

# John 14:15-21

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, IPC. Let us pray. Lord, you are the living God. Speak to us today.

! Let us hear what only you have to say.! In Jesus' name, Amen. Jesus says, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Love and obey. These are a pair of words that we often associate with what we ought to do. We ought to love one another.

We ought to love God. And we ought to obey. We ought to obey or keep God's commandments.

We ought to obey authorities and parents and so on.

But there is no commandment in this passage, in the passage that we read in John 14. There are no commandments. Jesus is describing the disciples' action.

[ 1 : 05 ] This is what he tells them. He says, The disciples are going to know the Spirit and live with him. The disciples will see Christ even though the world does not.

They will live because Christ lives. They will comprehend the unity of God and his people. But there are no commandments.

And I think the focus of this passage is on love more than on commandments. It's on our love for God and God's love for us.

If you love me, that's the possibility. So what exactly then is required of a Christian when Christ says this?

If you love me. Christian morality is really comprised of two parts. Think of it as a floor and a ceiling. On the floor of Christian morality, on the sort of foundational level, we have things like a lot of the Ten Commandments, which we read in here often.

[ 2 : 10 ] Don't steal. Don't murder. Don't commit adultery. And so on. Yes, we will break these commandments sometimes in some ways.

But these are a foundational level of what we ought to do as Christians. But these also have a ceiling. What do I mean by a ceiling?

Well, don't commit adultery. That's the floor. Love your wife as Christ loved the church. That's the ceiling. Don't murder. That's the floor.

But as we know, Jesus says, I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be judged. Do not steal. Versus, blessed is he who is generous to the poor.

The rich young ruler comes to Jesus. And what does he say? What must I do? To obtain eternal life. Jesus says, well, you need to keep the commandments.

[ 3 : 14 ] And he says, I've kept all the commandments from my youth. There's one thing I require. Give up all you have and follow me. That is a ceiling.

And the same is true for loving God. We must love God with all our heart, all our mind, and all of our strength.

As he who called you is holy, says Peter, you also be holy in all of your conduct. Since it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy. In short, be as holy as God.

Love him with everything you are. That's not minimal Christian morality. Do you remember what happens at the end of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory?

Gene Wilder is sitting there with that usual kind of crazed look in his eye. And he's sitting across from the boy, Charlie Bucket. And they're in a sort of rocket ship or elevator sort of capsule thing.

[ 4 : 18 ] And then it starts to go up and up and up and up until it eventually breaks through the glass ceiling. And they somehow fly around looking at the town.

That's a wonderful picture of what we don't do as Christians. We don't blast through the ceiling of God's demands. Does anyone for more than maybe ten minutes have an intense affection for the Lord?

Is anyone ready to give up everything and follow him? Ready to put your life on the line for Christ? Maybe you are ready.

But most of us, most of the time, need to increase our love for God. We need more affection for Christ. We need courage to give up our own interests for the sake of his name.

This takes us back to Willy Wonka one more time. We're a little more like the fizzy lifting drink. Right? Charlie Bucket and his grandpa drink the fizzy lifting drink.

[ 5 : 29 ] And they start to float up to the top of the tunnel. And they start to burp the fizzy drink. And they start to slowly float back down.

Until finally they come to rest on the floor. Popping up once in a while, mainly floating down to the ground. We're just kind of content on the floor. But we do love Christ.

That's not what I'm saying. We do love Christ. And it's possible, maybe in some way, that the rich young ruler did keep the commandments from his youth. And it is true.

Christians love Jesus. You are not indifferent about Christ. But Jesus wants more of our love. He wants us to increase our love for him.

He wants us to love him with all of our heart and mind and strength. We're in John 14. If your Bibles aren't open, go ahead and find John 14.

[ 6 : 33 ] This occurs in what's called the Upper Room Discourse. It's John chapters 13 to 17. The Upper Room Discourse or the Farewell Discourse.

Now before this, Jesus has been going along on his ministry. And that portion concludes with him arriving into Jerusalem. And then he meets with his disciples. And they have this final lengthy meeting together.

And then after this section in chapter 18, it's basically Jesus' passion. His death and then his resurrection and reappearance to his followers. Our section, not chapter 14, but chapter 13, our section begins like this.

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

What is about to occur is in itself an expression of Christ's love. An expression of Christ's love for his disciples.

[ 7 : 40 ] And you know this story. He cleanses them physically. This is when he washes their feet. But he also cleanses them symbolically. After he washes their feet, they're sitting around the table.

And for some light dinner table conversation, he says, one of you will betray me. And Judas is exposed and Judas departs. The disciples are cleansed in this symbolic way.

And then comes the news from Jesus himself. I too must depart. I am leaving and where I am going, you cannot come, he says.

What do these men need now? Reassurance? Comfort? Comfort? Instruction about how this is all going to work without Jesus?

Jesus goes on to tell them, Believe in me. Remember that my words are authoritative. Ask anything in my name and it will be given.

[ 8 : 46 ] This is chapter 14. And then, in verse 15, If you love me, you will keep my commandments. This is us. It sounds like obedience will just happen.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Obedience will just happen so long as we love God. And I think we actually understand this connection pretty well.

And the connection is this. Love has great implications for how we behave. Love has great implications for how we behave. Take a mundane example.

If you love a sports team, West Ham United, for example, what do you do? I know very little about football, so I love just picking a random team.

I know for some of you, we'll make or break this. But West Ham United, for example, if you love them, what will you do? Well, you might say, I love West Ham, but I never watch a match.

[ 9 : 52 ] I never talk about them. I'm not getting a jersey, nothing with a logo. I don't read up on the latest news about the players. No.

No, you don't do that. If you love West Ham, you make sure that match night is free. You talk about the team the next morning at work. You might wear something with the logo, and you surely read the news about them.

If you love West Ham, you will do these things. Now, I often hear people say that we use the word love casually. Right?

I love pizza. I love my children. I love God. How can we use the same word for all of those things? There's a difference here, which I'll talk about, but there's also an important commonality. Love has great implications for how we behave. Love has great implications for how we behave. It's a natural connection, actually, to love and to obey.

[10:58] What is supernatural is to love God. The question is, how do we love him? How do we love him?

And that's what our passage is about. It's about love, and it tells us three things about it. How we love God, when we love God, and the implications of this love.

How we love God, when we love God, and the implications of this love. First, how do we love God? We love God by the power of the Holy Spirit, given by the Father, thanks to the Son.

Look at verse 15. If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever. The word here for helper probably means something just like that, someone who helps, a comforter, someone who comes alongside and supports.

In general, it's an associate. Now, it can mean something very particular. It can mean a sort of judicial advocate, in that kind of sense, and maybe there's an interesting illusion there, that the Spirit would advocate on our behalf, as in a court setting.

[12:16] But more immediately, the Spirit helps with something else. What does the Spirit help with? We're on verse 17 now.

Jesus calls this helper the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. All of this talk about believing in Jesus, about being reassured when he departs, about having an incredible connection with God.

Jesus says, I will be in my Father, you will be in me. We will be one. All this talk about asking for things in Jesus' name and receiving them, all of this is thanks to the Spirit of Truth.

That is how we love God, by the power of the Spirit given by the Father, thanks to the Son. The New Testament says that everything about you as a Christian is new.

[13:28] You have a new heart to feel. You have new eyes to see. New minds to think. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says, we have the mind of Christ.

This is new life. And this makes the church the church. The world does not call God Father or pray in Christ's name or read the Bible expecting to see God himself or know that this book is the way that God has spoken to me and to us.

That's the Spirit's gift of what we call illumination. That's how we know the Bible is God's word. It's a supernatural word and a supernatural act to recognize it. For the same reason the world does not love God because they have not received His Spirit.

