

John 14:15-31 AM

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[0 : 00] Let's pray together. God, you so loved the world that you sent your only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And we ask that this morning we would understand that we would know your love and that we would believe in you. And we pray it in your name. Amen.

Grab a seat. Good morning. It's good to see everyone. My name is Ben Roberts. I'm a pastor here.

And we are in a series that is called The Story of God.

And as we come to John 14, we find that this story, this story of God, is a love story. And it's almost Valentine's Day, so it's just great timing.

Perfect timing. But just to clarify, this love story is not a romance. God's love story is not about sentimental feelings.

[1 : 01] It's about sacrificial action. Jesus says there's no greater love than someone laying down their life for their friend. And that's exactly what Jesus does.

Love, shown in Jesus' life, is active and purposeful. His love is more than strong feelings, the way that we might think about love. His love does things.

His love demands things. By His Holy Spirit, it meets our deepest needs. So, because Jesus loves us, He doesn't tell us we're perfect as we are.

He tells us to obey His commandments. He doesn't give us chocolates or flowers or cards. He gives us Himself. And He never leaves us guessing.

He teaches us everything we need to know. Those are our three points. Love obeys. Love dwells. Love teaches. So, love obeys.

[2 : 02] Well, we don't get very far in this passage before we realize that loving Jesus means obeying Jesus. So, look at verse 15. If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

That comes up again. Verse 21. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. Verse 23. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. Verse 24.

Whoever does not love me does not keep my word. And so on. Right out of the gate, let's remember who Jesus is. He is God.

He is our Lord. I and the Father are one. That's how He said it. And consider how audacious it is for us to think about loving God.

I mean, what's the biggest thing you can think of? I'll go with Milky Way. Nebula, black holes, stars, light years of empty space, space dust.

[3 : 05] That's the biggest thing. God made that. God made that. God made our world. He made all things. He made us. Jesus, John says, was before all things. And through Him, all things were made.

So I'm just trying to contextualize this a little bit for us. Because we're not on the same level as the Lord. When He speaks to us, it's wondrous. The earth shakes. Our knees go weak.

To obey Him is like finding the shape of the universe. It's how we are made. It's where we fit. And it's easy to forget sometimes how things really are with us and God.

Because Jesus has come to us with such gentleness. Humans ought to love and obey God.

But we don't. And we can't. And it's as if we're blind and we're deaf and we're trapped in the middle of this maze of false loves and false gods. A maze that we've built with our own hands. We can't find our way out of it.

[4 : 03] And Jesus comes into that maze. And He opens our eyes. And He opens our ears. And He leads us out of it. And that's exactly what He's doing in chapter 14. He's with His disciples.

He's in the upper room. They're celebrating the Passover meal. It's the very evening that Jesus will be arrested and brought to trial. It's the day before His death. He created life.

He has mere hours left to live. And He takes those hours and He uses them to teach His disciples. And He starts with an object lesson. This is chapter 13, verse 1.

You might want to flip back and look at that. It says, Jesus knew His hour had come to depart this world. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Now, how does He show that love? Verse 4. He rose from supper, tied a towel around His waist, and washed their feet.

[5 : 04] Now, we can imagine a Lord that's as different from us as God is from us. You know, might sit on a throne and just kind of thunder down at us peasants. Don't come near me until you've washed.

But Jesus isn't that Lord. He washes us. Jesus loves us first. Before we even understand what love is, He's doing it to us.

So look down at verse 34. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

So do you see what's happening here? Jesus loves us, and it shows us how to love. Jesus obeys His Father. It shows us how to obey.

It's like we've never seen color. We've never heard music. We don't know what love is. We don't understand love. Jesus makes it sing and shine for us, both by His example and how He does it to us, and in His teaching, how He tells us to live, how He explains Himself to us.

[6 : 13] He shows perfect obedience all the way to death. It's the obedience that we owed to God but failed to give. And by Jesus' obedience unto death, He paid the price of our rebellion.

And once He did that, He came to lead us back into love and the obedience that we're made for. So friends, it all hinges on Jesus. It all hinges on Jesus.

Look at chapter 14, verse 1. Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me.

So what does this mean? It means we need to trust Jesus. We need to follow after Jesus. We need to listen to Him. We need to obey Him. We need to do whatever He bids us to do.

And this is what He tells us to do on the night of His death. Because this is how He leads us to God's own love and life. So if you're a Christian, you yearn for this already.

[7 : 15] You yearn to obey. You yearn to go deeper into His love. Because you've experienced a bit of it. He's opened your eyes to see it. And you long to love Him back. And I think these verses can be troubling.

