In chapter 13, verse 31, in the middle of the meal, Jesus speaks about this, and he commands the disciples to love in the same way that he's loved them.

Verse 34. A new commandment I give you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Love is so distinctive about Jesus, about God, Father, Son, and Spirit, that when we love, people can't help but recognize God in us. Jesus is glorified in his ultimate act of love for his disciples.

[ 6 : 29 ] And Jesus is glorified when his disciples, that's us, love one another like he's loved us. But now we get to this particular section, in chapter 14, verse 15, the beginning of this passage that Simon read out.

And in this section, Jesus explains what it means to be in a relationship with him. In verse 15, he says, if you love me.

Love is mentioned 10 times in these verses that were read out. Love between us and God, love between and from God to us, and then love within the Trinity as well. The disciples, remember, the disciples are troubled in heart.

That expression, troubled in heart, begins chapter 14. It comes in the middle here, and then it actually comes again in the next chapter. The disciples are troubled in heart.

They're afraid. So in the next verses, Jesus paints a picture of what it means to be in a loving relationship with him. He offers them words of comfort.

[ 7 : 33 ] And they begin this way. It's how we experience love. If you love me, you will keep my commandments, says Jesus.

Keep my commandments. Do as I say. Is there a more confronting phrase to be said to Australians?

And this is a conditional statement. If you will. If Jesus speaks from the perspective of a prior existing relationship, remember that love in God's way of relating is affection that is steadfast. It's based on a prior existing relationship. So love means benefits and responsibilities. If this relationship between us exists, this loving relationship between us exists, then you will.

Jesus actually expects them. He expects this love for him to mean commitment to him.

Commitment that has a specific shape to it. We who love Jesus are those who have committed to giving ourselves to him.

[ 8 : 43 ] This means we will obey him. We need to remember here that this is not a relationship of equals. We are committed to God the Son when we choose to love him.

There is a right and natural order to this relationship. Think the parents who are dictated to by their children. A number of teachers here, so some of you will actually experience the outworking of what that actually looks like.

It's awful. When children dictate to their parents how things should work, it produces awful results. Just in case it's not clear, we are the children.

God is the parent. God's the one who knows best. Even when we don't like what he says, he knows best. And as our father, he demands our obedience.

If you love me, you will, he says on the one hand. And on the other hand, he says, and I will, in verse 16.

[ 9 : 49 ] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, 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.

Jesus, for his part, says, I will ask the Father for another helper. He's going, so there will be a replacement for him. Jesus is going away, but he will not leave them alone.

These people with troubled hearts will not be left alone. He will ask the Father for what we discover here is an eternal helper, where helper means comforter, but not just comforter in the sense of, oh,

they're there then, but comforter in terms of a teaspoon of concrete, you know, that will teach you to harden up, to get a spine, to stand firm, to strengthen you.

A comforter or a helper in the sense of an advocate, one who stands in court on your behalf and defends you as his. This is what a helper means.

He goes on to describe the helper as the spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. This is the outworking of prophecies like Isaiah 44.3 and Joel 2.28 where God promises that he will pour his spirit into us.

[11:13] So we see this fulfillment as well of Jesus' prayer here in Acts 2 when that actually happens at Pentecost. He asks the Father for another helper, the spirit of truth, and he promises that he will dwell in those who love him.

Even though Jesus will soon depart, their experience of God doesn't end. It actually becomes more intimate. Jesus dwelt with them, we read in John 1. The Holy Spirit was present in Jesus' ministry and in theirs as they actually were sent out by Jesus at different points.

Now this same Holy Spirit would dwell in them. Think the Holy of Holies in terms of the temple type image where you are the Holy of Holies.

We, for our part, well, we're called to express our love of Jesus by obeying him. He loves us by providing a deeper experience of God's presence in the Holy Spirit. So we have this experiencing, experience of love where we obey and Jesus provides the Holy Spirit.

And then we have this expression of love in verses 18 to 24. His disciples, remember, they're still disturbed. Jesus' departure is still significant to them.

[12:36] So he continues to express his love by speaking of his commitment to them. It's almost like vows in a wedding ceremony. Just listen to this. Remember, vows are not the airy-fairy vows that you sometimes hear.

I mean, I went to a wedding a few years ago and the wedding vows were basically, oh, I think you're lovely, you're beautiful, you're wonderful. There were no promises in them. There was no actual commitment in those vows. Whereas the traditional Christian vows actually reflect what marriage is as a covenant where you commit.

