

If ye love me (Quality Good)

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[0 : 0 0] ... Trusting in the help of God, shall we consider together verses you find in John, the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verses 15 to 17.

John, chapter 14, verses 15 to 17. If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.

Because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I'm sure you all know the circumstances in which the Lord spoke these words.

It was this last occasion that he met with his disciples before the crucifixion, just after Judas had gone out into the darkness, just after the Lord had made it quite clear as to the way in which he was to die.

[1 : 3 5] And it is a chapter, this chapter 14, in which the Lord is seeking to comfort and to encourage the hearts of his disciples. Let not your heart be troubled.

Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In this chapter, I believe, we have some of those very intimate instructions given by the Lord to his disciples to encourage them and to strengthen them regarding the future.

He knew that upon their shoulders would come the responsibility of preaching and teaching and guiding the early church. He knew that many of them would suffer greatly for his own sake and because of the gospel.

And he is concerned then in the intimacy of this last supper with them to encourage and to comfort and to strengthen them.

I felt about this service this morning that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to do just that. Jesus has gone into the glory of heaven, but he has fulfilled this promise.

[2 : 4 7] He has prayed the Father, and the Father has given to his church and to every believer another comforter. And it was my hope and prayer that this morning our meeting together would be for the encouragement and comfort, not only of Betty and Robert, but for all of you.

All of you who are believers, and indeed that it might be a comfort and an encouragement to some who may not yet be believers. For God can work very quickly and powerfully in people's lives to make them deeply feel that they need comfort and help.

So then, coming to these verses, If ye love me, keep my commandments. Now, surely that is a principle that the Lord lays down not only for the eleven who were gathered round him at this time.

I believe it is a principle, like so many others in these chapters, which are applicable to the whole church. When Jesus spoke to these disciples, he was speaking to, as it were, the very beginning of the church.

The church in embryo. The church in its earliest infancy. And from this gathering of men around the Saviour, there would grow that vast number of men and women in all nations who would know and follow, love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

- [4 : 25] So here we have what I believe to be an abiding principle for every believer. An abiding command of Jesus Christ for every believer.
- If ye love me, keep my commandments. Now, Jesus wasn't questioning their feeling for him. The word if, in this verse, is not a word which arouses any question at all.
- It is more a word that is used by way of argument. Not just mere argument, but by way of argument and persuasion.
- If ye love me, and of course the Lord was surely saying, I know that you do love me. Since you love me, then keep my commandments.
- Now, that is the sense of this verse. It's not that the Lord is looking at his disciples and saying, Now, it may be that some of you don't love me. No, that was never suggested.
- [5 : 32] Well, you can see that in the previous verse, can't you? If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. Now, the Lord wasn't suggesting that they would never ask anything in his name, was he?
- He knew very well that they would do so. So, it's really a word of encouragement, as well as a word of argument and persuasion. If you do ask anything in my name, and I'm sure that you will ask many things in my name, then I will do it.
- Again, that is the sense of the previous verse. So, there's no question about the love in the hearts of these disciples.
- But, it is true, isn't it, that there would be a question in their hearts later on, as to the depth, or strength, or character of that love.
- You remember that it wasn't long before they all forsook him and fled. It wasn't long before they were following him afar off. It wasn't long before Peter was denying him with oaths and curses.
- [6 : 40] It wasn't long before their hearts were filled with that dark sorrow, as they saw their master crucified. And two of them on the Emmaus road were filled with such deep sorrow, that they simply could not believe.
- They were fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets and all that Christ himself had told them. Now, there were things then that would happen in their lives.
- There would be things that they would do, sins that they would be guilty of, that may well raise a question in their minds about whether they really did love the Lord. So, the first point I want to make this morning is this.
- Very simply, that love is to be demonstrated, and in the demonstration of that love, love will be strengthened. Now, that's a very simple thought.
- I hope you can carry that away with you. Love to Jesus Christ is to be demonstrated. And in the demonstrating of that love to Jesus Christ, love will be strengthened.
- [7 : 49] Now, it was that particularly that seemed on my heart. In fact, since last Lord's Day, you remember that I read this chapter in the morning, last Sunday. And as I read it through, these verses seemed to seize upon my mind immediately.
- And I felt straight away that I knew what I should have to preach from this morning. If ye love me, keep my commandments. Now, that wasn't the reason why I read the chapter last week.
- But that was how these verses came into my own mind and heart a week ago. So, as I thought about them, it came to me like this.
- Here are two dear friends who are going to confess publicly their faith in Jesus. You know as well as I do that they have had the fear of the Lord in their hearts for a long time.

But there have been things which have stumbled them and hindered them. And they have had fears and doubts. And they have been conscious of their failure and of their sin. And really, it has not been at all an easy matter to face.

[8 : 57] Now, I wanted to encourage them, as God may help me, in this simple way. by saying that love is to be demonstrated and in the demonstration of love it will be strengthened.

I wanted them to know, without any shadow of a doubt, that this is the Saviour's command to them. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

It is the Saviour's command to everyone, however weak their faith may be, and however poverty-stricken they may feel their love to be.

Now, I'm sure, and I've said this many times, but I'm sure it's true, that for real believers, the question of love to Jesus Christ is often a real question.

Do I love the Lord or no? Now, do you? Let's ask the question of ourselves this morning.

[10 : 00] Do I love the Lord? Do I really love the Lord? Now, some will say yes, unhesitatingly.

Thank God that you can. And I'm not questioning at all the sincerity of your answer. I would go on to encourage you and comfort you and say, the more that love is demonstrated, the more openly and plainly and publicly you show that love, the more it will be strengthened.

Others will say, I feel I do love the Lord, but I'm very troubled because my love seems so very weak. to you, I've got one answer, and that is, that the more your love is demonstrated, the more you will know that you do love him.

In the keeping of his commandments, I believe, the stronger you will feel your love to him to be. But some may have come here this morning saying, when I look at my own heart, as far as I can see it, I really dare not say that there is anything in my heart that merits being described as love.

I feel that my heart is very cold and distant and careless. I am sad because so many other things seem to be at the centre of my affections, and I really dare not say this morning that I love the Lord.

[11 : 39] Well, let me press the question a little further. Would you dare to say that you do not love the Lord? I mean openly and publicly to stand up and say, I do not in any way at all love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Would you say that? You see, I think so many are hindered because they will not face that kind of consequence.

They will not put that kind of question to themselves. And the enemy of our souls wants us to go on in our lives being confused and bewildered about our spiritual feelings.

The enemy is very happy if we go on saying, well, I do not really know where I am, I do not really know what I feel, and so on. If you love me, keep my commandments.

Now, if it is still a question, if you are still perplexed and troubled, but you say, no, I certainly cannot stand up and say that I do not love the Lord at all, well, then I say this to you.

[12 : 53] Put that to the test which you already have in your heart. I mean, what you have toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Put it to the test.

if you love me, keep my commandments. Begin today, however simple it may be, however plain the commandment may be, begin today by keeping that commandment which you see in your own heart to be the first commandment that Jesus is impressing upon your conscience.

and I believe that in that way you will learn to love. Let me use a simple illustration.

A young man and a young woman are attracted toward each other. Now, some people fall in love suddenly and very deeply, don't they?

We call it love at first sight and there's never any question about the matter from that moment onwards. Now, I don't question the reality of that experience. How could I?

[14 : 02] There have been very many happy marriages that began like that. But there have also been very many happy marriages that didn't begin like that. There have been very many happy marriages that have begun amidst a whole fog of confusion.

uncertainty. And uncertainty. And as people have looked into their own hearts and questioned the condition of their own heart, well, there have been many uncertainties and people have said, well, do I really love him?

And he's been saying, well, is my love real and genuine? Is it the sort of love that will last? Is it the kind of love that can endure through years of married life and bear the strains of home and family responsibility?

And you see, I find that more often it is the more deeply thoughtful and introspective people who are questioning themselves like that. Will I make a good wife?