However, if anyone is going to love God and anyone can say that again, if anyone is going to love God and anyone can love God, then it's going to be for the same reason.

If you love God, you have been given the help of the Holy Spirit. God has regenerated your heart and given you new life.

[14:53] How's that for help? How do we love God? By the power of the Spirit given by the Father thanks to the Son. When will we love God?

This is the second question. When will we love God? It's a bit of a strange question. It may sound strange, but Jesus does make a point of it. We will love God and particularly increase our love for God when we see the resurrected Christ.

Verse 19, Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

In that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. In these lines, I think Jesus is referring about his resurrection appearance.

I think he's referring to his resurrection appearance. In that day, I think that's the particular day for the disciples that they're expecting when they will know that he is in my Father.

[16:00] The general point is that we love God when we see Christ, especially the Christ of glory. That's the general point. When we see the Christ of glory, we will love God and love him more.

It had a more immediate meaning for the disciples, of course. Jesus was physically going to go away. You will not see me. You'll open your eyes. I will not be around. You'll come into my room. I will not be there.

But then you will see me. But for them and for us, a single principle holds. And that single principle is it is Christ first.

It is Christ first. In the same way that we love God when we have the Holy Spirit, so looking upon Christ increases that love for him.

I hope you're starting to see that everything about if you love me, you will keep my commandments begins with God. It begins with his love for himself within the persons of the Trinity and it begins with his love for us.

[17:13] We love God by the power of the Holy Spirit. We will love God when we see the glorified Christ. We will love him more when we look upon him. Third, what happens with this love?

What are the implications of this love? Now, we've got to look around the chapter a little bit for this. Verse 13. When we love God, God is glorified.

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. When we ask for things in Christ's name for his sake, because we love him by the power of the Holy Spirit, then God gets glory.

hallowed be thy name is what we pray. That is what we pray for and that is what we love for, that God will be glorified.

Second, verse 31. When we love God, the world will know more about God's love.

[18:27] Jesus says, I do as the Father has commanded me so that the world might know that I love the Father. Jesus' self-sacrifice displays in the greatest way possible that he loves the Father.

And that fact cannot leave people unaffected. The presentation of Christ's self-sacrifice moves with power into the world. And our love for God in the same way adds fuel to this fire.

Our response to the crucified and resurrected Christ as fuel to the fire of God's love so that the world might know about God's love.

Lastly, verse 21. He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

More love for God means more love from God. And more love from God means more love for God. Now you may be getting a little nervous, right?

[19:38] More love from God as if we love God more and he loves us, he loves us more. I don't think that's exactly what's going on. Perhaps it's something about the manifestation of God's love appears more clearly to us when we love God.

But in either case, the relationship is reciprocal. it's very clear that God loves us first. But we increase our love for God and we know more of God's love through that same process.

God is glorified when we love him. The world will know more about God's love as we love him. And our understanding of God's love itself will be increased as we love him.

The greatest type of love is the love that will die for the beloved. It says, I will give up my life so that you might have life.

This is where the different types of love become important, right? Love for pizza, for a football team, for children, and for God. I was at a dinner on Thursday night with some teenage boys and the boy sitting across from me was 17 years old.

[20:54] We were talking about how we get teenage boys to, you know, attend little events, get-togethers. Let's have a movie night. Why is no one coming to the movie night? Well, you need some food there, right?

And this is exactly what this guy said. I kid you not, these are his exact words. I'd do anything for three hours if there was pizza there. I'd do anything for three hours if there was pizza there.

But we don't die for pizza. He might do anything for three hours, but we don't die for pizza. We don't die for dominoes because we love pizza. We don't give up our own life for the sake of a football team.

But we would die for the people that we love. And Jesus dies for us because the Father loves us. and told Jesus this is what we're going to do for the world.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him might have everlasting life. you might think I can't love God.

[22:10] Of course you can't. But you tell God you want to love him and you ask him for the help of the Holy Spirit since that's the only way you can love him.

Let's pray.