

Sermon: What's Next with Your Jesus Relationship

Scripture: John 14:15-21

Sunday, August 4, 2019

Last Sunday we looked at Jesus' incredible promise that if you asked anything in His name, that He would give it". As you know every promise in the Bible comes with a condition, except if it's an unconditional covenant God is making. When it comes to a promises, God is saying, if you do this, then I will do this. And we often forget the condition and focus just on the promise. To the point where universalism is becoming more and more popular. God has respected us enough to give us a role in His plans. So if we pray as authorized users of the name of Jesus, knowing His will and having every desire to glorify the Father, then the promise is that those requests will be granted.

So if you look back at this section of teaching, Jesus has revealed things about himself, his heavenly Father, and the relationship they share. And he also talked about where his disciples come into this picture. In the versus that follow, Jesus is going to introduce to us the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. And associated with the Holy Spirit, there is a condition and a promise. That's what we are going to look at today. So lets dive in.

Our passage today begins with these words from Jesus, ¹⁵ *"If you love me, obey^[d] my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,^[e] who will never leave you."* The promise here is, Jesus' heavenly Father will give you another Advocate. The condition is that you have to obey the commands of Jesus. And there is one more thing, obeying Jesus is the consequence of loving Jesus. We need to unpack the meaning of all these things. What does it mean to love Jesus then, what does it mean to obey Jesus and who is this "other Advocate" that Jesus is referring to.

First things first. “If you love me you will obey my commandments”. Now I want to take a few minutes to meditate on these words. There is a fascinating similarity between these words with the way the famous 10 commandments were presented to the Jewish people. In both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy, the commands do not start Your Shall have no other God but Yahweh. It starts with “I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery” and then it flows into the list of 10 things God expects his people to do. You see throughout the Bible you see this beautiful correlation between what God has done and what he expects you to do. And God always acts first and then he expects us to respond to what God has done. And when we respond in obedience, we get the benefit of a further blessing. So in Jesus’ case we see the exact same pattern. In 1 John 4:19, Apostle John reminds us that “we love because he first loved us”. Jesus loved us first, and so we love him back. And when we love him back, he even tells us how to love him. By obeying His commandments. And when we do, we get a further blessing. I don’t know about you but this whole set up looks like God is just waiting to pour on his blessings on us every which way you look, if only we are willing to receive it. Don’t you think you?

Now you will ask, so what are Jesus’ commandments. We don’t usually think of a list like the 10 commandments when we think of Jesus. That is correct, the Gospel writer here does not give us a list. But just a few verses earlier in 13:34 Jesus has said this, “A new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you”. Jesus had told his disciples that his expectation of them would be that they would love each other like he loved them. In other words, he was asking them to imitate himself. That would be a summary of everything Jesus asked us to do. Just imitate Jesus.

So these are the marching orders from Jesus to his disciples. Be imitators of Christ. What a bar to jump over, right? But before the disciples break out into a cold sweat, Jesus tells them something very reassuring. He tells them, don’t worry, if they are willing to obey, he will ask the Father and the Father will send them someone who will enable them to

do just that. Jesus would send them the Paraclete. The word is translated as Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby. You know why there are so many different translations of this Greek word? Because there is no word in the English language that can contain the whole meaning of the word Paraclete.

Ok so a few things to know about the Paraclete. The Paraclete is not simply going to hang out with everybody. Jesus is very clear, the Paraclete will only be sent to those who are his disciples who want to be imitators of Christ. Jesus is very clear in Verse 17 when he says “The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him.” Friends, the fact is, the world does not think it needs the Holy Spirit or the Savior for that matter. Last Sunday I had mentioned that our Spirit is the part of us that sits over our mind and gives us our God consciousness, our conscience and wisdom. So to recognize and receive the Holy Spirit, we need a regenerated spirit and not a dead spirit which is what the world has. That is why Jesus Christ says “you my disciples will be able to receive the Advocate”, “but the world cannot recognize or receive Him”.

So if you are his disciple and want to imitate Christ in every way, Christ is saying He will send us the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. So what will the Holy Spirit do when we have the Holy Spirit in this passage? The first thing we are told in this passage about the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit would never leave you. This is important because having the Holy Spirit guide your spirit is something you have to get used to. After all we are not born with the Holy Spirit guidance system in place! Now if the Holy Spirit came and went we would not be able to tell what guidance was coming from the Holy Spirit and what is coming from our own spirit, right? And because the Holy Spirit will never leave you, you don’t have to worry about trying to run after the Holy Spirit.

