

John 14:15-21
"Real Love"

There is no word of greater importance than the word love when it comes to God, when it comes to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is most likely the most common word in the Christian vernacular. It is used quite often in our conversations. In its use we are often the object of love rather than the Triune God. We use it to encourage one another, to uplift one another, to remind one another, sometimes to challenge one another. We throw this word around at each other, believer and nonbeliever alike, very casually and liberally. So much so, it has become a cliché among some many other clichés. I believe we have devalued this critical word, this monumental word and underestimated its significance and necessity in the life of the believer. So, how are we, disciples of Christ, to properly understand this word? What is its meaning and implication in the life of the believer? How do we know if we have a real love, an authentic love for Jesus Christ? I'm glad you asked. Drawing from the text I want to provide three responses to these questions.

First, to love Jesus is obey his word. V15 Those who love Jesus hold him in the highest esteem. And the thing or person you hold in highest esteem you will desire to please; you will serve. It is necessary to note that the Greek word here is agapaō and it involves the idea of affectionate reverence for, prompt obedience to Jesus Christ. Church, love is more than a feeling. It is not an emotion that comes and goes. Love is actionable. It sways the will of a man/woman to obey the word of God/Jesus

Christ above all else. Do we love Jesus? The answer to that question is found in this question, “Do we obey him?”. To love Jesus is to keep his commandments; to keep his commandments is to love him.

1 John 5:3 “Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.”

Luke 6:46-49 ⁴⁶ “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. ⁴⁸ It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. ⁴⁹ But anyone who hears and doesn’t obey is like a person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins.”

Second, love of Jesus is the precondition to our receiving the Holy Spirit. **V16** What Jesus is saying is not an if-then scenario. Jesus is not waiting to see if we will follow. Those who love him follow; they will obey because they have his Holy Spirit. A literally reading of the text sounds like this, “if you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you”. It is extremely important that we understand that the Holy Spirit is liken unto Jesus Christ. That is, he is as much God as God the Father and God the Son. He is always physically present with the disciple. Teaching us, comforting us, guiding us, encouraging us, enabling us, appealing to God on our behalf, and keeping us until the day of redemption. There is no church apart from the power

and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. There is no obedience apart from the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Do you have the Holy? The answer to that question is found in this question, “Do you love him?”. And the answer to that question is found in this question, “Do you obey his commandments?”.

Romans 8:26 “²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

Gal 5:16 “So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.”

Eph 1:13-14 “¹³ And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴ The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”

Acts 1:8 “⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Finally, love of Jesus results in our receiving the love of the Father. V21 Jesus is clear, he does not mince words, does not speak in a parable. He states those who love me are loved by God and those loved by God, he loves and makes himself known to them. This truth is foundational and, in our culture, extremely controversial, but nonetheless true. Those who love the Son are loved by the Father. There is no love of God apart from love of

God's Son. Are you loved by God? The answer to this question is found in this question, "Do you love his Son, Jesus?". And the answer to that question is found in this question, "Do you obey the Son's commandments?". And all these questions are preceded by the ultimately question, "Do you believe in him?". **John 3:16.** If the answer is yes, then the answer to all these questions is yes. If no, there is still time. As a matter of fact, no better time than right now. Real love. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen