

## Sermon – 16/04/2006 pm

### Love and Obey

Study Text: John 14:19-26

If you love someone you will try to please them. You will give them things you know they like, you will do things you know they like, and you will say things you know they like. In other words you will obey them, you will hear what they say when they tell you the things they like and the things they do not like. Because you love them you will listen and seek to please them. If you are always giving things and doing things that a person does not like it would indicate that you did not really love that person.

Speaking to his disciples on the night he was betrayed Jesus said *If you love me keep my commandments* (14:15). He went on to say *if anyone loves me he will keep my word* (14:23). He also put this in the negative – *he who does not love me does not keep my words* (14:24). The relationship between love and obedience is simple and direct.

### Manifestation of Jesus

When Jesus told his disciples he was going away their hearts were troubled. They did not understand what he meant. All their hopes regarding the Messiah were shattered. They were expecting Jesus to come out and reveal himself to the world as the mighty deliverer of Israel, his own holy people. But Jesus said he would reveal himself only to those who love him.

Judas (not Iscariot, but the brother of James – Acts 1:13) expressed dismay when Jesus said this. *Lord how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world he asked* (14:22). Jesus was only concerned for his disciples at this point in time. He knew it was through them that the gospel would be proclaimed to the world. Jesus was going to the Cross; he would rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. His work on this earth was coming to its climax and end.

Jesus was seeking to calm their troubled hearts. He was seeking to comfort his disciples, explaining that it was best for them that he goes away. He was going to prepare a place for them. He would send the Holy Spirit to comfort and help them in the days ahead. *I will not leave you as orphans* he told them – *I will come to you* (14:18).

What did Jesus mean *I will come to you* (or literally, ‘I am coming to you’)? D.A. Carson thinks he was referring to his resurrection, while J.C. Ryle thought he was referring to his second coming (*Parousia*). But the thrust of Jesus words at this time was upon ‘another Helper’, upon the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In 14:20 Jesus speaks about ‘you being in me and I in you’. He was not necessarily talking about a visible revelation. ‘That day’ (14:20) of course is interpreted in accordance with what is considered as Jesus ‘coming’. For some it is the resurrection, for others the Day of Judgment, but surely it is the day of Pentecost. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit would be given to the disciples to indwell them for ever.

Jesus goes on to say that *we*, i.e. he and his Father, *will come to him and make our home with him* (14:23). This could hardly refer to the days before Pentecost. Jesus was with them again in his resurrected body but what about the Father? Anyway this was only for a few days.

Moreover, to delay this coming of Jesus to the Parousia is not very meaningful in this context. At the *Parousia* Jesus said he will come and receive them, that *where I am there you may be also* (14:3). Believers will go to be with Jesus in his heavenly kingdom. God will come and dwell with men (Revelation 21:3), but here Jesus speaks about being 'in' his people. The context points to a more immediate 'coming' – *a little while longer* (14:19).

The profound mystery here is that when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell the people of God it is the same as the Father and the Son indwelling them. Just as *I and my Father are one*, so the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.

Just as it is heresy to deny the deity of Christ so it is to deny the deity of the person of the Holy Spirit. Let us not ignore the work of the Holy Spirit as outlined by Jesus here. Remember *if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he does not belong to Christ* (Romans 8:9). Neither let us focus upon the work of the Holy Spirit to the extent that we ignore the work of Jesus on the Cross and the Father who sent both God the Son and then God the Holy Spirit.

## Love and Obey

Jesus called upon his disciples to believe him and believe in him. He called upon them to know him. *If you had known me you would have known the Father also* (14:7). Now Jesus speaks about them loving him. He told them that he loved them, and that they should love one another (14:34). But now he refers to them loving him. The love of God precedes our love for him – *this is love not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (I John 4:10).

Love is the basis of the covenant relationship God makes with his people. *You shall love the Lord your God...this is the first and great commandment* said Jesus (Matthew 22:38). If God loved us and sent his only begotten Son to die for us, we ought to love God. How do we love God? How do we demonstrate our love for God? Do we bring him gifts to express our love? Do we sing his praises and tell him how much we love him?

Well, yes we do, but this is not the best or essential way to demonstrate our love for God. It is obedience he desires, obedience to his word. Singing praise all day and all night is futile if we do not obey him. Christians who focus only on 'praise and worship' and neglect the commands and words of Jesus are not in the end loving Jesus at all.

In my family whenever we asked our mother what she wanted for her birthday or for mother's day, do you know she said? She always said 'I just want loving and obedient children'. That is what Jesus wants above all else.

*If you love me keep my commandments* Jesus told his disciples. And again *if anyone loves me he will keep my word*. More than anything else, Jesus wants us to obey him. Obedience shows that we love him. *And he who loves me said Jesus will be loved by my Father and I will love him* (14:21).

What are the commands of Jesus? What is his word? The commandment to love one another is highlighted in this discourse (14:34, 15:12). But all that Jesus spoke is truth and as such must be heard and obeyed by his people. The word which he spoke was in fact the word of the Father (14:24), it was divine revelation. Remember how John refers to Jesus in the prologue – the Word become flesh.

That is why we call this the Holy Bible. It is all truth, given for our instruction in righteousness. There is no provision for us or anyone to pick and choose what they like and don't like in the Bible. Obedience is not optional for those who claim to love Jesus. It cannot be replaced praise, gifts or service.

*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.* Jesus came to give life to those who are dead in sin. His death is the means by which man can live. *Because I live you will live also* Jesus told his disciples (14:19). He may be referring to his resurrection here – because he will rise from the dead they will live – but the reference is probably not so specific.

Jesus does say that *a little while and the world will not see me no more but you will see me* (14:19); but was he simply speaking of physical sight? The resurrection appearances were not transforming for the disciples. They were going back to their fishing even after seeing the resurrected Jesus. It was at Pentecost that they were transformed. It was only after Pentecost that everything fell into place with regard to their understanding of who Jesus is and what he had accomplished on the Cross and in his resurrection.

Jesus promised to reveal himself not to the world but to those who love him. He would manifest himself not to physical eyes but to spiritual eyes. The disciples saw Jesus in a whole new light when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost. And they had the power to love and obey him when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in them. The Holy Spirit would teach them and guide them in all truth.

## **The Holy Spirit**

Another Helper Jesus promised them and that Helper was sent at Pentecost and is still sent to dwell in the heart of all who believe in Jesus. His presence is not only manifest by gifts of the Spirit, by spectacular gifts like speaking in tongues. His presence is manifest by obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit's work is to teach you all things, and to remind you of all that Jesus said (14:26). Later Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will not speak on his own, but only what he hears (16:13). If someone tells you that they have a new revelation from the Holy Spirit, could this be true? No, because the work of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of what Jesus said. The Holy Spirit gives gifts and empowers us to work and witness for the glory of God.

Are you listening to the Holy Spirit as he reminds you of Jesus' words and are you obeying this word, the word of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed (Ephesians 4:30). If you are not 'loving your neighbour', then you are doing just that, you are grieving the Holy Spirit. Will you strive in the power of the Holy Spirit to love your neighbour as Jesus loves you?

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