

John Chapter 15 Continued

John 15:12 "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

You can quickly see from this, that it is not an option for us to love each other. This is a commandment of the Lord. The type of love Jesus is speaking of here is interesting too. This type of love is not "I love you because", but "I love you in spite of the way you act".

This is called agape love. This is unselfish love to the utmost.

Love of the brethren constitutes the test of genuine fellowship. The primary focus of the moral test is obedience to the command of love because love is the fulfillment of the law, and is also Christ's new command. True enlightenment is to love. God's light is the light of love, so to walk in light is to walk in love.

John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

This is a reference to the supreme evidence and expression of Jesus' love (verse 12), His sacrificial death on the cross. Christians are called to exemplify the same kind of sacrificial giving toward one another, even if such sacrifice involves the laying down of one's own life in imitation of Christ's example (1 John 3:16).

We discussed this type of love in the previous lesson. This kind of love is really more than our carnal mind can comprehend. Not only did Jesus have this great love, but the Father's love for mankind goes so far that we cannot comprehend it at all.

(John 3:16), tells us that He loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I am a parent, and I just cannot comprehend loving anyone enough to give up one of my children so that someone else could be saved.

John 15:14 "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Here we see who Jesus' friends are. They are those who walk in Jesus' footsteps, doing the will of Jesus and not their own, are the ones who follow Jesus' commandments. If we are rebellious and turn against God, we are not Jesus' friend.

Just as Abraham was called the "friend of God" (2 Chron. 20:7; James 2:23), because he enjoyed extraordinary access to the mind of God through God's revelation to him which he believed. So also those who follow Christ are privileged with the extraordinary revelation through the Messiah and Son of God and believing, become "friends", of God also. It was for His "friends" that the Lord laid down His life (verse 13; 10:11; 15 and 17).

John 15:15 “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

We see from this, that Jesus did not think of them or us as just a common servant, who takes orders never knowing the why of the situation. He explains to them and to us, that we are more than servants. He is our friend.

If we have decided to follow Jesus, we are actually younger adopted brothers and sisters to Him. We have been grafted into the tree of life. Jesus has kept no secrets from us. He has revealed the Father to us.

John 15:16 “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

In case any pretense might exist among the disciples in terms of spiritual pride because of the privileges they enjoyed. Jesus made it clear that such privilege rested not in their own merit, but on His sovereign choice of them.

God chose Israel (Isaiah 45:4; Amos 3:2), but not for any merit (Deut. 7:7; 9:4-6). God elected angels to be forever holy (1 Tim. 5:21). He elected believers to salvation apart from any merit (Matt. 24:24, 31).

One purpose of God’s sovereign election is that the disciples who have been blessed with such revelation and understanding should produce spiritual fruit.

The New Testament describes fruit as godly attitudes (Gal. 5:22-23); righteous behavior (Philippians 1:11); praise (Heb. 13:15); and especially leading others to faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God (Romans 1:13-16).

As we have said before, many Scriptures have several meanings. This one is spoken by Jesus to His chosen followers who will continue the work that He started, before He left to go and sit at the right hand of the Father. We have seen in these last few verses that the Spirit of God never leaves.

These, whom the Lord has chosen to continue His work, will be in constant contact with Him through prayer. If they remain in the work they have been called to do, operating in the fruits of the Spirit which God has given to make them effective, then they will bring many into the kingdom of God. They will bring many fruits (followers), to the Father in the name of Jesus.

They can pray to the Father in the name of Jesus and have positive answers to their prayers. These, whom the Lord has chosen as extensions of Himself, can be the ministers in our society now, or the apostles then. These are those the Lord set aside to work out of all the believers.

“I have chosen you”: By Christ’s appointment, not by their choice, they were taken out of the world (verse 19), and sent out to bear fruit.

John 15:17 “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

You see again, it is not our option to love each other or not. We are commanded by Jesus to love each other. We must love everyone, even the unlovable. We do not have to like what they are doing, but we must love them. Love the sinner and hate the sin.

John 15:18 “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”

Jesus is warning all the ministers who follow in His work that they will have great opposition. The world hated Jesus then, because it brought guilt to them. It is no different now. Worldly people are intimidated by those who live and work for God.

If our leader was ridiculed and hated, we are no better than He. What they were afraid of and fought against in Him, they will fight against in those who stand for the same things.

Since Satan is the one who dominates the evil world system in rebellion against God (14:30), the result is that the world hates not only Jesus, but those who follow Him (2 Timothy 3:12). Hatred toward Jesus means also hatred toward the father who sent Him (verse 23).

John 15:19 “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

In this Jesus is saying: if you are my followers, you are in the world, but you are not of the world. Christians are to be separated people. We are separated to the call of Jesus in our lives.

We, like Abraham, are looking for a city whose maker is God. We have a job to do in this world, but this world is not our home. We are just passing through. Our home is in heaven. If we were fleshly people who sought worldly things, then the only pleasure we would ever have would be the false pleasure of the flesh here on earth.

Worldly people have no hope of a better tomorrow. They are living for the here and now. The lusts of the world control worldly people. Those who Jesus has called to follow and work for Him must crucify their flesh, so that they may live in the spirit with the blessed hope of an eternity in heaven.

John 15:20 “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

“Slave ... master”, that axiom, spoken also (in 13:16), reflects the obvious truth that led Jesus to inform His disciples. They could expect to be treated like He was treated because those who hated Him don’t know God (verse 21), and would hate them also; and conversely, those who listened with faith to Him, would hear them also.

The disciples of Jesus, then or now, cannot expect any better treatment than our leader, Jesus, had when He walked the earth. The true believers, then and now will be persecuted. There are just two kinds of people in the world. The true believer is one and those who are not true believers is the other.

Many church people fell into the category of not being true believers then, it is the same now. The lukewarm Christians will fall into the category with the non-believers. If you do not give Jesus 100% of you, He will not have any of you at all. Those who truly believe in Jesus will keep His sayings. If they keep Jesus' sayings, they will keep the sayings of the true believers, as well, since they are one and the same.

John 15:21 “But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.”

One thing for all of us who work for God to remember is they are not really coming against you personally, but what you stand for. If you stand for Jesus' teachings, they are really coming against Jesus. Those who know the truth will not speak out against you.

Verses 22-24 “they had not had sin”: Jesus did not mean that if He had not come, they would have been sinless. But His coming incited the severest and most deadly sin, that of rejecting and rebelling against God and His truth. It was the decisive sin of rejection, the deliberate and fatal choice of darkness over light and death over life of which He spoke.

He had done so many miracles and spoken innumerable words to prove He was Messiah and Son of God, but they were belligerent in their love of sin and rejection of the Savior (see Hebrews 4:2-5; 6:4-6; 10:29-31).

John 15:22 “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.”

Jesus says here, that they have turned Him down having full knowledge of Him. You see, Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament which they claimed to know. Jesus came to reveal His Father's true ways to them. They in full knowledge, refused. Since they knew, their sin was greater.

We see here, that they rejected the greatest gift that mankind has known: God's own Son. Their guilt is more since they pretended to know the Scriptures.

John 15:23 “He that hateth me hateth my Father also.”

We see here, that it is impossible to love the Father without loving His Son. Jesus is a reflection of the Father.

John 15:24 “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”

Many of the miracles Jesus had done were so far above what any human had ever done, that they had to know this was their Messiah. Their jealousy, of the great and mighty deeds He did, blinded them. They could only see His flesh. They were never acquainted with His Spirit.

Even their physical eyes showed them these miracles. There should have been no doubt who He was. They did not want to believe, because they felt they would lose their position in their community.

John 15:25 “But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”

Jesus quotes (Psalms 35:19; 69:4). The logic here is that if David, a mere man, could have been hated in such a terrible manner by the enemies of God, how much more would the wicked hate David’s perfect, divine son who was the promised king that would confront sin and reign forever over His kingdom of righteousness (see 2 Sam. 7:16).

He healed the blind, made the lame to walk, opened deaf ears, cast out demons, fed the multitude, and raised the dead. For which of these, did they have the right to hate Him?

John 15:26 “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”

The Comforter refers to the Advocate beside us as we bear witness to Christ (14:15-16; compare verse 27 with John 18:21; see also Luke 1:2). Again, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. This time He emphasized the Spirit’s help for witnessing.

Proceedeth: The Holy Spirit, like the Son, is God from God. The Son is “generated” or “begotten”, whereas the Holy Spirit “proceeds” from God. Again, while the Trinitarian relationships are a mystery to us, they are nonetheless very evident in the New Testament.

We see in all of this, the personality of the Father, as to not having been the begotten. The Holy Spirit, here, symbolizes all truth. The truth will set you free. This Holy Spirit’s functions are to comfort, teach, and guide. Jesus is the Savior. The Spirit of God was present with Jesus when He walked the earth.

When Jesus goes back to heaven and becomes the Word again, the Spirit of God will still be present on the earth in the Holy Spirit. In all of this, notice the unity of the will of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

John 15:27 “And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”

What are they to bear witness of? The spoken and written Word. Jesus is saying here, you have heard my Words proceed from my mouth, and you know it lines up with the written Word, the Bible. They shall bear witness, because they have firsthand knowledge of Jesus.

John Chapter 15 Continued Questions

1. What did Jesus say was His commandment in verse 12?
2. What type of love is Jesus speaking of?
3. Greater love hath no man than what?
4. God's love is called what kind of love (one word)?
5. What is the "if" in verse 14 that makes you Jesus' friend?
6. Jesus says, He calls His followers not servants, but what?
7. What had Jesus made known to His followers?
8. "Ye have not chosen _____, but I have chosen _____."
9. Who ordained Jesus' disciples?
10. Disciples should go forth and bring much what, as in verse 16?
11. Whatsoever you shall ask the Father, in whose name, shall be given you?
12. In verse 17, Jesus commands that His followers do what?
13. Who did Jesus say the world would hate?
14. We Christians are _____ the world, but not _____ the world?
15. Where is the Christian's home?
16. The servant is not _____ than his lord?
17. What are the two kinds of people in the world?
18. What percent does God require?
19. Why do people persecute believers?
20. Why were these people without excuse?

21. Those who hate Jesus, hate who also?

22. They hated Him without a cause that the _____ might be fulfilled.

23. What is the Holy Spirit called in verse 26?

34. Who do all believers bear witness of?