

John Ch 15:11-17

Keeping The Command Of Christ"

Vs9-11

Now as you follow the flow you realize that what Jesus is in reference to is the secret of a fruitful life and the subsequent results of abiding in Him. You in Him, and Him in you, and as we've spoken of before, you in Him is your salvation, the bible says, "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Cor 5:17 and Him in you is your sanctification, the life of Christ at work in you, flowing out through you, Him increasing and you decreasing in your life, again, "*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God -- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--*" 1 Cor 1:30 and by this (Jesus said) the Father is glorified, as there is less of you and more of Jesus at work in your life. and Of course if Jesus is at work in your life, the *love* of God is going to be an evident manifestation and characteristic of your life, because Jesus is God, and God (the bible says) is love. and So Jesus begins here to speak about love, how He's loved us, and desires that we abide in His love, and He tells us very clearly that the way we abide in His love is by simple obedience to His word. and We spoke about that last time, but in order to keep from dipping back to far into last weeks text let's just say for now that the overflow of the life of love, (that is true love according to the biblical definition) is joy.

Vs 11

Now as Jesus goes on here in a minute He'll revert straight back to the subject of love, and so we're seeing a real correlation here between love and joy, and how they're interwoven together. and That really shouldn't surprise us, as a matter of fact the very topic of love and joy should be ringing a bell in your heart and in your mind, because the bible tells us that a real aspect of the love of God, is the joy of the Spirit in your life. Gal 5, "...*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*" Gal 5:22-23 So the fruit of the Spirit is love, period. But as the attributes of love begin to break down we see that it's comprised of joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and so on, and so forth. So to see Jesus speaking of His joy in relationship to His love is almost to be expected, earlier He told them "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you;*" John 14:27 Not the circumstantial peace of the world, but the supernatural peace of the Holy Spirit, His personal peace, that same peace that kept Him collected just hours before the cross, that encouraged others when He was the one in harms way. and That's what He's speaking of here.

Now we've spoken of the secret of a fruitful life, here Jesus is unlocking the mystery of a joyful life. Jesus offers fullness of joy, *His* joy, not the world's happiness, and no doubt many of you are familiar with this but there is a vast difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is circumstantial and it's flaky, it's an emotionally based experience that changes with each passing situation sometimes minute by minute.

It's happen stance, so that you might come to me and say, "Jeff, I'm in real trouble, and if I don't come up with \$20,000 my life is going down the drain, they'll repo my house," or whatever. and So I might sit down and write you out a check for \$20,000, and so it tops you out, you're stoked, and you're laughing, and dancing and just beside yourself with excitement all the way to the bank. Then you try and cash it, then suddenly you're not happy anymore, now you're sad, or perhaps mad, or any # of emotions that may surge up at that moment, because I don't have \$2,000 in the bank, much less \$20,000. But the point I'm trying to get you to see is that happiness is a variable, but joy is a constant. and What Jesus offers is joy, and it's the result not of circumstance, but of my relationship to Jesus Christ which is a constant.

Joy is based, not upon me, or what's going on in my life, but rather it's based upon who Jesus is, what He's done upon the cross, how He's transplanted me from condemnation to salvation, and is working in me sanctification, it's all about Him rather than me and so Joy remains a constant because Jesus is as consistent as they come, He never leaves me, never forsakes me, is always faithful to me. and So the joy of the Lord is not an emotional based happenstance, but rather it's as faithful as the work of Jesus Christ on my behalf, it's just another aspect of the overflow of the life of Christ in you, because it's *His* joy, and He's imparting it to you as you abide in Him and in His love.

You see the joy of the Lord is relationship oriented, and I think that's what Jesus is trying to drive home to us. He's saying, "Look, stay connected *to* Me, deeply rooted *in* Me, abide in Me, and in My love, and here's how you abide in My love, obey My commands, now I'm telling you this because I want your life to be full of joy." The bible says, "...*the joy of the LORD is your strength.*" Neh 8:10 God doesn't want you to have a humdrum, bored out of your skull experience in life and then graduate into Heaven for an eternity of it. That's a total misconception of Christianity, and who God is altogether, as if holiness, and solemn sincerity are linked in that way. Now obviously kingdom business is a serious matter, but to think that holiness is somehow measured by how boring something is, or that if something is fun it must not be godly is just a lie from the pit. Jesus wants you to have *fullness* of joy, "*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" Rom 15:13 So don't buy the lie that your relationship with God isn't right if you're somehow enjoying life, Jesus wants you to be topped out with joy, filled to the max with it, and that's going to happen as the resulting overflow of you abiding in His love, and so He says here.