Shall I be a loyal husband? And they're conscious, you see, of their own weaknesses and failures. And yet, they can't get away from it. There is a deep feeling.

[15 : 13] There is a feeling that seems to be drawing them together more and more. And there is a feeling that they really don't want to be parted. And if they're threatened with parting, even for a little while, they're very unhappy and sad about it and they want to be together again.

And so, gradually, in spite of all the questions and uncertainties, what happens? The love that God has given is demonstrated.

And it's demonstrated in little ways to begin with and then in more and more obvious ways as time goes by. Now, I believe that's a picture.

And it's a picture of what often happens in real spiritual experience. We may begin our spiritual lives in a great fog of confusion and uncertainty.

And yet, the beginning is really a work of the Spirit of God. Other people begin their spiritual lives in a sudden blaze, as it were, of the clearest light of day.

[16 : 18] But to others, there is much of darkness and confusion that they have to do battle with. But, the fact is that there, deep down within them, there is the love of Christ.

Deep within, God's Holy Spirit has begun that work. They have begun to hate their sin. They have begun to turn away from the world. They have begun truly to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in their need.

They have begun really to pray to Him as they feel that need. They have begun to ask Him not just for the everyday things, but for spiritual and eternal things.

They have begun to ask Him not just for a good job and a happy home, but they have begun to ask for the forgiveness of their sin. They have begun to ask for the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of the Word of God and the gift of eternal life.

These things they begin to ask for. If ye love me, keep my commandments. So there's the first point then.

[17 : 31] I've tried to explain it as simply as I can. That love demonstrated is love strengthened. Second of this morning, I want just to look with you at what we might call the recent commands of Jesus to these men in chapter 13 and verse 15.

Having girded himself with a towel and kneeled down and washed their feet in that way of humiliation, he says, I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

I have given you an example. What is the example? Why, friends, the example is not only humility but also service.

He has done the part of a servant. He has taken the place of the household slave for it was the household slave who did this task to wash visitors' feet.

Jesus has set us an example. Peter, in that first epistle, says he has left us an example that we should follow his steps.

[18 : 58] Now here is one of his commandments. Enforced by an example. I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

I tell you one thing that hinders people from keeping the commandments of Jesus Christ and that is pride. And it's not always pride that can be easily seen to be pride.

But it often is. Often is. People are far too concerned about other people's opinions. Now, that is a kind of pride, isn't it?

Pride can keep us from keeping his commandments. Some people have said to me, well, I'm afraid that if I'm baptised and I join the church, perhaps I shan't be able to endure in my Christian life.

Now, that is very often a genuine concern. But sometimes it can be pride. It can be just that they're concerned about people thinking well of them. Now, it's far wiser for us to be concerned about the commands of Jesus.

[20 : 20] Not about anything else at all. People's opinions or what might happen in the future or even our own weakness. His word, His word of command is to be supreme in our lives.

Keep my commandments. I have given you an example then. And of course that is true in a far more general sense than just that Jesus had washed the disciples' feet.

In the whole of his life he has given us an example and this morning in regard to baptism he has given us an example. Suffer it he says to John suffer it to be let it be that word is a very strong word it must be suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.

That is his example. The example of a man obeying his father's will. The example of a man keeping his father's commandments.

The example of a man marking out the pathway for his followers to tread. That is the righteousness of Jesus that he did everything that his father approved of.

[21 : 46] And you know very well that when he was baptised the very heaven was open. The Holy Spirit came down upon him in that bodily form as a dove and the father's voice was heard from heaven.

This is my beloved son hear ye him. Well he says I have left you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verse 34 of chapter 13. 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. You know friends we are not short of commandments to keep.

If Jesus said if ye love me keep my commandments we are not short of commandments to keep are we? And the commandments that we are given are commandments that are very extensive shall I put it this way they are very demanding commandments very demanding a new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another.

[23 : 15] What happens after people are baptised? What happened in the New Testament after people were baptised? they were added to the church.

The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Did he ever add to the church those who had not been baptised?