So listen to how Jesus commits to them. He says in verse 18, I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.

Because I live, you also will live. In that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. I will, he says.

I will not leave you as orphans. I'll not leave you alone. Not as orphans. What we need to hear here is Jesus' departure is not an abandonment.

[13:39] I don't know if you remember the parenting series we did a couple of years ago where we actually interviewed Andrew and Anne and we talked about the effects of abandonment, the effects of dislocation between the relationship between parents and children and what that can have.

Dissociation between parent and child leads to feeling adrift relationally in the world and adrift personally within ourselves. We struggle to actually create a personal identity.

But Jesus' departure is not abandonment. Jesus still owns us. And so he says, although I go, it won't be for long.

Now, I've got to just pause at this point and say there is some debate over what is actually meant by this. You see, the main departure that John's been explaining to us through Jesus' words at this point in his gospel is the departure to heaven via the cross.

So that's the main departure that's being talked about. But this particular departure and return is likely referring to something that kind of happens within that. So yes, the cross and then his resurrection and manifestation appearance to them before he then goes off to heaven.

[14:56] You can argue with me about that later, but it seems to make best sense of what he's saying here. And so if we follow on that train of thought, what Jesus is saying is they will see him when he rises from the dead, but at this stage the world won't.

But when they do see him, they will finally understand what he's been talking about. It'll finally make sense. So Jesus says, I will not leave you alone.

But he says more than that, I will return to share my life with you. Anticipation will turn to knowing, we discover in verse 20. Their witness of the risen king is central to our hope.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, 14, if Christ had not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

That still applies if. But Jesus knows that his resurrection appearance will actually transform their lives. He urges them to hang on for it. Their foundational preoccupation with the here and now, so easy for us to take on, will be smashed to pieces.

[16:12] Everything that they believe will be put back together again with an eternal perspective. And finally, it will make sense. That's the knowledge that we have now, thanks to the witness of these disciples.

Through the resurrection, we understand Jesus' ministry. And notice in verse 21 that the I and you becomes whoever. This promise then applies to us.

Whoever believes in him, whoever puts their trust in Jesus, these truths now come to us. Through it, the resurrection, we understand his death.

Through it, we can see the Father's hand at work. Through it, we can know his presence with us, his love for us. He speaks about the things that he will do and they're monumental.

He will share, as he comes back to us, he shares his very life, the quality of his life with us. But we have to remember that he's talking about a loving relationship.

[17:22] Whoever isn't everyone, it's those who have a living relationship with the Father through Jesus. Those who trust in him, which we read in verse 14, in verse 1, is the thing that Jesus encourages them to do.

Now, Judas was a little bit uncertain about this in verse, and you see his question in verse 22. His vision of the restored Israel was more concrete and immediate. He was expecting to not wait at all. And he didn't expect the world to be, sorry, and he expected the world to be the stage when it actually happens. But Jesus explains in verse 23 and 24, he says these words, 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.

Whoever does not love me does not keep my word, and the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. This promise is only for those who love Jesus, that loving, committed relationship with Jesus.

You who have my commands and keep them, he says. You who keep my word, he says in verse 23. And for those who love Jesus, he promises to make his home with them.

[18:36] The oneness that Jesus experiences with the Father is something that we're actually being invited into, being drawn into. It's something that breaks into the here and now. There's no pause in this notice.

Jesus says this is how it's going to work out. The Father and the Son have made their home with us. The Spirit is already in us. God is pouring himself into our existence, and there is so much more to come.

He is so much greater than us. We will be flooded with his goodness, flooded with his love. Friends, marriage is the most intimate of human relationships.

When we don't have it, we long for it. When we have it, we long for a better version of it than we do have. I use the concept of marriage because John actually does when you get to the end of Revelation.

He actually applies these truths of Jesus' return in terms of the arrival of the bridegroom and the church being the bride. I don't apologize for using marriage, but for some of you who are single, you may be wondering what's going on here.

[19:46] What I want to tell you is this, and you who are married as well and think marriage is everything. You're deluded. That'll change in time. Don't worry. But marriage is only an illustration. It's a metaphor in the Bible.

It's meant to give us a glimpse or a taste for the greatest relationship, home with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

That's what we were created for. If you think you are missing out, then remember this. Marriage is like as children when we play with cars and toys and dolls and role play.