Vs12

Now there's a couple of things we see in this vs, #1 A commandment, and #2 A condition, or a standard. and I want you to underline, or perhaps circle the word "commandment" there. It's a non-option, it's an order Jesus is charging each and everyone of His disciples that we love one another, that's the command, to love one another.

By the very fact that Jesus commands this of us, it speaks to us something about love, that is, true love, because there's no that I can force you to love me in the traditional sense of the understanding of love. I can't make you warm and fuzzy all over regarding my person, who I am, I can't force you to *feel* a certain way about me. Therefore, if follow that line of reasoning I have to conclude then that love really isn't a matter of how I *feel* or don't *feel* in a given situation. I hear people say things like, "I just don't love her, or love him like I used to."

What they mean by that is that they used to feel a certain way around this person that now they don't, but the fact is, that the way I feel, or the way you feel has nothing to do with love. Now certainly (especially as it pertains to those of us who are married) a nice emotional experience is a desired thing. But I don't think Jesus got warm fuzzies reflected back to Him from the people who wanted to place Him on the cross, yet it was because God so *loved* them that He gave His life *for* them. So we realize that what Jesus is commanding here isn't to feel warm all over about people. So then love according to the biblical understanding isn't an emotional state, but rather it's a matter of my will, and my personal choice to give you a certain platform in my life whereby I will take the subservient position and give you the primary place of importance. I'll place your needs above my own, and again Jesus is speaking to those who are following Him. You would think that the last thing that Jesus would have to command His own is that they be good to each other, and love one another, but it's amazing how often brothers and sisters in the Lord bite and devour one another only to be consumed by one another.

Meanwhile people are slipping off the planet with out Jesus and spending eternity in hell, that's the fact, but we get so *internally* focused that we're no longer *eternally* focused. and So there are all these breaches and schisms in the body, when Jesus said that people are going to know that we belong to Him by our *love* for one another, not our resentment and bitterness, and lack of forgiveness *towards* one another. But our flesh is such a powerful force, and the enemy of our souls loves nothing more than for us to get distracted from the desire of God's heart for the world, and he loves to divide the body of Christ, yet it's Jesus' heart to unite us in His love. We're to love one another, that's the command.

What's the standard of love? #2 Jesus says, "As I have loved you." How has Jesus loved you? We spoke a bit about this last week, He loves you unconditionally, not generically or theoretically, but personally and intimately, He responds to your needs, strengthens you, cares for you, watches out for you and has your eternal best interests in mind. and Now Jesus says, "That's the way I want you to love each other." Not with strings attached, not in a ½ hearted generic kinda way, if you see a brother in need guys and you have the capacity to meet it, do it. Gals same thing, be one who builds up the body, not tears it down with what you say and the questions you subject people to, care for each other, watch out for one another, keep people's eternal best interest in your heart towards them.

Which means don't just condone sin in their lives under the code word love, deal with it in a manner that reflects the heart of God, truthfully, tactfully, and tenderly. But Jesus wants us

to purpose on our hearts to make the choice to respond to our brothers and sisters in this way, we don't have to feel warm and fuzzy about someone to speak a kind, edifying, and encouraging word to them. Or to help them out in a practical way, or to encourage them to be careful to follow Christ if you see them begin to stray, or to extend forgiveness to them when you've been somehow hurt by them, yet those are attributes of loving someone. Paul tells us in the book of Eph, "...*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*" Eph 4:32 and Again in Col Ch 3, "*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*" Col 3:12-13

You see, there's that command again, it's not a matter of feeling a certain way, it's a matter of volition, me simply making the choice to be kind, and humble, patient and forgiving just as Christ forgave me, is kind *to* me, and patient *with* me, He's our standard of love towards one another. As He loves me, so I'm to love you, and as He loves you, so you're to love me, in humility, tenderly and compassionately. But all of these things can be summed up in what He speaks of in this next vs, how is it (ultimately) that Jesus has loved me? Self-sacrificingly.

Vs13

In essence Jesus is saying, "Love one another as I have loved you, and I have loved you by laying down My life for you, and there's no greater way that anyone *can* love you, then to lay down their *life* for you, and that's what I'm doing for you, now you lay down your lives for one another." The love with which has Jesus loved you is a self-denying, self sacrificing love. The bible says, "*Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*" Eph 5:1-2 and Over and over again the bible speaks of how Jesus loved us, and has given Himself sacrificially for us, and now Jesus says that's what I want you to do for one another. Die to self, take up your cross, lay down your life for your brothers and sisters, place their needs above your own, the cross wasn't *imposed upon* Jesus, it was *embraced by* Jesus. It demonstrated His love *towards* you as He laid down His life *for* you, and for me.

