

SERMON

**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND
EVIDENCE OF HIS WORK**



SCRIPTURE READING

John 14:15-31 (ESV)



“15 ¶ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

17 even 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.”

John 14:15-31(ESV)



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“18 ¶ “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

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.

20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

John 14:15-31(ESV)



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“21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

22 “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?”

23 Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

John 14:15-31 (ESV)
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“24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

25 ¶ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

John 14:15-31 (ESV)



“27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

28 ¶ You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I

29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.”

John 14:15-31 (ESV)



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“30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me,

31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.” (Joh 14:30-31 ESV)

John 14:15-31 (ESV)



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THESE ARE THE LIVING WORDS OF GOD TO US

**THANK YOU JESUS FOR PROMISING US LIFE AND
TEACHING US HOW TO FOLLOW YOU**

AMEN



During today's sermon, we are going to focus on the fact that Jesus promised God would be with us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

In the few verses that we have just read, Jesus taught many things. As we saw in last week's sermon, we are assured we would not be left as orphans because he was going to send the Holy Spirit, a counsellor just like him, after his ascension to heaven.

Jesus lived in the love of God the Father. He lived as a human being to love God the Father. He did so by living a life of perfect obedience in his fleshly, human body. He did it in our place, paving the way for us, liberating us from the slavery of sin.

We will also focus on what it means to love Jesus by how we respond to him in obedience.

As God is working in our life through the Holy Spirit, we will consider the evidence of his work in the life of his followers.

Of course, as fallen human beings, we don't have it in ourselves to live the way Jesus wants us to live.

As fallen human beings, we are self focused. Without God, we are trapped in sin. We are trapped in the horizontal – meaning that we have human to human relationships. We exclude God thinking we are okay on our own. Our point of reference is the standard set by society, values that are anchored in the self. This is limiting because without the vertical relationship with God, we keep repeating the same mistakes over and over again. As Solomon said, there is nothing new under the sun. **“9 ¶ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us.” (Ec 1:9-10 ESV)**

Instead of looking to God, we focus only in our own ability to live up to high standards. We are created in the image of God so we have a desire for justice, for love, for mercy, etc... We try to live independently from God. Without God, we aim for these high ideals but we never reach them. Human history is proof of it.

This last week, I was listening to a minister talking about the crisis now happening in the USA following the tragic death of a black man, George Floyd, in the hands of the authority. This particular pastor talked about the fact that we should value other human beings whatever their skin colour. He talked about the fact that we should love one another – that we should treat one another as we would like to be treated. These are all good things but there was one element missing. He made no reference to the fact that first of all we need to admit our sinfulness and our need to turn to God in repentance.

As fallen human beings, we want to live and experience the good life - the qualities of love described in the New Testament. However, as we try to live up to these lofty and good ideals, in our society, there is little or no reference that our hearts need to be changed by God to be able to begin to live loving lives characterized by love for one another. We cannot attain these on our own.

What Jesus promised his disciples in the verses that we just read is that they would not be left alone but that they would be given the Holy Spirit and a “new life” to guide them in the truth after his ascension to God’s throne.

HOW CAN WE LOVE GOD?



“We love because he first loved us.” (1Jo 4:19 ESV)
We can only love God because God loved us first.

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, the apostle Paul wrote.

Most of us are very familiar with the Scripture found in John 3:16-17. **“16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”** (Joh 3:16-17 ESV)

The love that Jesus is talking about in these verses is rooted in God himself. We can only love God because God first loved us.

Disciple of Jesus, Ambrose of Milan who lived between 339 and 397 captured it beautifully. (next slide)

**O God, teach me to seek You, and reveal Yourself to me
when I seek You,
For I cannot seek You unless You first teach me,
nor find You unless You first reveal Yourself to me.
Let me seek You in longing, and long for You in seeking.
Let me find You in love, and love You in finding.**

(Ambrose of Milan, 339-397)

From: REACHING OUT WITHOUT DUMBING DOWN, A
Theology of Worship for This Urgent Time, page 105.



In that passage of Scripture, Jesus emphasized the fact again in verse 21 the evidence that we love Jesus is that we have his commandments and we keep them. As we respond and participate in his love in obedience, Jesus makes a wonderful promise that we will be loved by God the Father and that Jesus will manifest himself to us through the Holy Spirit.

For emphasis, Jesus repeats in different words in verse 23. He adds a very important promise that if we love him and keep his word, we will be loved by God the Father and both God the Father and Jesus will make their home in that person. **“Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (Joh 14:23 ESV)**

God being one cannot be divided. He is one in three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When one is involved, the whole God is involved!

HOW NOT TO LOVE JESUS



“Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.” (Joh 14:24 ESV)



We are here worshiping God today because we love Jesus.

We know and acknowledge many things among which are the following:

- Jesus was sent to the earth by God the Father.
- Jesus is love because he is both God and fully human.
- He loves us to the point of sacrificing his life to give us life.
- We do not want to dismiss what he tells us.
- We also admit, acknowledge and accept that he died for us not because we were good but because we were sinners.
- We are made righteous not by our own efforts but because righteousness is a gift received from Jesus!
- Being sinners, we were dead in our sins. Jesus came to give us life, real life, eternal

life. Jesus is life therefore he gave us himself.

- Having a new life, we want to stop being slaves to sin and as the apostle Paul said, we want to be slaves of righteousness because we have been freed from the slavery of sin.

In our North American society, we have difficulty accepting that we are sinners and in need of a Saviour. In fact, the term sinner is offensive. I suppose that is true in any society.

In our North American society, "The new generation seeks self-fulfillment, autonomy, a high degree of independence, and the possibility fully to actualize one's potential", from REACHING OUT WITHOUT DUMBING DOWN, A Theology of Worship for This Urgent Time, by Marva J Dawn, page 83.

WE LIVE IN A TROUBLED WORLD



We can be realistic about the type of world we live in yet we do not despair. We cannot deny the suffering that we see all around us. We cannot deny the untold sufferings created by this invisible virus, COVID-19, which is affecting and killing thousands of people across our globe.

We cannot deny the pain and suffering caused by humanity trying to live independently from God. There is so much suffering that it is hard to fathom or understand. God is certainly not indifferent to such goings-on. While he was on the earth, he felt anger and grief at the hardness of the human heart as the religious leaders were watching whether he would heal a man with a withered hand. **“And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.” (Mr 3:5 ESV)**

I am quite certain when we see scenes of the human hardness we witness on the news from all kinds of sources. We hear insults, the demeaning of other human beings, the brutality of force of all sides from looting, killings, abuse of power at all levels, etc...

Yet God sees all of this. In this trouble world, he continues to provide hope for humanity.

He boldly reveals that’s one day, the nations will turn to him in repentance. They will

come to worship him.

He boldly proclaims that one day he will make his headquarters on earth and he will be the light of all men, all men who come to faith in Jesus. We read in many places that it will not only just the few but the many.

“For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.” (Ro 5:19 ESV)

With God in us, there will be evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. What is that evidence?

Last week, we saw that on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples and in the disciples powerful changes were made in people’s lives.

The apostles preached boldly about Jesus. When the apostle Peter talked about the life of Jesus and what he had done for them, 3000 people converted on that day. The church continued to grow afterwards.

BUT YET WE HAVE HOPE!

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (Joh 14:27 ESV)



We can be a realistic about the type of world we live in yet we do not despair.

We cannot deny the suffering that we see all around us. We cannot deny the untold sufferings created by this invisible virus, COVID-19, which is affecting and killing thousands of people across our globe.

We cannot deny the pain and suffering caused by humanity

MARKS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN



“9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.”

Romans 12



“12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

ROMANS 12



15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

“16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited.

17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”

ROMANS 12



“18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

ROMANS 12



“20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Ro 12:20-21 ESV)



What we have just read is a reflection of the mind of Jesus of whose disciples we are.

It begins with the sentence, **“Let love genuine or sincere”**. What follows in the other verses is a description of this genuine, sincere love.

Christian love is more than a feeling. It begins that we are to abhor what is evil. Christian love is more than a feeling; it leads to a violent hatred of evil and a tenacious attachment to what is good *Moo, Douglas J.. Romans (The NIV Application Commentary Book 6) (p. 409). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. “*

Then we are to love one another with brotherly affection. The NIV translates it as we are to be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

The **New Revised Standard Version** says that we are to love one another with mutual affection and that we are to outdo one another in showing honour. This means that we are to show tenderness and affection to another.

Again this is rooted in God. God the Father glorifies the Son. The Son honours and

glorifies the Father by doing his will and the Holy Spirit glorifies both the Father and the Son by elevating Jesus and bringing to us the truth found in Jesus.

Then he tells us in **verse 11** not to be slothful in zeal but to be fervent in spirit.

Zeal can be harmful if misapplied. So immediately he tells us that the zeal, this fervency is in service of the Lord.

The apostle Paul then tells us the attitude we are to have when faced with the challenges of this world and the trials of life.

1 – The apostle Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit, **tells us to rejoice in the hope** that we have. Our hope lies in Jesus and his promises point us beyond this present world.

2 – He tells us **to be patient in tribulation** or trials. When we go through hard times, whatever they may be, it is so easy to become impatient and to lose hope. He tells us to lift our eyes and to stay the course. When tribulations and suffering come, some leave the faith. Why would God permit such things? From the onset, we have been told the following: **“21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” (Ac 14:21-22 ESV)**

As **Psalm 46:10** tells us, **“Be still, and know that I am God.”**

Psalm 37:7 tells us, **“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him”;**

3 – To be constant in prayer. During those times of difficulties, it’s very important that we continue praying to our great God to have the strength to go through whatever we’re going through whether it be health, finances, family difficulties, relationship difficulties, difficulties within the church or whatever it may be. When we go through hard times, it is so difficult sometimes to keep praying. We must remember the promise of Jesus that he will never leave us or forsake us.

4- And then he tells us not to be self focused **but to contribute to the needs of the saints** and **to seek to show hospitality.**

Our context today is different than the social conditions of the first century. However, the same principles apply. We can pray that God will show us ways that we can contribute to the needs of others whatever they may be and be welcoming.

Then Paul tells us how to be with people who are not yet part of the church and who may cause us problems.

1 – We are to bless those who persecute us. We are to bless and not to curse them. This squarely goes against our natural human nature. There is a battle to bring our thoughts in obedience to Jesus Christ. This is now what we want to do when left with our raw human nature. What Paul is instructing is a supernatural response empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We willingly participate.

I am reminded of the story of Corrie Ten Boom when she was incarcerated in a German concentration camp during the Second World War. Because the authorities were mistreating fellow Jews, she began to become bitter and began to have hate in her heart. Her sister, who died at the hands of the Germans persecutors, reminded Corie of the attitude Jesus wants us to have “to bless those who persecute us and to pray for them”. She repented and changed her attitude. She stopped feeding the root of bitterness which was growing in her heart.

For us,

- It apply to political leaders of various stripes with whom we do not agree.
- It may be neighbours.
- It may be fellow workers.
- It may be members of our family - immediate or distant, etc...

What is our attitude?

- It may be even members of the church with whom we may have disagreements. Once, I had to deal with a situation where there was animosity between church members over firewood. During the sermon, I gave a general principle of how to be with brothers and sisters inside the church. Afterwards, one member came to me and said, "How did you know we were having this problem?". I had no idea. It was the Holy Spirit convincing this person to let go of the bitterness that was building up over some kind of misunderstanding with another member. The person was able to let it go.
- Do we pray for them and hope that God will give them wisdom or do we denigrate them and hope the worse for them?

There are so many examples we could use that really hit close to home.

Then he tells us in verse 15 to share in the feelings of those who rejoice and to be compassionate towards those who weep and are troubled.

In the church, we are to **strive to live in harmony with one another. We are not to be**

contentious or arrogant. We are to have a willingness to associate with all the brothers and sisters God has called into his family.

We are not to be wise in our own eyes. It is so easy to fall in the trap of thinking that we know better than anyone else. We have been called to walk humbly with the Lord. We always need to realize that wisdom comes from God. Jesus, we are told, is our Wisdom. We also know that Christ died for us and has forgiven us. This is for good reasons. We are sinners made saints in continuous need of God's grace.

We are not to repay evil for evil but to give thought to what is honourable.

In other words, we are to take the high road, as one of our modern sayings says. We are not to go tit for tat. If you hurt me, I'm going to hurt you more or just as much to show you how much you hurt me. This is not the highroad. This would not be how the Holy Spirit leads us.

If possible, so far as it depends on us, we are to live peacefully with all.

In other words, we are not to be troublemakers. This does not mean that to live in peace we are to sacrifice honouring God and loving God first. Putting God first in our life is not always accepted by others. Given that context, as much as we can, we are to make every effort to live at peace with other people yet never sacrificing our relationship with God. God being first in our life can and does bring trouble at times.

“11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Mt 5:11-12 ESV)

Sometimes, other people do not want to make peace for whatever reason. They may want to stay away from us and not to have anything to do with us. When that happens, we are to apply what we are being taught in this section of Scripture.

We are never to avenge ourselves but we are to leave the wrath to God for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord. ‘

During those difficult moments, we are not to take things in hand and get back to others to hurt them. We are again to take the high road and put the whole situation in the hands of our loving God. He is more than able to deal with the situation in a loving, kind and corrective way.

We are to do the opposite of vengeance. **“To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap**

burning coals on his head.”” (Ro 12:20 ESV)

He then finishes with the guiding principles that **we are not to be overcome by evil but that we are to overcome evil with good’.**

Again all of this is rooted in Jesus, in God. He did the utmost by dying on the cross. He did good for all of us and all humanity because we were doomed because of sin to have no eternal life. He died on our behalf to give us eternal life and to restore our lost relationship with him.

A changed life, living in the faith that leads to obedience, is evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the disciples of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is gradually changing our lives so that we can be transformed in the likeness of Jesus! Let us ask for Jesus to be our Wisdom as we serve Him.

Let us pray

**“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with
your spirit, brothers. Amen.” (Ga 6:18 ESV)**

BENEDICTION



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