No he didn't. There is no such example. There is always this example that there were people who followed the Lord in his footsteps and then were added to the church.

Now what happened when they were added to the church? They were added to the church so that they could demonstrate their love one to another.

A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another. And God puts his people in the church in the local church in the community of believers in a place like this so that they can keep that commandment.

[24 : 35] Did you realise that? Those of us who are church members should take that thought very much to our hearts shouldn't we? This is referred to as a new commandment.

There is something very special in the way the Lord describes it. It's not that he is taking an Old Testament commandment and developing it. He is saying there is something very special about this.

It is a new commandment that ye love one another in that new community, in that new relationship, to demonstrate your love to me by loving one another.

other. Isn't that how we are to keep his commandments then? By loving one another in the fellowship of the church.

There is a third way and of course really it is involved in all that has happened in this time that the Lord Jesus spent with his disciples. Keeping his commandments mean that when we are baptised and we have been added to the church, we gather with believers round the Lord's table and we remember his commandment when he said this do in remembrance of me.

[25 : 54] That is why many of us will gather this afternoon God willing around this table to remember the Lord. And our concern then is to keep his commandments to demonstrate our love to each other for it is very much a time when we do that to demonstrate that spiritual relationship that we have.

But then in that particular way of expressing our devotion to the Lord Jesus we remember him. And you know there is something that links baptism with the Lord's Supper and that is the death of Jesus.

It very much links those two things together. The death of the Lord Jesus is here demonstrated to us in the water. Going down into the water being buried with him by baptism into his death.

And then resurrection is rising again and we rise again to newness of life. And that links baptism very closely to the Lord's Supper because in the Lord's Supper we see the broken body and the blood of Jesus poured out.

We remember him. We say in our baptism we want to be identified with him. We say in the Lord's Supper we want to go on identifying ourselves with him.

[27 : 25] We want everybody to know that he is the one we belong to. If you love me keep my commandments. well there is so much more I could say.

All I can do this morning is just give you a few thoughts to carry away. I want to go on to this second thought this morning. More personally now.

In our salvation which leads to baptism to the Lord's Supper. In that salvation which brings us immediately to keep his commandments as an expression of our love.

In that salvation we are to see nothing less than the glorious Trinity at work. Jesus said in verse 16 I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter.

Jesus praying the Father hearing the Holy Spirit coming. God blessing us. Now friends so it is all the way through and so it will be all the way through your life as a believer.

[28 : 41] This is why these verses are so comforting. Our salvation friends was not some kind of afterthought on God's part. It wasn't that God was looking down on the life of Robert and Betty and then after 20, 30, 40 years or more he says oh well I think it's time I did something for Robert and Betty.

Not at all like that. Not at all like that. No friends it's God that glorious eternal God having a purpose, having a determination even before the world began.

And what we see this morning is part of the outworking of that divine purpose. And the prayer of Jesus when he says I will pray the father and he shall give you another comforter.

That is the outworking of this eternal purpose of the eternal God. Now friends our salvation then is no afterthought on God's part but the outworking of that eternal divine purpose.

The trinity then. Each divine person working this great work so that we might know his saving love. And then lastly this morning in verse 17 the privilege of those who love the Lord and who demonstrate that love.

[30 : 11] The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive you will receive. Indeed believer you have received. Now the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it seeth him not neither knoweth him.

The unbelieving world is always saying well you know prove it prove it to me show me these things. But God by his spirit when he quickens a sinner gives that sinner the kind of sight that is necessary the inner spiritual sight and discernment and understanding so that you know God so that you know the Lord Jesus Christ so that you know the spirit's work within.

Ye know him. You do know him don't you? Well if you don't know what the Holy Spirit has done perhaps you should think about it this morning.

Why did you ever feel your sin and need? Why did you ever know that there was a saviour? Why did you ever pray to him for salvation? Why did you ever want him to forgive your sin?

Why did you ever look to the cross of Jesus for pardon? Why do you go on praying to him and looking to him and trusting in him? Why do you feel this morning your need of him?