So for his disciples, step one is repaying to receive the Holy Spirit. This is what the 120 did in the upper room as they waited for the Holy Spirit to come in obedience to Jesus.

Remember at this point for the disciples, the Holy Spirit was with them but not in them yet (Verse 14:17). When does the Holy Spirit come on the disciples? It comes at Pentecost as you know in a form that is very visible to them and the world, just like it came on Jesus Himself at his own baptism. So step one is waiting in anticipation for the Holy Spirit to come.

The second thing about the Holy Spirit that Jesus tells us about in this passage is that the Spirit will guide us into all truth. Why is truth the first thing Jesus tells us about the Holy Spirit? In last Sunday's sermon I talked about how the Bible wants our minds to be controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than by our own thoughts or emotions or passions. Why? Because our mind is a fascinating machine that is made up of many parts. And most of the time, our mind is fragmented and at war with itself. Apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans 7: ¹⁵*"I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate"*. So Paul here is talking about the disconnect in his mind between what he wants to do, and what he actually does. Like an amateur painter like me. When I set out to paint a horse, it comes out looking like a dog Why because there is a disconnect between what my mind wants to draw and what my hand is able to draw. But the problem in our mind gets even worse. James 1:8 says, *"A double minded person is unstable in all his ways"*. In [Ephesians 4:17-18](#) Paul writes, *"So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;"* And finally Mark 7:21 says this about the mind, *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,"*. When you look at these verses you find that the Bible is very clear that there is a big problem with the human mind. And the problem is this. At its worst it is full of evil, darkened in understanding and ignorant of the truth. That is at the bad end of things. But even if you were to look at the good end of things, at its best, the human mind is like a tractor pull.

It is a machine at war with itself, double minded, because wants to go in two different directions. The book of James says, a double minded person is blown and tossed by the wind. The human mind by itself is unable to discern what is true and right. When Adam and Eve were at the garden and were tempted, they fell for it. Why, because when they used their own mind to figure it out they saw what looked good to them and thought that it did make sense to have access to all the knowledge in the world. Satan said, all you can eat knowledge buffet with no negative consequences. What is wrong with that? See when they only used their own mind they were unable to realize that what the serpent was telling them was simply not true. Jesus Christ is saying, when the Holy Spirit comes into you, He will guide you into all truth. When you have the super power to discern what is true, you know what is right and wrong and what is real. Then you can begin to live your life in reality, rather than in some world that you or some other messed up person has made up. When you can discern the truth friends, that makes all the difference. And Jesus is saying, when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will know the truth.

Finally, when the Holy Spirit is operating in you, you will get to know Jesus in the most intense way. Verse 21 Jesus says, he will reveal myself to each one of his disciples. When you are able to see the truth, you can then begin to see Jesus. Because Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life", right? When you can discern the truth only then are you ready for Jesus to be revealed to you. In fact verse 20 says this about the post resurrection disciples. Jesus says, "when I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in the Father". It is one thing to **have information that says Jesus is with the Father**. It is something else to **know that Jesus is with the Father and in you as well**. As a disciple, you will get the gift of the Holy Spirit. And you will know things about Jesus Christ.

So when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will get a companion Spirit to your spirit who will dwell in you permanently. Then you can get to know Him. The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth and in the process you will begin to know things about Jesus Christ and

the Father. And you know what that will do you Jesus disciples? You will get the power to imitate Jesus Christ, not just in being a nice guy or gal, but the power to do the things that Jesus did and even greater things that what Jesus did on the earth? If you are a Jesus disciple and want to imitate Jesus more fully with the transformational power of the Holy Spirit dwelling then ask because the word says, ask and you shall receive? If you have not given you life to Christ and feel your mind is like a tractor pull and you are weighed down by a spirit of confusion, give it to Jesus and ask him to come into your life so he can breath life into your spirit and renew your mind. There is hope for everybody, but we all have to do our part as well.

My prayer is that all of us will receive the Holy Spirt either for the very first time or in a form that the disciples received at Pentecost. Because the world needs to see the power of Jesus is still operating today. Let us pray.