

Experiencing God by Experiencing God's Love
Pastor Ty Blackburn
John 14:18-24
November 16, 2014

Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 14. Looking again at this marvelous 14th chapter, moving into a new subsection of the chapter, we'll be looking at Verses 18-24 this morning, having looked at 15-17 last time, 'The Gift of the Spirit'. This morning we're going to focus on those seven verses, but I want you, as we look at this, to think about the larger context. I want to read Verses 15-31 in just a minute. One of the things that we see going on in this chapter, when we understand again the context, it is always so important when we interpret Scripture to interpret it rightly by taking note, due note of the context. Remember that we have here Jesus talking to His disciples on the night before He is crucified. He knows what is about to happen, they don't, and He is trying to prepare them.

This is '*The Farewell Discourse*', Chapters 13-17, those five chapters of John's Gospel, dealing with this theme where Jesus is basically spending His last few moments of physical presence. He will see them in His resurrected body a number of times, but as far as the three and a half years of continual, physical presence with them, that is coming to an end, and He is telling them that He is going away. The theme of the chapter really, or the purpose of the chapter, the purpose of these verses, Verses 1-31, really is seen when you consider that there is an '*inclusio*' in the passage. An '*inclusio*' is when you have something said at the beginning, and you have it said at the end, and it kind of binds together what is in between.

The '*inclusio*' in the chapter is this: Do not let your heart be troubled. It is in Verse 1, and you'll also hear it in Verse 27 when we read it, He says again, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Jesus understands that His disciples, knowing that He is leaving them, feel as though they are being orphaned, they feel abandoned, and they are going to feel that a lot in years to come because they won't have His physical presence with them again, not in the way they have. He understands the challenge of living for Christ in this fallen world. Their hearts are going to be troubled at times, and they are going to have to gather themselves, and not allow that.

We talked about this way back when we were looking at John 14:1. The word, (*ταράσσω*) '*tarassō*', which is '*troubled*', means '*to be agitated, to be stirred up*'. The word is used naturally to describe the effects of a strong wind that would

create chaos and confusion, or strong waves, troubled waters. So the idea is that the outward troubles in this world are going to want to press into your heart, and you need to understand you can't let your heart be troubled. Don't let your troubles trouble you is what we talked about in that first couple of messages in John 14. That is really behind everything, He is saying, is that concern.

How is it that you live victorious in the midst of turbulent times? Turbulent circumstances? Then you also have, He's basically saying, "Don't let your troubles trouble you," and then the chapter, as I've observed it, falls into kind of two neat halves. Verses 1-14, you have a great emphasis on the command to believe. Six times in 14 verses Jesus says, "Believe." Four of them are imperatives in Verse 1, and Verse 11. He says, "Believe." So six times in 14 verses He is talking about, "Believe," and the idea is, "If you are not going to let your troubles trouble you, you need to place your faith in Me. Trust in Me. Believe in Me. Believe Me." And then, it's interesting, Verses 15-31, the last 17 verses, *'faith'* only occurs one time. Six times in the first 12, actually to Verse 14, and once in the last 17.

But in the last 17 verses, a new word appears, and it's the word *'love'*. It didn't occur at all in the first 14 verses of the chapter, but it occurs 10 times in the 17 verses from Verse 14 to Verse 31. Jesus keeps saying, "If you love Me..." I think what is happening here, when you look at the larger flow of the passage, He is saying, "The way that you don't let your hearts be troubled, the way that you live victoriously in the Christian life, is you trust Me, you believe Me, and you love Me." That the victorious Christian is the person who is growing in his faith in Christ and he is growing in his love for Christ.

We are at the second half of the chapter now. We're looking at love. What He is telling us in these verses, Verses 18-24, is that the way you experience God's strength, and God's support in the midst of adversity, is you love Christ. I mean that as a verb, an active verb, you love Jesus. Not something that is just in the background of your life, no you actively pursue a loving relationship to Jesus. You seek to express your love to Him. So He's saying, "The way that you overcome turbulent circumstances is first of all, you've got to believe more," in the first 14 verses. And then, "The way you overcome turbulent circumstances and difficulties, is you've got to love more." We'll see, as we look at these next couple of messages here in John 14, the repetition, you're going to hear it ten times in these next 17 verses. Read with me from Verse 15 to Verse 31 of John, the 14th chapter.

John 14:15-31 ~

*15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. 20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) *said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”*

23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. 25 “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. 28 You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. 30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; 31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

Let’s pray together.

Father, we thank You for the wonder of Your word. We come now asking that You might even now grant us more of Your grace, grant us the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, our Helper. That He might illumine Your word, make it alive in our minds, and our hearts, and that we might see more of the wonder of Jesus and what He has done for us. We pray this in His name, Amen.

The title of the message is 'Experiencing God by Experiencing God's Love'. I started to just make it 'Experiencing God', which there was a book by that name back in the late 80's, early 90's, and that book had some serious problems with it, so I'm not recommending the book. Be clear on that, it's got some real issues. Mainly the issues are related to how you hear God, how you know God's will. It is not biblical in the way that it presents those issues. But it was a really popular book, I think partly because people are always intrigued to find out how to know God's will, even if someone is giving them maybe not a biblical solution to that problem. But I think another reason it was popular is because the idea of experiencing God is so attractive, and there is a sense in which we see again and again how we have to remember that we are not to be looking for experiences, feelings, and that kind of thing, we look to the truth.

But it is something to see when we look at Scripture, sometimes we can throw out the baby with the bathwater. We react to somebody, and we overreact. Here we are being called by Jesus to experience God in this passage. We're being called by Him to experience the wonder of the love relationship that we have with Him, to experience that which seems impossible, union and communion with the triune God. Jesus is saying, "The reason you don't have to be overwhelmed with despair because I am leaving you, is you are about to enter into the experience of the love relationship with the triune God when the Spirit, the Helper, comes." He is telling us, in this emphasis on love, "If you love Me..." three times He says in the passage that we just read. "If you love Me..." Verse 15. Verse 21, "The one who loves Me..." Verse 23, "If anyone loves Me..." Verse 24, "He who does not love Me..." There is one time negative. Three times positive, and one time negative. The idea is, listen, He is exhorting us to love. He is talking to people who already love Him and know Him, and He's saying, "Listen, if you love Me, this is how you are to grow in love for Me. This is how you are to express your love."

In fact, we experience God by experiencing His love, and there are three points I want us to look at this morning as we look at this passage. First of all, we see 'The Exhortation to Love'. Secondly, we'll see 'The Expression of Love'. And thirdly, we'll see 'The Experience of Love' that He is calling us to.

1) The Exhortation to Love:

'The Exhortation to Love', the first point, we're exhorted in the passage to love. I just noted the four times He talks about anyone loving Him. Three times, "If anyone loves Me..." positive, once, "If anyone does not love Me..." Interesting that Jesus is talking about people loving Him. I mean, think about this, and

basically what we have, the exhortation to love, He is saying, He is defining here that a Christian, there are different ways of defining a Christian. A Christian is someone who has been born again. A Christian is someone who believes the Gospel. Yes, absolutely, the first half of this chapter talked about believing, but the second half of the chapter, what we see as a Christian, if you don't know what a Christian is, a Christian, a true believer is someone who loves Jesus Christ. That's what a Christian is. They are someone who loves the Savior. They are not someone who is following a philosophy of life. They are not someone who has just merely adopted a world view. Certainly Christianity has a world view, and it is a philosophy of life, but true biblical Christianity is something much more than that. Biblical Christianity is a relationship with the living God, and the Christian is someone who loves Jesus Christ, and who loves God. A work has been done in their heart so that they no longer hate God, as we all did before we were saved. The natural man, as it is at enmity with God, Romans 8:7 says, is at war with God, another way of saying that, or hates God, wants to rebel against God, will not submit to the law of God. That is the unsaved person, Romans 8:7. God is angry with us, His wrath is abiding on the unbeliever, so there is enmity from us to God, and from God to us. Righteous enmity on His part, wicked enmity on ours.

But the glory of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ, God expresses love to those who do not love Him, and expresses His love, demonstrates His love by giving Jesus Christ to be a Savior of the ungodly. He grants a new heart to repent, and believe, and to be saved, and to enter into a new relationship of peace with God, of love with God, so that we actually become the children of God. And Jesus is here reminding us that, "If you want to talk about what a Christian truly is, he is someone who loves Me. They love Me."

Now God doesn't need us to love Him, it is real important for us to say that in this day and age, where so much syrupy and silly teaching happens in the church. We're not commanded to love God because God needs us to love Him. Nowhere in the Bible is any hint of that kind of foolishness. You hear people say that, "God created man because He was lonely," that's a lie. God has never been lonely, could not be lonely. God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have existed in a communion of love and fullness, how can He fill us up with the fullness of God if He has anything lacking? He is nothing but fullness, overflowing joy, overflowing love, overflowing contentment, and He invites you and me, who are empty, to be filled with Him.