[31 : 39] Why do you feel that the name of Jesus is above every name? Why do you look upon the Bible as a book apart from all other books? Why do you look upon his church as a very favoured people?

Ye know him. It's because ye know him. You couldn't go to the world and say, look I can show you where the Holy Spirit is. If you come with me I will show you the Holy Spirit.

But what you can do friends is this. You can say to an unbelieving world, look at my life. And you can say that this morning, look at my life.

I am willing to do this in obedience to Jesus' command and I'm doing it because the Holy Spirit has been at work in my life. You can't show the unbelieving world, the Holy Spirit, in any physical, visible form, but you can demonstrate your love to Jesus.

And that is the way in which the world will be reproved for its unbelief. They will have to admit then that he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

[32 : 57] You know in the early church there was one occasion when the power of the Holy Spirit was so great that no man durst join themselves to the church. They were afraid, but they were convinced, not because they saw the Holy Spirit in any physical way, but they saw God's work in the life of the church.

And when they see God's work in your life, they will be forced to this conclusion that there is some power at work in your life that is very obvious.

If you love me, keep my commandments, demonstrate that love, and all the world then will see that God dwells in you.

And you will have the comfort then of knowing that he shall be in you. For Jesus says, I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.

May God bless his word to us and encourage us all through those precious words of his and help us humbly to keep his commandments, as we hope to in this special and public way in a few moments.

[34 : 13] Amen. Shall we now sing together hymn number 427?

Jesus, and shall it ever be, a mortal man, ashamed, of thee, ashamed, of thee, whom angels praise, whose glories shine to endless days?

427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 427. 528.

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Christ's heartbreaking song is joyless stocking I have changed, O Jesus, that will praise.

[37 : 16] Honor my God, O heaven may bring. And when I first resist my shame, that my earth for me is made.

The strength of Jesus, that I may.

Where I were healed to all shall reign. The tears to fight, the love to pray.

What gifts to have, the soldiers say.

Here then, Lord, is my mercy great.

[38 : 44] Till the Lord must not say, O say. And the way is my glory be.

That Christ is all the shape of me.

The peace of Jesus, that I promise.

Take up my cross, the shameless might. There to be pain, his blood of God.

And in the peace, there is no. I will just explain, friends, that I shall speak to both Betty and then Robert.

[40 : 12] I shall then go down into the water. Betty will both baptize, and then Robert. And after the second baptism, if you would begin to see the hymn 667, Straight of Latter.

Straight of Latter. The hymn 667, after the second baptism. Yes, Sister Betty, after thinking about this occasion, and knowing how much it meant to you, and how many concerns and anxieties you had about this day, my mind went to a word in Hebrews 13, where we read, that your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Well, I'm sure that that's my prayer for you. That God will bless you with such a gracious assurance and promise. For I'm sure that as a believer, it is your possession.

It is what God has already given to you. The promise that he will never leave you, or forsake you. To Robert, there were verses in the 26th of Isaiah, which again seem to fasten on my mind, which I hope may be an encouragement to you.

[41 : 50] Verse 3, Verse 3, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Now I believe that is true.

I believe already you've begun to prove the truth of that, that in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. In which we are praying today for you, the whole church here will be, that God will so strengthen you through that precious word.

And then shall we go down to a moment. Okay, shall we go down to a moment? Let's pray.

My dear Sister Betty, upon your repentance toward God, and your confession of faith, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

[43 : 15] Amen. My dear brother Robert, upon your repentance toward God, and of your confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[47 : 29] Amen. as we part, we might go with a sense of the presence and blessing of our Lord with us.

Take Betty and Robert on their way, rejoicing. O Lord, how glad we should be when we see what great things our God has done.

May it then be a day of joy and thanksgiving for us all. But a joy and a thanksgiving mingle with our tears because we remember what it cost our Saviour to bring us to this place.

So Lord, we pray, seeking forgiveness for all that has been wrong and thy blessing upon all that has been according to thy holy will.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father and the communion and comfort of God the Holy Spirit our Comforter be with us forevermore.

[48 : 58] Amen. Amen.