

## Sunday Morning Message

January 15, 2022

Title – *Preparing the Disciples*

Text – John 15:12 - 27

Congregational Reading – John 15:12 - 17

### Introduction

As Jesus is drawing nearer to the Cross, He spends a great deal of time preparing His disciples for what lies ahead for them. After Christ ascends into Heaven, the disciples will be on their own, without Him. But, as we will be reminded in this passage, they will not be completely alone, because He promises that He will send them the Holy Spirit of God to help them. The principles and promises that He gives these disciples here and in the remaining discourses in this Book are guiding principles that will help us as we live and serve the Lord in these last days.

#### I. Christ's Commandment to Love One Another (vs. 12 – 17)

Here Jesus explains to the disciples the importance of loving each other. They already were taught that they were to love God and their neighbors:

*"37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)*

They were also taught to love their enemies:

*"43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48)*

Here, Jesus tells them that their needs to be a special love that the disciples have toward each other. They needed to stick together, take care of each other's needs, and forgive one another when they are wronged.

Our love for each other is rooted in our love for Christ. It all begins there. If we truly love Christ, we will love one another.

## Illustration

Legend has it that a wealthy merchant traveling through the Mediterranean world looking for the distinguished Pharisee, Paul, encountered Timothy, who arranged a visit. Paul was, at the time, a prisoner in Rome. Stepping inside the cell, the merchant was surprised to find a rather old man, physically frail, but whose serenity and magnetism challenged the visitor. They talked for hours. Finally the merchant left with Paul's blessing. Outside the prison, the concerned man inquired, "What is the secret of this man's power? I have never seen anything like it before."

"Did you not guess?" replied Timothy. "Paul is in love." The merchant looked bewildered. "In love?"

"Yes," the missionary answered, "Paul is in love with Jesus Christ."

The merchant looked even more bewildered. "Is that all?" Smiling, Timothy replied, "That is everything."<sup>1</sup>

### A. Loving Each Other Is Not Optional (v. 12, 17)

*"12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ... 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another."* (John 15:12, 17)

Loving each other is commanded. It's not something that we do only when we are feeling good, or when we are having good days.

### B. This Love Was Exemplified by Christ (v. 12b)

*"13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13)

Love originated with God:

*"19 We love him, because he first loved us."* (1 John 4:19)

The Scriptures tell us that God is love:

---

<sup>1</sup> G. Curtis Jones, *1000 Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1986), 225.

*"8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ... 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:8, 16)*

This is a principle that He taught earlier in this Book.

*"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34-35)*

It is the sacrificial love that He demonstrated for us by coming to this earth and dying for our sins.

*"(8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)*

It is the same love that will show the rest of the world that our faith is genuine. People will know that we are truly disciples of Christ by the love that we demonstrate for each other.

### C. This kind of Love Demonstrates Our Fellowship and Friendship with Christ

*"14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:14-15)*

If we obey Christ, especially in this area of loving each other, we are demonstrating friendship with Him. We are not servants who are beaten into submission. We are loving children and dear friends to the Lord. We serve Him out of love for Him, not out of fear for what will happen if we do not obey Him. He loves us. He died for us, and He asks that we love each other and look out for each other; to genuinely care for each other's welfare.

Some sixty years after Christ dies and ascends back into Heaven, the last remaining Apostle, John, will remind us of this very important principle:

*"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that*

*darkness hath blinded his eyes."* (1 John 2:7-11)

This is a common theme in 1 John – John will remind us again and again to love one another. (3:11; 3:23; 4:7; 4:11; 4:12; also 2 John – v. 5)

Peter also wrote about this principle:

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:" (1 Peter 1:22)

We may have a difficult time liking each other at times, but if the Holy Spirit of God is in you, He will be pushing you to get along with each other, and to act in love toward each other.

How do we demonstrate love for each other:

1. By Sacrificing and Meeting Each Other's Needs

*"16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"* (1 John 3:16-17)

2. By Praying for Each Other

3. By Speaking the Truth in Love

4. By Being a Peacemaker

5. By Forgiving One Another

6. By Being Willing to Overlook Each Other's Quirks

These are just a few examples. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you in how you can be more like Christ in the love that you demonstrate for your brothers and sisters.

#### **D. It Is Impossible to Bear Fruit Without Loving Each Other**

*"16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."* (John 15:16)

#### **II. Christ's Caution Regarding the World (vs. 18 – 25)**

*"18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen*

*you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." (John 15:18-25)*

If you belong to Christ, the world is going to hate you. That does not mean that every lost human being on the planet is going to hate you, but it does mean that this world system will hate what and Who you stand for. The world hated Christ and crucified Him; the world will hate you also.

This world is controlled by Satan who has them blinded to the truth:

*"3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)*

Christian, the sooner that we realize that this world is not our friend, the sooner we will be able to protect ourselves from what the world will ultimately do to us.

John later wrote:

*"15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17)*

We are to love the people of the world and desire to see them saved and come to the knowledge of the truth about Christ, but we are not supposed to love the humanistic and atheistic philosophies of this world. This world is anti-God, at least they are "anti" the God of the Bible. They are not opposed to a god that they can control and manipulate according to their whims – that is the very definition of humanism. But, they are very much opposed to a God that is going to expose their evil deeds and hold them accountable.

*"18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned*

*already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*

(John 3:18-21)

Church, this world is not our home, we are truly just passing through.

Jesus prayed to His Father regarding this very principle:

*"13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

(John 17:13-21)

### III. Christ's Coming Comforter (vs. 26 – 27)

*"26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."* (John 15:26-27 KJV)

Jesus reminds them here, which He does often in the latter part of this Book that after He leaves the earth, He will send them the Holy Spirit who will encourage them and guide them.

*"16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ... 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* (John 14:16, 26)

*"7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin,*

*because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."*

(John 16:7-15)

You and I, as believers, are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. He lives within us if we are saved. We have God inside of us. He lets us know when we get it wrong, and He shows us how to do it right. He equips us for ministry, and He gives us the miraculous ability to obey God and to love each other.

## Conclusion

As Jesus prepared these disciples for life on earth without His physical presence, let His words here remind us:

1. We are to love each other. We cannot do the Christian life the way God wants us to without loving one other. This Christian life is a "one another" life:

*"24 And let us consider **one another** to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting **one another**: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* (Hebrews 10:24-25)

2. We also need to keep our distance from this world and its increasing movement away from God.
3. The only way that we can love each other and distance ourselves from this world system is by recognizing and obeying the Spirit of God Who lives within us and the Word of God, which was written by the Spirit of God:

*"15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."* (2 Timothy 3:15-17)