

Love Each Other as I Have Loved You!
John 15:9-19 (vv. 12-13, 17)

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I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

While creation and the being of man are great testimonies of God's love, the greatest testimony of all is that He sent His son Jesus to us. God came so close to us to show through Jesus's life and death how much He loves us and wants to save us. God's unchanging love is prevailing because it is a love in Christ, with Christ, by Christ, and for Christ. God demonstrated His love for us in that Christ died for us. John's message is the same, "This is how God showed His love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but He loved us and sent his Son as atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:9 & 10).

John 15 includes the some of the last teachings that Jesus extended to his disciples before his death. In this chapter, Christ uses a metaphor to signify the correlation between God, Jesus, and the disciples. The metaphors Jesus used in his teachings were to ensure that the disciples understood the teachings. In the beginning of Chapter 15, Jesus compared himself with the vine, his father with the vine grower, and the disciples with the branches. Disciples were not commanded to do the trimming but rather to abide in Christ and to love one another. Just as Jesus depends on and works in consultation with the Father, the disciples are nothing without the Father and Jesus.

Jesus emphasized on the need to understand and obey God's commandments. Jesus explained that our obedience to Him not only proves that we are his friend and disciple, but also that our obedience is how we experience the joy of our salvation. Through our obedience, we remain in Christ and glorify God. Jesus command us to love one another as He loved us. In John 15, everything Jesus says comes back to love. Love and obedience ought to be the pillars of a Christian life.

II. The Lesson: Love Each Other as I Have Loved You!

John 15:9-17

1. John 15:9-10.

Jesus begins the verse by confirming his compassion for the believers. In expressing how this is immense, Jesus compares it with the love His Father has towards Him. Notice the elements of Jesus' presentation on love: The Father loves the Son, The Son loves the Father, The Son loves His followers. Jesus' followers are to remain in His love. Jesus' followers are to love the Son by appropriating His teaching, and being loved by the Son implies loving fellow believers. The unceasing and unconditional love the Father has for the Son externally existed before the foundation of the world. This was the model for the relationship between Christ and His disciples. Jesus used the pattern of the Father's love to love His disciples. The disciples were to love like Jesus loved them throughout His public ministry. He instructed the disciples to remain – to dwell in His love by keeping what He has taught them. Jesus provided them/us with a perfect model of obedience. He had come to do the will of the One who sent Him, He kept the Father's Word, and He did the Father's will so that the world might know that He loves the Father.

Jesus further states to the His disciples that obedience was one of the ways of remaining in His love. By following His commandments, the disciples will be sure that they dwell in Christ's love. He showed that love and obedience are intertwined. They are hand in hand.

2. John 15:11.

Jesus showed the model of the love of the Father and Son among the disciples was the basis for the abiding experience of His joy in their lives.

It might seem strange that Jesus would offer His joy when He was about to be crucified in a matter of hours. However, it was joy for Him to die on the cross to save those who would believe in Him (Heb 12:2).

Obedience to the Lord is the means to full, lasting joy. Joy follows when disciples realize that loving Christ is true life.

Jesus commands us to render obedience to Him because such obedience is a source of joy to Him, "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you"

(John 15:11a). We bring joy to Christ when we are obedient and faithful. He furthermore commands us to render obedience to Him because such obedience is a source of joy to us: “I have told you these things so that your joy be complete” (John 15:11b)

Therefore, the life of obedience is a source of joy to Christ our Savior and it also proves to be a source of joy to us. The same joy that Jesus had in His life fruitful service He wanted for His followers. His desire for them was to have the joy of a fruitful life in time and after His departure. He challenged them to remain in His joy. Jesus’ joy is not fleeting or temporary.

3. John 5:12 – 13.

Jesus condenses the commands of verse 10 into one in verse 12, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

This was Jesus primary command to His disciples. The high standard of love among the followers of Jesus was to love each other like He loved them. Genuine love for Jesus entails love for other believers. Cultivating mutual love among believers flows from following the life and commands of Jesus. Abiding in Christ, His words, and His love will allow us to love one another.

Verse 13 conveys the standard of love Jesus’ disciples are to have for one another. Jesus gave His life for His friends, and His disciples are to follow the same pattern. At this point, this was not fully understood by the disciples because Jesus had not yet been crucified. However, it had a greater meaning during and after Jesus’ death.

The greatest love one have for others is to give oneself for them. The most an individual can do for one’s friends is to die for them. This is the level of love believers are to possess for others. Jesus’s death for us is the ultimate standard of love. Jesus gave everything; He gave Himself to die on the cross for others (Rom 5:10). Believers should follow Christ’s example of supreme love for others (1John 3:16, 18).

4. John 15:14-15

These verses mark an important shift in the relation between Jesus and those who closely follow and obey him. Jesus now says he will no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made

known to you. Jesus is telling us that we have not always been His friends. We have not always had a close intimate, personal relationship with Jesus. It has not always been our heart's desire to do what He has commanded us to do and to live a life in obedience and commitment to him.

He explained the difference between a servant and friend. He says that a servant doesn't know his master's business. A servant does things that he's told to do because he's told to do them. A servant is told what to do while a friend is told why it is being done.

By Jesus selfless love for us, He has transformed our relationship with him. We are no longer mere servants, simply doing what we are told because we are told to do it. We are friends who know that all have sinned and fallen short of the God's glory. We know that the wages of sin is death. We know that the right time, God sent Jesus into the world to pay the price of our sins on the cross. We know that through His resurrection, Jesus broke the chains of sin. We know that God made all of this to happen so that, through faith in Jesus Christ, we can be reconciled to God and given the wonderful gift of eternal life.

As Jesus' friends, we are told that we have a mission to share this good news with the world. It is good news of love, compassion, and forgiveness. It is good news of mercy and grace meant for all people.

The words of a once popular song entitled, "That's What Friends Are For", "You can count on me, for sure, In good times, in bad times, I'll be on your side forevermore: 'Cause that's what friends are for."

These words are a right description of Christ's commitment to us and an expression of His friendship to us. If we would maintain an intimate relationship with him, we must render obedience unto Him.

5. John 15: 16-17.

Jesus speaking to His disciples about how He appointed them to be His disciples. They do not choose Him, but He chose them. Their calling as disciples was not based their own merit but by the grace of Jesus.

Jesus did not choose them because they were rich or powerful or even eloquent. They didn't submit a resume to one of the chosen. Jesus simply called them out to go and bear fruit.

God chooses whom God chooses. God empowers whom God empowers.

Jesus choosing His disciples was a continuing a long tradition that we see throughout scripture, and throughout the history of the church, of God choosing unlikely people to accomplish unexpected tasks.

Joseph was chosen by God to preserve God's chosen people. Moses was chosen to confront Pharaoh and lead God's people to freedom. David, a man after God's own heart, was chosen to be king.

Mary had a remarkable faith, open heart, and a willingness to do whatever God asked of her, was chosen to become the mother of God's son, Jesus.

Jesus continuing the long tradition. The disciples were not scholars nor expert in God's teachings. They were from all walks of life, fishermen and tax collector.

Jesus knew what they would be confronted with after His departure; therefore, He knew they needed to remember that He had chosen them to continue the work He had begun and to bear His fruit, fruit that will last.

They are not the only ones for each and every one of us has also been chosen by God for a particular purpose in this world. In Ephesians, Paul tells us that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world for a particular purpose, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. We are chosen by God to proclaim God's mighty acts. Chosen by God to bear the fruit of God's love in this world. We did not choose this, but God has chosen and appointed us.

III. Conclusion

The Father loves the Son, and the Son loves us and invites us to abide in His love. As we keep His commandments, we abide in His love, and we experience a complete kind of joy. This joy fills our hearts, driving out poisonous feelings that would otherwise make it difficult to love our neighbor. God's love, Jesus' love, our love, our abiding in Christ, and our keeping of the commandments change us in ways that enable us to love those imperfect souls with whom we rub elbows every day – to love them warts and all.