

A Costly Friendship

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John 15:12-27

Outline of this chapter:

- I. 15:1-11 Relationship with **Christ**. Key word: **Remain**
- II. 15:12-17 Relationship with **fellow believers**, disciples. Key word: **Love**.
- III. 15:18-27 Relationship with **the world**. Key word: **Witness**. There will be hostility, yet the Advocate will guide us the share the Gospel.

Three great priorities, and three relationships.

Each section affects the next one.

Last week we covered our relationship with Christ. Abide, remain, 11 times in a short section. The point is clear: continuous dependence on the vine, constant reliance upon him. There is no other way to bear fruit.

Jesus wants me to abide in Him; He wants me to love the believers; and he wants me to witness the world. Very easy, right? Hahaha. Relax, start with abiding in Jesus. Learn to trust God and not your strength.

II. Our Relationship with the Believers

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other. (John 15:12-17 NIV11)

Our relationship with each other, believers, the church, disciples are so significant.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (john 13:35 NIV11)

John also has letters in the bible. We read:

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:11,12 NIV11)

Let us examine the passage that John talks about loving each other.

Five characteristics of Love (from Dr Mark Bailey)¹

1. Love is Sacrificial

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. (13)

The disciples of Jesus, the believers love one another, as Jesus loved them. Vs.12 and 17, love one another.... This command will come over and over. From your love people will know that you are my disciples. What kind of love is this? Should be sacrificial...

2. Love is Obedient

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, (14,15a)

I think this is what we learned in chapter 14: If you love me you will keep my commandments. Love is obedient. Please notice relationship of Jesus God the Son to His Father God the Father.

From my life, I loved my daddy and obeyed him. I am his son, his friend, not servant. How beautiful is to trust Jesus and obey his commandments. You are my friend. Jesus elevates our relationship from servant to friend. We are willingly in relationship with Him, love him, abide and remain in him.

Abraham was called a friend of God. (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; cf. Jas. 2:23)

Moses was called a friend of God. (Ex. 33:11)

This title is unusual and speaks of the highest relationship possible between God and a human being. This friendship is not our doing; rather, Jesus chooses us as friends (15:16a), which gives us tremendous security that his affection for us will not disappear.²

3. Love Always Communicates the Truth

for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.(15b)

Jesus is saying I am not hiding anything, whatever I received from the father I pass it to you. I am telling you the truth.

4. Love Takes the Initiative

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you (16a)

Love does not wait, it takes initiative. God so Loved the World that He gave His son. This is tough sometimes. Why should I go first to talk with that person? I wish we can learn to take initiation in restoring relationships. Do we get issues between believers, oh yes. What do we do about it? Hide, gossip, ignore, ... I get it;

sometimes you choose not to make an issue something; that is wise. But sometimes we don't solve the problem and accumulation of things can destroy our relationship.

Love takes initiation. Let me tell you that taking initiation does not guarantee the other side will receive your love.

5. Love produces fruit that remains

so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (16b)

The first characteristic of the fruit of the spirit is LOVE. This fruit will remain. In this context love is the fruit that will last.

Summery

Loving each other is not a suggestion, it is an important command that we need to learn and keep it daily, consistently. Without abiding in him, it is impossible.

III. Our relationship with the World

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.' (John 15:18-25 NIV11)

Too bad that the world will not get it, and most likely will hate us or persecute us.

Why? **Jesus** says, "Because **of me.**" Because **we believe in Christ.**

Why?

-Let me start with our faith in Jesus:

Now we don't go around and ask our neighbors if they hate us because we are Christian. No, don't do stupid things.

I think Jesus is preparing them and us that the world will not necessarily welcome us. They did not welcome him. Of course, they will not welcome us.

Sometimes neighbors will like you. And sometimes when they see your faith, they will distance themselves from you.

Illustration: When I was a school principal, I was often asked by people to give them fake High School Diploma. Those years were right after the civil war of Lebanon.

Some Embassies required HS diplomas for immigration. I refused to give them, even though they promised big donations to the school. They asked, why? I told them about my Christian principles. They did not like it at all. They, in fact, mocked me saying, “Everyone does. Are you going to save the world by doing this?”

-The second dimension here is the world hates Jesus because God exposes the sin.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. (22)

Jesus exposes the sins of the people. No wonder they hate Him. People feel uncomfortable with that.

Funny, you want the doctor to heal you, but you don't allow him to diagnose you and tell you what is wrong with you...

-Solution: How do we deal with the hostility of the world?

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27 NIV11)

Advocate, the one who stands next to us, the one who reminds us, the one who will teach us, the one who will put the right words in our mouth...the Advocate

Paraklētōs

Please notice the triune God at work.

The one I will send you from the Father.

The Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father.

The Spirit is coming both from the Father and the Son

The Spirit will witness for me...

We are equipped through the triune God to **witness to the world the Love of God.**

Warning:

Those verses in chapter 15 are interpreted in various ways.

What is our worldview?

1. Some churches embrace the world with all its values.
2. Some churches are “world-suspecting” Those are cautious from the world.
3. Some churches are “world rejecting”. These communities isolate themselves from the world, disengage from the public life.

Please notice how early Christians were persecuted, tortured, put to death.

Today there are countries where Christians are literally under persecution. When John wrote this gospel, his world was not easy.

So what did the early Christians do?

They continued to witness Jesus to their hostile environment. Today if PACC is standing in this world, it is because of the blood of the martyrs. But please make sure when the world hates you, you don't hate them back.

"Here in 15:18–16:4a we have dramatic words outlining the 'hatred of the world.' It would not be far wrong to see that the worldview John offers is "world-rejecting." Such teaching needs to be balanced against other teachings in the New Testament that express God's love for the world and the readiness of the world to be evangelized".³

What do we do?

We are not **OF** the world; we are **IN** the world and we are **FOR** the world. Like Jesus' own kingdom ("My kingdom is not of this world." 18:36), we are FOR the world, **sent into it**, as Jesus was, to bear witness to God's love and to bring about his victory.⁴

Application:

1. Go over the list of love that I mentioned before. We are called to love each other. Why not examine yourself and see if you are abiding in him and bearing the fruit of love. Please be practical, see if you need to express that love to a brother and sister...

2. We are called to bear witness of the love Christ to the world. You cannot do that if you isolate yourself from the world. You cannot do that when you hate the world. Be watchful about the values of the world which are not biblical, and in fact, they are against your Christian values. Shield yourself with the Word of God. On the other hand, be ready to serve, care, love, respect people you don't agree with their worldview. Let the Holy Spirit help you and equip you with His Wisdom to face the world.

"Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. (Luke 6:22-23 ESV)

Let us approach the Table of the LOR¹. Dr. Mark Bailey, Dallas Theological Seminary, online course, Gospel of John, lesson seven.

2. Gary M. Bruce, *John, NIV Application Commentary* P419

3. *ibid* p 430

4. NT Wright, *John for Everyone* p 78