We read them. Because we know our own sin. And the longer we've known Jesus, the more sensitive, the more clearly we can see the sin in our lives. And it's right that this call to obey cuts a little bit.

It cuts with conviction. When we hear His commands and we know we haven't kept them, it's an opportunity for us to confess and repent.

Remember, Jesus came in love. He came to save sinners. He stands ready to forgive when we confess our sins. He calls us not only to confess, but repent.

Which means turning around and acting differently. And we have to remember, this is a long journey of transformation. There are going to be many circuits of repentance on the way out of this maze.

[8 : 21] But Jesus is faithful to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And so what we do is we keep our eyes on our guide. We come in behind Jesus.

And we follow Him in the way that He's going. And He leads us out. So that's the cut. We should hear this. We should hear this and we should be cut. And if there's things in our minds that come up and we say, this is an area where I haven't obeyed the Lord, we bring it to Him.

It's simple. It's not easy, but it's simple what we're to do with that. But there's also a huge degree of comfort in this, I think. Because it means that my love for Jesus isn't based only on my feelings.

This is a huge relief because feelings come and go. One day I feel close to Jesus. Another day I don't. And our judgment of our own hearts is very unreliable.

But our love here we see is our love for Jesus is a much wider category than just how we're feeling about Jesus from day to day. And so we could ask ourselves these questions. Do I trust in Jesus?

[9 : 30] Do I believe He is Lord? Do I believe that His words are true? Do I believe that He washed me and died for me? Do I change how I live? Am I seeking to frame my life around His teaching?

Am I listening to His words? Do I turn back to Him when I sin? And if we're answering yes to those questions, God help me, but yes, those things are true, then we love Jesus.

We're keeping His commands if we answer yes to those things. We're abiding in His love. And He'll use us to bear fruit. So, this is the love that obeys.

But it gets better because His love also dwells. This is verse 16. It says, So, we want to be with the people that we love.

This is basic. You all agree? Okay. So, when a new mom hands off her baby, they cry. When kids go to overnight camp, they get homesick.

[10:53] They call their parents. When people become empty nesters, they miss their kids.

Because we want to be with, we want to dwell with, we want to live with the people that we love.

And this holds true for every human throughout all time, except for teenagers. They never miss their parents.

It's a phase. I've heard it's a phase. But the point is that love dwells. We know this personally. So, think of Jesus' disciples as He explains to them, I'm leaving.

And imagine what their lives had been like up until that point. Three years of daily life with their Lord. Asking questions. Walking around. Making pancakes. Whatever they did together.

They were together all the time. And in His patient presence, they experienced His love. It was real. He wanted to be with them. He was always with them. How could He be leaving them? Well, He explains, it's only temporary.

[11:59] And Jesus dwells with us now by the Holy Spirit. So, as He goes, He promises another helper. So, this means that Jesus was the first helper. And when He departs, He sends a second helper.

This is the Spirit of Truth. Also called the Holy Spirit. The third person of the Trinity. And Jesus promises that the Spirit won't just dwell with us, as Jesus did in His earthly ministry.

But that Spirit will dwell in us. And it fulfills the promise that God gave through Ezekiel, I will put my Spirit within you. The Spirit that helps them to obey.

And what a sweet promise this is. It means that in Christ, we are never alone. It's not just that Jesus was a great example and a good teacher.

Now it's up to us to implement everything that He taught us. No, He is with us always. He's always with us. Helping us to understand. Helping us to obey.

[13:03] Verse 18 says, I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. And first, He comes to them in His resurrection, yes. But even now, hidden from our sight, in the ascension, in heaven, where He is now, He still comes to us.

By the Holy Spirit. And so you could say that Jesus is closer to His disciples now than He was during His ministry on earth. And I think Daryl Johnson nails it when he says it like this.

You can't get closer than in. That's what verse 20 says. In that day, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

So just think about this logistically. Imagine a line out the door, around the block, for millions of Christians in the world who want to be with Jesus all the time. Well, He is with each of us, all the time, by His Spirit.

The indwelling Spirit brings Jesus and His Father into every believer. And this is, on the one hand, a deep mystery. It's a deep mystery of the Trinity. Which is that one person of God can fully communicate the other persons.

[14:17] So when we're with one, we're somehow with the whole of God. And it's in this way that the whole love of God dwells with us and within us.

We also learn that God's Spirit is not in every human person. So this is about Judas asking about how's the world going to see you?

Is the world going to see you or not? How are we going to see you and the world doesn't see you? God's Spirit is not in every human person. The world doesn't see Him or know Him. But, this promise of this presence of God within our hearts is available to anyone.

