

John 14:25-31

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[0 : 00] Heavenly Father, we pray that you would help us to hear your word tonight.! Sanctify us by it, that we would become more faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus.

We pray this in his name. Amen. Folks, be seated. It is good to be with you tonight. I'm Jacob. If I haven't met you before, I'm one of the ministers here at St. John's.

And we're going to be looking at John chapter 14, which Harlan just read for us. It's on page 901 of the Pew Bible. Please open there with me. John chapter 14, verses 22 to 31.

If you're new with us or just need a reminder, we're in a sermon series called Formed by Jesus. And throughout this sermon series, we're sitting with the apostles as Jesus is teaching them on the night before he's crucified.

And he's teaching them everything that they need to know about how to be his disciples after he leaves. So as we peek into this upper room discourse, as it's called, and we hear Jesus teaching these disciples, we also want to listen and hear how to be formed as his disciples today.

[1 : 20] That's the big idea of the sermon series. And that is the big idea for tonight. Our passage tonight is Jesus answering a question.

Throughout John chapter 14, well, the end of 13, end of 14, there's four questions. The disciples, as they're listening to Jesus teach, four times they interrupt him and ask a question.

And this is the last one. It's a question that's posed by Judas, not Judas Iscariot. He had gone out by this time, but another Judas.

Just by the way, how lame it had to be to be the other Judas that had to explain everything every time he met somebody. Not that Judas.

I'm the other Judas. It's that Judas, not Iscariot, that asked this question. And Jesus, just a few verses ago in verse 19, had told them something that was a little bit confusing.

[2 : 22] He had said, Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more. But you will see me. And the question that Judas has is verse 22.

He says, Lord, how is it that you're going to manifest yourself to us and not to the world? He's confused. He doesn't get it. Jesus, after you're gone, how are we going to see you, but the world's not going to see you?

And if you're going to come back, and if you're really the Messiah, won't it be obvious to everybody? Won't you come in glory and power and won't it be obvious to everybody that you're the Messiah?

What's the difference between us as your disciples and the rest of the world? That's at the heart of the question that Judas is asking. What's the difference between the disciple and the world?

And at bottom, Jesus gives a really, really simple answer. What distinguishes a disciple of Jesus from the world is that they have a relationship with him.

[3 : 31] That's the difference. It's a relationship. And as Jesus unfolds this answer, because this passage is really quite complex, he unfolds it and gives us four character traits that distinguishes a disciple from a worldly person.

Four character traits that reveal genuine love for the Lord Jesus. And so that's what I want to look at with you tonight, those four character traits that Jesus lays out.

Because as we are learning here at St. John's how to be formed by Jesus, to be his disciples, this is very important for us to get. It's important for us to digest this and really to make it part of ourselves. Jesus is painting here a picture of the person who has a real, genuine love for him. And we want to gaze at that image.

And we want to shape our lives accordingly. So that's what we're doing tonight. Let's look at it together. First. First of the four. This is the first character trait of the disciple.

[4 : 43] It's that a disciple of Jesus keeps his word. A disciple of Jesus keeps his word. This is verses 23 and 24. Look with me.

Jesus answered Judas, 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. To keep here literally means to guard. Think of a guard in a prison keeping watch.

It means to protect. To hold fast. It also means to live by. Right? It's something you guard and you live by in your life.

Think of keeping office hours. Or keeping a strict workout routine. It's this idea of maintaining with diligence a habit.

[5 : 44] So keeping Jesus' word, as he talks about here, is ordering your life to habitually live by what he taught.

That's what he means. And look. Did you notice that the word here, in verse 23, it's in the singular. Whoever loves me will keep my word.

Singular. We are to keep all of Jesus' words, all of his commandments. Yes, to be sure. All the different things that he taught us. But here he's saying that we are to keep all of his teaching as a whole.

Singular. My word. Every bit of it. The whole thing. All of his teaching is supposed to shape our lives. And this is the point.

It's that we can't pick out two or three of the things that Jesus said and live by those things. We have to live our lives by everything that he taught, whether we find it particularly easy or difficult.

[6 : 48] It's the whole kit and caboodle. That's what we have to live our lives by. I just want to say something really quickly.

I'm going to open up parentheses. Remember, when we're talking through this, that Jesus is giving more of a description than a conditional statement.

Do you know what I mean? He's describing what a true disciple looks like. He's not giving a conditional. Like, a conditional statement would be if Jesus said, you've got to keep all my commands and love me in order to be my disciple.

Now, that might be true. But that's not what he's doing here. He's saying, the one who loves me, he'll keep my word. He's giving a description.

It's an ideal picture of the person who really loves him. And if you've ever been in a close, loving relationship with anybody, you know what this is like, right?

[7 : 56] If you really love somebody, you want to please them, right? You may fail a lot. But your desire, the desire that's driving the relationship is love.

And you want to do things to build up that relationship. Whether it's obedience, or service, or self-sacrifice, or acts of love.