Earlier Jesus said that if we keep His commandments (plural) we'll abide in His love, but here He's narrowed it down to a single command, and if you walk in the reality of *this* command, (that is that we love one another as Christ has loved us) you'll fulfill every command of the word of God. The book of Romans tells us, "*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*" Rom 13:8 and Again, "*Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*" Rom 13:10

You see love doesn't seek to wrong someone, or malign someone, or rip someone off, if you *love* them, you'll fulfill the principles and the precepts of the word of God *towards* them. Not only will you do right by them, but you'll be willing to forgive when they do wrong by you,

the bible tells us, “*And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’*” 1 Peter 4:8

Can you imagine what would happen if everything you’ve had to confess before God He sounded out on a global loud speaker? We’d shrivel up and die. Think of the vile, and wicked notions you’ve had to repent of, and seek forgiveness for, and confess in humility to Him, and yet He’s kept it covered, because He loves you, and seeks your well being, not your destruction and demise. Someone once said, “If we try to cover it, then God will expose it, but if we expose it (that is before God) then God will cover it.” It’s not in His heart to embarrass you and belittle you, but you forgive you, and restore you, that’s how we’re to love one another. He has every right to expose us, we’ve violated Him time and time again, but He covers us, His love is self-sacrificing. Perhaps you feel as though you would be vindicated in letting everyone know just what that guy did to you, or just how that gal violated you, but that’s not love, that’s not self-sacrificing. This is tough stuff, I know, we all go through it, but this is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* Gal 5:14

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. and In that single statement Jesus is making a mind boggling declaration, and that is that He is your friend, and He’s my friend. Jesus says, “I’m your friend, and I’m proving that by laying down *My life* for you.” Now,

Vs14

Again we take note of this word “If” here which speaks of choice, you don’t have to befriend Jesus, you have a choice as to whether or not you want to be His friend. Now He’s *your* friend, and He demonstrated that in that while we were still sinners He died for us, he laid down *His* life for *us*. The question that confronts us in this statement is, are we willing to lay down *our* lives for *Him*? Am I willing lay aside my wants in this life, die to my dreams of pursuing personal popularity, or doing all *my* desire, in order that I might lead my life in humble submission and obedience to Him? Am I willing to lay down my life for Him, give way to His word, allow His will to be assimilated into my life rather than my own? Because Jesus said if I’m not willing to submit to His command to my life, than I’m not His friend, what’s His command? That I love you, as He has loved me.

This is sort of along the lines of bearing fruit in that as we spoke before I can being doing good works, but that doesn’t make me godly, but if I’m growing in personal godliness, good works will be a reality in my life. It’s like good works don’t save you, but if you’re saved you’ll do good works. It’s like baptism being an outward demonstration of the inward

transformation, being baptized doesn't cleanse you, but if you're cleansed you'll desire to be baptized, and in like manner rigid legalism means nothing, yet we demonstrate that we're friends *of* Christ as we simply walk in obedience *to* Christ. One is legalism, the other is love, one is religion, the other is relationship, and that's what Jesus desires of us. That the obedience we walk in be out of the overflow of our love for God, that out of His demonstration of love *towards* us in laying down His life *for us*, we respond in laying down our lives for one another out of our love for Him. How do we show the world that we love Jesus Christ? By laying down our lives for one another, 1 John 3:16 says, "*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*"

Vs15

This isn't a business relationship that we've entered into with the Lord, employer/employee, it's a love relationship. The difference between a friend and a servant isn't diligence or the lack thereof; it's in having understanding or not having understanding. The friend is let in on the heart of the individual, the servant is just told what to do and they're not to ask questions. and We should keep this word friend in it's proper perspective, it's not really buddy, buddy, it's more the picture of being in the circle of the inner court of the King. You're given the insights and understandings of the King's heart, that those who aren't in that inner circle aren't. and So there's no conflict in Paul and James and Peter and the NT writers referring to themselves as bondservants of Jesus Christ yet Jesus calling us friends, if you're a friend of the King, you're still under His authority, and that's the picture we have here. I suppose the perfect picture of what a servant/friend of God looks like is found in the person of Abraham back in Gen 18.

vs16

Lest the disciples get the impression that they alone were in the plans of God, Christ now made clear that they had been granted their privileged position with a view to their declaring the message to others. They had been chosen, not with a view to their own pleasure or pride. Rather, Christ ordained (appointed) them with service in mind. Go . . . bring forth fruit. Previously the fruit meant love. Now it was to mean love in action, the heralding of the message of salvation and the winning of souls. (from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press) John 15:16
That there would be abiding fruit was a gracious promise in view of the disappointing results during Jesus' own ministry, with many professing an interest in him, only to leave him after a time. (from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press) John 15:7 if my teaching so abide with you as to control your thoughts and ideas, remain in you as your guide and inspiration, (from The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft) 1 John 5:14-15

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