Marriage is like that compared to the real thing of being home with Father, Son, and Spirit. Single or married, that's when you're at home.

That's when you are complete. That's what we were created for. Again, Jesus expresses that this home, this completeness, this invitation into relationship of this kind of magnitude of intimacy is not for everyone.

[ 20 : 57 ] You see, a loving relationship, you'll know, particularly a relationship between lovers is an exclusive relationship. If we love Jesus, we will keep his commands. If we keep Jesus' commands, then we love him.

We demonstrate our love for him practically. But notice each time that Jesus raises obedience, he raises it in the context of relationship.

He's not just looking for a moral life. He's not looking for you to conform to a set of rules and regulations. Like you, I've got a bunch of friends who are really, really good people.

Friends who don't profess to be Christian but in every other way live lives that are as good as if not superior to myself and many of my other Christian friends. But here's the thing, they don't love Jesus.

no amount of obedience is equivalent to loving Jesus. That's not the point of these verses. The point is that love implies a loving relationship, a prior relationship of self-giving, loyal commitment, faithfulness, unwavering affection.

[ 22 : 08 ] someone who loves Jesus is so committed to him that they will be preoccupied with growing in obedience to him. It'll be the work of their lives to honor and delight and imitate their God.

Is that you? That's what expressing love is about. That's what expressing love is about. Jesus then goes on to describe love in an enduring sense, recognizing that there will be a period of departure, a period of separation, that they will feel it acutely and so he speaks words into this too.

See, Jesus did return after his death and appear to his disciples and then he went to be with the Father and we live in that time now, a time where Jesus is not physically present with us like he was with the disciples.

And our skeptical friends, if you have a robust conversation with your friends who aren't yet Christians, they'll call on us to prove that God exists. I don't know if you've had this happen to you, but I certainly have on numerous occasions.

The taunt of Psalm 42, where is your God? It still stings, doesn't it? It hurts when they say it because we do feel the separation.

[ 23 : 29 ] So Jesus explains what will happen after he's returned to the Father. There is parting gifts and he's parting words in this passage. They're designed to comfort and prepare, comfort in the sense, remember, of strengthen, the teaspoon of concrete, to strengthen and prepare those he loves for this period of separation.

So in terms of parting gifts, we'll read verses 25 and 26. Jesus says, These things I have spoken to you while I'm still with you, 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.

So he comes back to the Holy Spirit again at this point. The Holy Spirit is the first gift. He's the gift all believers receive. But for the first receivers, his role is specific here.

I need to again point this out. That for the first receiver, that's the disciples of Jesus, the ones who were with him and witnessed and experienced. This is who he's talking to in the first sense. The Holy Spirit will remind them of everything that Jesus spoke to them, everything that Jesus taught them.

And he'll teach them what it means. Not just a memory verse exercise, which I did as a child, but life-changing truth about Jesus' transforming plan of salvation.

[ 24 : 56 ] Truths that they wrote down and some others who were with them and received their teaching wrote down as well. Truths that they knew were scripture even as they wrote them.

And you can see 2 Peter 3.16 for an expression of that, just a glimpse of that sort of thinking. Truths that they knew would change us in all the ways that we need changing.

Look at Timothy 3.16. All scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting error and training in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

You could also read in light of this passage that the man of God may be thorough, or woman of God may be thoroughly equipped to love God wholeheartedly. Or Hebrews 4.12.

The word of God is living and active sharper than any two-edged sword. You get the sense of almost surgical precision that the word applies. Friends, what I'm talking about here, just to be clear, is the New Testament.

[ 26 : 07 ] This is the written down teaching of Jesus. It's written down, distilled, and understood. It's not just that they remembered, but they began to understand it.

The Spirit taught it to them. It's recorded. So what we're talking about here is the work of the Spirit is actually teaching us and reminding us of everything that Jesus taught the disciples through his word.

I am not talking about some kind of Christianized seance here where we all sit around and pray or whatever until the Holy Spirit speaks to us personally. He has done.

It's not some airy-fairy thing that happens. The Spirit shows us the truth of the Gospel. He keeps us looking to the truth of the Gospel and applying it to our lives, applying the Bible to our lives.

And as we do, with the power of the Spirit, he transforms us into his likeness. this gift of a comforter is an uncomfortable gift.

[ 27 : 15 ] He gets into our heads and he exposes our false beliefs. He gets into our hearts. Imagine, this is God inside us seeing everything.