You want to do things that fosters that relationship of love. And if you have that kind of love for Jesus, you'll keep his word. That's what he's saying.

And here's my point. Jesus doesn't expect perfection from his disciples. He knows how weak you are. He knows how weak I am.

But he does expect us to love him. He wants our hearts to be oriented toward him. And the true disciple, because they love Jesus, strives to keep his word.

[8 : 57] Failingly, of course. But the heart is in the right place. And that's what matters. And if the disciple loves Jesus, this is the really important part.

Look at verse 23. What does it say? If anyone loves Jesus, he'll keep my word, and my father will love him. And we, my father and me, will come and make our home with him.

This is amazing. There's so much to say about this. This is the Greek word *mone*. And, you know, the only other place in the whole New Testament where this word is used is in verse 2 of this chapter.

Look back with me. You may remember this from a few weeks ago. In my father's house are many *mone*, dwelling places.

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? In that metaphor, Jesus is saying that he's going to prepare a dwelling place, a *mone* for his bride, us.

[10:13] But here he reverses it. He says, my father and I will come and make our home, our dwelling place, inside of anyone who loves me.

It's the same home. It's the same dwelling place. The place Jesus is going to prepare is you. Isn't that amazing?

This means that if you simply love Jesus, the living God, the creator of the universe, will come and make his home inside of you. And all the powerful presence and the infinite resources of God will be at work within you.

And that presence of the living God is not dependent on how well you keep his commandments. Like it could come or go depending on how good of a day you're having.

But the person who simply loves the Lord Jesus has that presence and power permanently dwelling in them.

[11:19] Do you realize that, Christian? That the living God is living inside of you. What is he doing?

He's enabling you to keep his word. He's enabling you to choose obedience to him. Remember the passage from Ezekiel. I will put my spirit in you and I will cause you to keep all my statutes and to keep all my rules.

So the disciple of Jesus keeps his word by the power of God dwelling in him. That's the first character trait.

And the second, the second is this. A true disciple of the Lord Jesus follows Jesus' apostles. This one seems like it's coming out of left field, right?

Let me explain. Okay. So you and I, we're disciples of Jesus and we want to keep his word, right? But Jesus is not here, right?

[12:30] He doesn't speak audibly to us nowadays, right? So where can we find his word? Where do we hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us?

Where do we find his commandments that we could live by them? Look at verse 25. The things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, but I'm going, I'm leaving.

And 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.

Jesus promises here that the Holy Spirit will come and teach and remind about everything that he taught in his earthly ministry.

Now, notice who this promise is directed toward. It's directed to the apostles. It's directed to the apostles in that room with Jesus that night.

[13:34] In verse 23, the promise that God will live in anyone who loves him is for anyone, anyone who loves Jesus. But this promise is to the apostles in the room with him.

The promise to teach you all things, to bring to your remembrance what I have said to you, this is specifically for them. Because we weren't there, right?

At least I wasn't. I hope nobody will raise their hand and say that they were there. And we can't be reminded about something we didn't witness firsthand, right? It's a promise that the Holy Spirit will help them recollect and interpret their time with Jesus.

Because if you've read the Gospels, most of the time throughout the Gospel accounts, the apostles are just absolutely clueless. They're totally confused.

They don't know what's happening. So Jesus is saying here, My Spirit, after I go, my Spirit will come and remind you what I taught to you, and he will make sense of it for you.

[14:47] Why? Well, so they could write it down. So they could deliver Jesus' very words to the whole world. To us.

So that we can keep his word. Isn't that amazing? Jesus is promising that the Holy Spirit will work in these men to give us a complete and full account of Jesus.

And friends, this is why we are apostolic Christians. Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever wondered why we profess the Apostles' Creed?

Why we believe one holy Catholic and apostolic church? It's because the apostolic witness of Jesus' disciples there with him on that night.

Their witness has delivered the true Jesus to you and me. Through the Apostles, we have all of Jesus' word.

[15:48] Everything that we need for salvation. Now, we do indeed receive the Holy Spirit. Anybody who believes in Jesus gets the Holy Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit doesn't work any new revelation in me or you. Right? Rather, he helps us to hear and to see and to understand the face of Jesus in Holy Scripture.

He illuminates Scripture for us so that we see Jesus more clearly. And he teaches us how to apply Jesus' word in our circumstances, in our daily life.

That's the work of the Spirit in you and me today. Okay. You still with me? So the true disciple of Jesus keeps his word, which is delivered by Jesus' apostles.

And the third thing is that the true disciple rests in the peace that Jesus gives. Look at verse 27. Peace I leave with you.

[16:58] My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your hearts be troubled. Neither let them be afraid. As we get to know this Jesus that's delivered to us by the Holy Scriptures, we come to know the really fundamental thing.

It's that he is one peace for us by his cross. He is one peace and he gives it to us. The world offers us a phony kind of peace.