And that's what verse 23 is talking about. So notice there it says, if anyone. That's the subject change. Not if you, disciples, but if anyone, anyone hearing this promise right now, if anyone loves me, they keep my word, meaning, they recognize the truth about themselves and Jesus.

They believe in Him and want to obey Him, seek to obey Him. If anyone loves me and keeps my word, then, the Father will love him, meaning, we will have peace with God.

[15:31] We're justified, we're forgiven. And, we will make our home with them, meaning the Spirit will bring God to dwell in our hearts. That promise is for anyone.

And of course, it has to happen in this order. A holy, magnificent God could never dwell in a person or a place that's unclean, but by Jesus' work on the cross and our trust in Him, our hearts are washed.

Not just our feet, but our hearts. All of us. And so, Jesus comes into us by His Spirit, taking us by the hands, leading us in trust and obedience.

We will come to Him and we will make our home with Him. Think of the immensity of that promise. The first half of the chapter, Jesus says, I'm going to heaven and I'm going to make a home for you there.

And that's pretty amazing. But while we wait for that promise to be fulfilled, God can't wait to be with us. He doesn't wait to be with us until we get there.

[16:36] He says, in the meantime, I'm going to move into you. I'm going to be directly with you because love dwells with the people that it loves. And in Jesus, we're never alone.

So, whatever challenge we're facing in life, even to the moment of death, God is close. He's with us. He's there to encourage us, to help, to comfort, and to cause us to grow. So, whatever we feel or whenever we fail, the Spirit is there, making Jesus and the Father available to us.

So, love obeys. It's more than a feeling. It leads to action. Love is present. It's more than familiarity. It's real dwelling.

It's presence. And third, love teaches. So, it's more than just grasping bare facts. So, this is talking about a living and growing insight and a real understanding of Jesus.

[17:41] So, we learn in verse 21 that when God makes his home in our hearts, Jesus manifests himself to us. Not a word that we use very often, manifest, but the manifest on a ship is a list of all the cargo, theoretically.

People are following the law. The manifest will say, everything on this list is in the ship. Everything that's there is in the hold. It's the full picture. And the Spirit's presence will make Jesus like an open book to us.

We're able to see and fully understand Jesus. And Dr. Packer wrote that the best way to understand, the best image for understanding the work of the Spirit is that he's like a great spotlight that's shining on Jesus so we can see him clearly.

That's manifestation. We can see everything clearly. And that's what Jesus is promising here. That when the Spirit comes to dwell on us, we will truly know Jesus. We'll know him.

Not just know about him, we'll know him. He'll be manifest to us. It's a remarkable promise. And you might be wondering, how does that actually work? The Christians I know long to grow in understanding Jesus.

[18:51] And sometimes we have a burning question or a burning decision and we say, what does God want me to do? Why is Jesus letting this happen? What is he speaking? What is he saying? What is he doing? We want to know.

And so we also want to know, how does the Spirit speak? How does the Spirit teach or manifest Jesus? Do I pray harder? Do I obey harder? Do I dwell harder? What do I do? How do I grow in understanding?

And the answer is pretty simple. And it's that the primary way the Spirit teaches us is by the words of Jesus in the words of Scripture.

This is what verse 25 is teaching. 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. The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, not everything in the world. Otherwise, I would understand math.

[19:57] No, the Holy Spirit teaches us all things we need for what he's talking about here. All things we need to know for knowing Jesus, for growing in his love, for growing in obedience.

And we get a hint here as to one particular historical work of the Spirit, which was to highlight Jesus' words and his teaching, his commandments in the minds of the apostles and to sharpen it on the tips of their tongues when they preached and on the tips of their pens.

And they took his teaching and they shared it and they spoke it and they wrote it and it's now fixed in the pages of Scripture. And there are so many things that we don't know and won't know in this life.

So many questions we have for the Lord. And we can ask him when we're dwelling with him there. But he's already spoken everything we need to know for Jesus to dwell with us now, here.

He's supplied it in Scripture, which is God's living word to us, empowered by the Spirit. So we can come to the Bible and this is an example of it today, just opening John.

[21 : 00] And we can know that God doesn't just throw this at us like a textbook that we're supposed to figure out, but the Spirit, dwelling in our hearts by faith, works in us as a gentle teacher, as a helper, bringing us to trust and understand and obey.

And so the simple application here is to lean into God's word. Find a way to get in it. Get in it daily. Get in it with other Christians. Because as you do, the Spirit, God himself will be teaching you. So, this is Valentine's Day, remember the love story of God. God loved us in sacrificial action and he calls us to the same.

God loved us enough to make his home with us and he dwells with us still. God teaches us everything we need to know to know him fully.

Amen.