So when He calls us to love Him, He is not saying that like we might say that to one another, “Please love me. I need you to love me.” He doesn’t need us to love Him. He doesn’t need anything. But He invites us into the fullness of His love, and the wonder of it is the God of the universe would take people who formerly hated Him, and make them people who truly love Him, and experience the wonder of His love. So Jesus is saying, “Listen, to experience stability and strength, what you are going to need to do is you’re going to need to focus on your relationship with Me, and actively love Me for your own good.” “If you love Me...”

The call to be a Christian is the call to love. It’s really neat, isn’t it? Isn’t that a wonderful thing about the Gospel? I mean, we don’t teach a religion where it is all about just keeping a set of rules so that you don’t have to be afraid of God like the Muslims do. Allah, some distant god that though he is emotionally separate and detached, is very concerned about how you act, and he’s ready to punish, but there is no love. That is not the God of the Bible, that’s not the God who is the true God. That is a god of their own making. The God of the Bible is a God who overflows with love. Now, yes, He is a God of righteous holiness and wrath, and He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. He has created hell, and it will be to His glory to send people who will not believe there, but He is a God who overflows with compassion, and mercy, and tenderness, and love.

When you come to be a Christian, you don’t just come to be a part of His army, you do come to be that, you come to be His dear child. He sends forth His Spirit in our hearts, as Jesus is talking about here, He gives us the Helper. One of the things that Paul tells us about the ministry of the Helper, the Holy Spirit that comes to live in us, is that He creates within us this cry, “Abba, Father.” He makes us call the eternal, omnipotent, majestic glory, “Daddy.” So Jesus says, “Listen, if anyone loves Me,” He’s saying, “You must love Me.” God wants our love. He doesn’t need it, but He commands it, and it is the most blessed command to obey, to love God. For when we love Him, we are the ones who receive.

Now, it’s important for us to understand too, John helps us a lot, I mean he actually is the ‘*Disciple of Love*’, or the ‘*Apostle of Love*’, he’s been called. We talked about this way back when we began the study of the Gospel of John. I remember pointing out that John, some of you who were here, and have a great memory, might remember that John was called one of the ‘*Sons of Thunder*’. He and his brother James were ‘*Sons of Thunder*’, they were rough guys. John is the one who said, when the Samaritans were rejecting Jesus, asking Him not to come around, or I think it was the Samaritans, one of the cities He was passing through, “They don’t want you here.” They sent emissaries out. “Please stay away from here.” And

John said, “Let’s call down lightning from Heaven. Call down fire from Heaven on them. I’ve got a great idea!” Not very loving, and yet Jesus’ love became so real to this ‘*Son of Thunder*’ that he became the ‘*Apostle of Love*’.

Forty-four times in his Gospel we find the word ‘*agape*’, ‘*agapao*’, the verb and the noun for love. And 44 more times in his other writings, his other three epistles, 1 John, 35 times, 2 and 3 John an additional nine times. One of the things that is neat about John is he doesn’t refer to himself in the Gospel by name. You read about John the Baptist, but that is not John the apostle. He never speaks of himself by saying, “John.” What does he say? “The disciple whom Jesus loved.” “What is most important to me, what makes my identity, what makes my life worth living is that Jesus loves me.” John tells us in 1 John 4:19, that the way that we grow to love God, the way that we really work out this command to love Him, is we love because He first loved us.

The way you grow to love Jesus more is you reflect more on how much He loves you. That is the only way that you can love Him. You can’t work it up, but if you just look at Jesus, and you look at His love, then you will find within your heart, by His grace, love welling up. So the exhortation to love is that we are commanded to love Him, we must love Him, we need to love Him, and the way that we stand up under trials and difficulties is, “I must have more of Jesus and love Jesus more. He must become more real to me in this moment so that I can love Him more, and treasure Him more.” That is the exhortation to love that we see in this section.

2) The Expression of Love:

Then the second point is ‘The Expression of Love’. Not only are we exhorted to love, we are exhorted, or explained how we should express our love, ‘The Expression of Love’, our second point. It concerns how we are to show, or demonstrate our love. This is how you can recognize the true follower of Jesus Christ. He is someone who is expressing his love. How does he express his love? I mentioned that four times we have Jesus talking about, “loving Me...” Verse 15, “If you love Me...” Verse 21, “The one who loves Me...” Verse 23, “If anyone loves Me...” Verse 24, “He who does not love Me...” You also have in each of those four verses an explanation of how you demonstrate love. Look at Verse 15:

John 14:15 ~ “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Verse 21.

John 14:21 ~ He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me;...

Verse 23.

John 14:23 ~ ...“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;...

Verse 24.

John 14:24 ~ He who does not love Me does not keep My words;...

The verb ‘keep’ there, every time, all four times, is a word I mentioned last time, which comes from a noun that means ‘a warden, or a guard, a prison guard’, and this verb means to basically ‘to warden, or to guard’. It connotes ‘keeping an eye on, getting attention to, to observe, observing closely, not in an attached way, but in a focused way, intense observation’. And what are we to intensely observe? We are intensely to observe His commandments and His word. There is overlap, that is the same thing in a way and yet there are different nuances that we need to understand. He is saying that, “The way you express your love for Me is you give attention, you observe My word, you observe My commandments, you guard My word, you guard My commandments.” The NIV translates this word ‘keep’, ‘obey’, and that’s an inference. It is one of those places where the NIV takes a little bit of liberty that I wish they didn’t take. It is better explained in preaching rather than to change the word, or as you do the word study as you are reading.

Nowadays you can do word studies on the computer. It’s amazing. You click on a word. If you haven’t tried some of those blueletterbible.org, crosswalk.com. You can just do amazing things. Especially blueletterbible.org is I think a little better than crosswalk.com, my opinion. But the idea is, “You are to love Me. If you love Me, you’re going to tend to My word. You are going to tend to My word, and you are going to tend to My commandments.” Now think about this, if you love someone, what do you want to do? You want to spend time with them, you want to know them. So He’s basically saying, “If you love Me, you will want to know Me,” that’s why you give attention to His word.

How do you know Jesus apart from His word? You don’t! You know Jesus through the word and only through the word. The Spirit works with the word and not apart from it. So you give attention to His word, but even as you are going to the word, it shows what our heart is. The reason we should read our Bibles is not because we have to, to feel better about ourselves, to feel like we are accepted

before God—that is legalism. We can fall into that, can't we? We can even think that if I have my quiet time, then I expect blessing. If I didn't, then well I know I'm not going to be blessed today. That's not Gospel living. But the reason that we should go to the word is not to check off a box, even though we ought to have a disciplined life, and we ought to make ourselves read the word when we don't want to, yes, yes, yes. But what we need to do as we go—I mean, you should never not read the word because you don't feel like it, but don't let Satan rob you that way. If you're not sincere, you can't read the word. Tell him, "I've never been sincere, but praise God, Jesus is, and I'm going to read His word, and I'm glad you just reminded me how I need to really attend to this, that nonsense you've brought up in my mind." But when you go to the word, why you go to the word is not to learn rules or learn a philosophy of life. You go to meet a Person. You go to know a person. He said in John 5:39 and following that these Scriptures, He's talking about the Old Testament. Remember He said to the Pharisees:

John 5:39 ~ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these (the Old Testament Scriptures) that testify about Me;

And then in Luke 24 when He's telling the disciples on the road to Emmaus, remember, He begins with the law and the prophets, and the writings, and then He shows them how they all pointed to Christ. So you go to the Bible to know Him. You attend to the word. You give yourself to the word. You sit under the preaching of the word. You sit under the teaching of the word. You give yourself to personal Bible study and devotional books that are biblical, that are helping you get into the word, because you want to know and love Jesus more. And expressing your love, if you want to show Jesus you love Him, attend to His word. And it's not just attending to the word, though He also mentions commandments—two times word or words, and twice commandments. "Keep My word, my words. Keep My commandments." His commandments are His moral imperatives, His ethical directives. Yeah, that's clearly implied too, that the one who loves Jesus is someone who is trying to obey Jesus.

Hear the word not just to know about it and forget it, but to know about it so that I can then do it. I want to learn what pleases You. I want to learn who You are, and I want to learn what pleases You. In the relationship, isn't that what happens when a young man is trying to woo his wife or vice versa, some of that, you try to get to know the person? And part of getting to know them is so that you can just celebrate who they are, and also you can know what they like, so that you can give them what they like, because you love them. That's part of what it is to be in a

relationship, and not just in a relationship, but any relationship. You want to know what people like. You don't make the wrong dish for somebody's birthday, that you like. I mean, I guess you could do that. I'd be more inclined to do that than Patti would. "Oh, you really like this, don't you?" I'm eating it. No, you find out what they like, what they want, and then you do that so that you can then meet that need and have the joy of serving them. That's one of the reasons we read the Bible is to know Jesus and to find out how we can bless Him and be a source of joy to Him.

One of the things that we see, it applies to all commandments, but I think particularly in John's Gospel at this point, we need to realize that he's also the disciple of love, and you see this in 1 John as well when you look at it carefully. He's talking about all the ethical exhortations. The Christian is the person who wants to be holy in every area of life, absolutely, but think about what they hear:

John 14:15 ~ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 14:21 ~ He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me;

He'd just given them a new commandment just hours before, in John 13:34.