A political peace that is drawn up in treaties, but that doesn't last very long, as we know from current events. The world offers us that kind of peace.

The world also offers us all kinds of personal pacifiers. Pacifiers that give us a phony sense of peace in our lives, whether that's money or entertainment or doom scrolling on TikTok.

These are pacifiers. They're pacifiers, a phony peace that the world gives us to keep our minds off of the important things of life.

[18:18] That's the peace that the world gives. But it's totally different from Jesus. Jesus, by the sacrifice of his cross, grants us true peace.

He reconciles us with God. He puts us into a state of peace and loving relationship with our creator. It's a decision that is made, a pronouncement that is made that you and I are now at peace with the righteous God of the universe.

And it's that sense of rightness and settledness when you've been reconciled with someone that you've wronged or you've been released of a debt to someone that's much more powerful than you. I remember a few years back, I made a mistake filing my taxes. And it turns out it was a bad mistake.

[19:23] And I ended up owing the government a lot of money, more money than I could pay. And it was a mistake. But if you ever dealt with the IRS or the CRA, it was a big deal.

And so it took months. I had to be on the phone with so many people. It took months and months of convincing the government that I didn't owe this money. And it was so stressful.

If you've ever been in that kind of situation, where you owe a debt that you cannot pay. And then when I talked to that one person, finally, and they said, okay, case is closed.

It's done. It was this huge release. A relief off my shoulders. That's the feeling of reconciliation and peace that Jesus gives.

The debt is erased. You're settled. And maybe even beyond that, I think even more beyond that, is that he gives us peace because he dwells with us, right?

[20:31] He makes us home with us. He purifies us. And makes us the temple of the living God. And his presence remains with us. And so we have access to this deep, deep well of well-being.

You know, that sense that everything's in its right place. That feeling of security that you know that no matter how bad you mess up, no matter how turbulent your life gets, God is with you.

He's with you. And he's enabling and empowering your life. And everything's going to be okay because he's living with you.

And your heart doesn't have to rise or drop with your worldly circumstances. Your heart doesn't have to be rooted in the things of this world, but it's rooted in the hope of eternity.

Because your eternity is sure. God's going to bring you into eternal life with him forever. That's the peace that Jesus gives us.

[21:35] And friends, I know, I know how difficult life is and how difficult it can be, especially even for people in our congregation right now. And I know it doesn't always feel like you have that peace, but here's the point.

The point here is that the true disciple of Jesus decides to receive his peace. We simply trust that this promise is true.

And we strive to rest in it. Even when we're facing death and despair, we say no to the phony peace that the world is offering us.

And we say yes to what Jesus is promising here. I'm going to believe what you've accomplished on the cross, Jesus. And I'm going to rest my life on that foundation, whether I feel it right now or not. That's the decision made in faith. And it's the decision that a true disciple makes. Not irrationally. It's not a leap of faith in the dark.

[22 : 43] But it's just confidence. Because you know who Jesus is. And you trust his word. And you keep it. And this leads to my last point, just very, very quickly.

It's that a true disciple believes and proclaims Jesus in the world. This is verses 28 to 31. This whole section. And I'm going to try to sum it up really simply.

Jesus is telling his disciples that he's going to the cross. And he's returning to the Father. And he's cluing them into this all ahead of time.

Why? Have you ever wondered? Like, why does Jesus actually bother to tell them all of this? Well, it's verse 29. Look with me. And now I have told you this before it takes place.

So that when it does take place, what? You may believe. It's so that the apostles would believe.

[23 : 47] Believe that Jesus had really accomplished what he promised that he would accomplish. That he really is giving them this peace. Because he knew it ahead of time. He knew what the cross would entail.

And he knew that he would come out on the other side having purchased eternal life for all of us. But the end goal of belief for the apostles here and for you and me, the end goal of that is way beyond our personal benefit.

The end goal of the disciples' belief is verse 31. Jesus says, That's the end goal of belief.

That's the end goal of belief. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is going to be proclaimed to who? To the world.

The message of the gospel is going out into the world through the proclamation of everyone who believes it.

[24 : 55] Beginning with the apostles. Beginning with the apostles and continuing on with you and me. The apostolic call is to proclaim the truth of Jesus throughout the world.

And we again, we follow in their footsteps. The apostles believed because Jesus told them. We believe because we believe their testimony.

Because it's inspired by the Holy Spirit. And now we are to bear witness to the ends of the earth. Why? Because God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

That whoever should believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life. The gospel is for the world. For everyone who doesn't know and love the Lord Jesus.

Because God wants more and more and more and more and more and more and more to believe him. He wants all of his children to be reconciled.

[26 : 01] So friends, let's be faithful disciples, shall we? Let's keep him as the love of our lives. Let's keep his word.

Let's rest in the peace that he gives us. And let's proclaim him to the world. Let's pray. So that more and more of his lost children can come home. This is the image of discipleship that Jesus gives us. May it shape our imaginations and direct our lives. Amen.