He gets into our hearts and realizes our selfish desires. Absolutely nothing is hidden from him. I'll give you an example.

Joe went to a coffee shop the other day and a favorite place I really like to go. I love eating pastries. and I asked her to get a cake for me. And she forgot.

And I was speaking to her on the phone as she told me this. And I was so annoyed that I hung up on her over a cake. I got so annoyed with my wife, who I've loved for nearly 25 years, nearly, for not getting me a cake that I actually hung up on her.

You didn't know that about me. But the Holy Spirit did. And the Holy Spirit made me ashamed of what I did. And guilty.

[ 28 : 28 ] And he led me to set it right. This is the gift of the helper that we're talking about here.

With the Holy Spirit comes another gift. And that is the gift of peace. In verse 27 we read this. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you.

Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Friends, when we feel alone, perhaps even abandoned, when we wonder what's going on in the world, when climate change and political unrest and social injustices just kind of fill the newsreels, the Holy Spirit teaches us and reminds us of what our loving God has done to set things right.

He reminds us that Father, Son and Spirit have made their home with us. He reminds us that Jesus will return to make this our absolute reality, a thing we look forward to.

He speaks words of comfort and strength into our fearful hearts. Jesus gifts us with peace.

[ 29 : 49 ] He provides the antidote to fear, an antidote that needs to be applied daily, moment by moment. It's not the effect of the Spirit that's deficient in us in this so much as our own and Satan's choices that keep us needing the Spirit's ministry.

to know the truth that we are at peace with God and that he is one with us. That all that can happen into the future is a guarantee, the absolute certainty that can happen in the future is a guarantee that that will become an absolute reality.

Not even death can prevent that. So Jesus finishes with some parting gifts of the Holy Spirit and peace.

and then he finishes with some parting words. Some final instructions if you like. In verse 28 he's encouraging us to learn so that we can rejoice.

He says in verse 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.

[ 31 : 06 ] In other words they know what's going to happen because Jesus has told them but they responded wrong. He's saying learn from this understand the truth and begin to rejoice.

Not everything comes to us straight away and that's okay but we need to pursue Jesus' perspective not wallow in the disappointments that our own perspective will bring. We need to learn to rejoice in Jesus' departure in particular because of what that brings us.

Learn so that you can rejoice. Remember so that you may believe. Verse 29 he says and now I have told you before it takes place so that when it does take place you may believe.

Let's think about this here. You see the disciples got a glimpse in advance so that they would believe later. We have the full picture now so believe.

When you wonder if this is all pointless or if there's an easier way or if there even is a God in the first place choose to believe the truth that was told and then fulfilled and then witness to us through

his word by disciples who abandoned him and gave up only to be restored by him at his resurrection.

[ 32 : 39 ] This is the witness testimony of skeptics and unbelievers who when they encountered the risen Jesus believed. This is not just a nice little spin clever little religious spin on a historical event.

It's far more than that. choose to believe the truth that was told and then fulfilled. So he says learn so you can rejoice.

Remember so that you may believe. And finally he wants this to be clear. Know that I choose to leave. If you look at verse 30 Jesus said to his disciples before he was crucified I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming.

He has no claim on me 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.

Friends Satan has power in this world. He's described here as the ruler of this world. He has power but not over Jesus. Jesus chose to die in obedience to the father.

[ 33 : 58 ] It wasn't a failed coup attempt. Jesus chose to die in obedience to the father. He willingly went to where he would be betrayed. He was glorified beyond our capacity to comprehend as he hung on the cross.

His love for us rescued you and me. And so we come back to where we began with love. steadfast or loyal love. Unfailing kindness. Covenant faithfulness because of an existing relationship.

A beautiful fusion of commitment and affection. Self-giving in nature. Gloriously and completely expressed at the cross for us who believe.

let me pray. Father God, we thank you for sending the son.

[ 35 : 06 ] We thank you for your plan of salvation that began before time for rescuing us from the futility of our lives and the reality of sin.

Son, we thank you for being obedient to the Father and choosing to lay down your life for our sake. For granting us with peace. Peace with you and peace with one another.

Father. And Jesus, we thank you too for sending the Spirit. And Spirit, we thank you for coming to us and for teaching us and reminding us the truths that your word just keeps declaring to us.

We thank you for patiently working on us and through your goodness showing us what it truly means to be obedient children of our Father.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.