John 13:34 ~ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

And that commandment had to be emblazoned on their minds, because they had that coming upon the astonishing, stunning display of love in Jesus washing their feet, where their minds were blown by the teacher, the one whom they believed to be the Son of God, bowing down and taking the form of the lowest slave, and washing their feet, which was a picture we saw of the cross. The only way that you can be saved or I can be saved is that the one who is worthy of the most glory and the most honor must become the lowest and most despised. That's the cross. The eternal Son of God, holy in perfection from all eternity, then become a Man and lives a perfect life, a perfect moment-by-moment life lived before God, the perfect expression of righteousness, and yet He is cursed by the Father in our place. And the washing of the feet was a picture of that. It was a scandal for Jesus to wash their feet. How much more of a scandal was it for the Son of God to hang cursed upon a tree?

When He said:

John 13:34 ~ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

He's saying, "I want you to love one another by serving one another, and in a radical way." This commandment had to be foremost in their minds, and as people have read the Gospel of John through the years and come across, "If you love Me, keep my commandments. If you love Me, keep my commandments," the importance of the commandment to love has been echoed down through the centuries in the hearts of God's people. We're to love Him by expressing—the way that we can love Him most wondrously is to serve a brother or sister, is to humbly serve a brother or sister, or to wash their feet, not literally but spiritually by forgiving them, by patiently enduring with the sinful dirtiness that we all have in our life. When we love one another in that moment, we're loving Jesus. We're obeying His commands.

So He says, "Listen, you need to realize that what you're to be about in this world, even though I'm not with you, is your business is to love Me." That's the exhortation. "Your business is to love Me, and the way you're going to express your love for Me is to attend to My word and attend to My commandments. Be about My business in the same way I was about My Father's business." In fact, it's interesting He points out in Verse 31, look at how Jesus expresses love to His Father.

John 14:31 ~ but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.

If it was good enough for Him, it's good enough for us. So if someone says they love Jesus, and they don't keep His commandments, John says in 1 John that they're a liar.

1 John 2:3-6 ~ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

We're to grow in holiness, but that love is the motivation. The only way that you can grow in obedience is you must love more. If you don't love Him more, you will not obey Him more. You can't. You may perform acts of external righteousness. The Pharisees were great at that, and lots of Christians sometimes struggle with that, don't we? But if you really want to obey Him from the heart, you must love Him more. Love is the only motivation that will truly result in obedience, real obedience. So we have the exhortation to love, the expression of love, but then thirdly, the experience of love.

3) The Experience of Love:

This is what Jesus puts before His disciples as the thing which really will sustain them, the experience of His love. He notes this in a number of ways. First of all, you see that as we love Jesus and obey His commandments, one of the things that we enter into and experience more of is His love for us. Look with me at Verse 21:

John 14:21 ~ He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him...

He's saying, "Listen, if you find in your heart that you believe the Gospel, you've repented and placed your faith in Jesus, and as you look at Christ, you have love for Christ where you didn't before, you can know that He loves you, and He's loving you. And not only is He loving you, but the Father is loving you." In fact, He says that again about the Father loving Him in Verse 23.

John 14:23 ~ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him,..."

He says, "If you love Me, My Father will love you. You make your focus loving Me, and My Father will love you. The picture is really the idea of a family. How many of us have experienced the blessing of being loved by some people because we loved their son or daughter? When you marry into a family, that's certainly the case, isn't it? It should be. It's not always. There are in-law problems and all that. And especially even unbelievers, you will find occasionally really good relationships with in-laws, and Christians ought to be laboring at that, though there are challenges. Certainly there are challenges to loving everybody, but isn't it something? If I love my child and you love my child, I love you for loving my child. Maybe you had friends in high school or college that you became part of like your friend's family because you loved your friend so much that they just treated

you like you were another son or daughter. That's what He's saying. "If you love Me, My Father will love you, and I will love you." He not only says that the experience of love is we will experience the love itself, but we will experience the blessedness of this love, and He shows this in a couple of ways. First of all, in the verse we were just reading, Verse 21:

John 14:21 ~ ...he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

That if you are focusing on loving Jesus, if God has worked in your heart so that you have repented and believed the Gospel, and you're loving Jesus, and the more that you love Jesus, what's going to happen is you will know experientially more of the love of God, and the love of the Father, and Jesus will disclose Himself to you. It's a wonderful word. The idea of the word here is from a verb which means to make visible, to make apparent. It's actually from a root word which means to shine. You can translate it as manifest, make known, make apparent, cause to be seen, and the force is to let oneself be intimately known and understood. Jesus is saying, "Listen, if you love Me, My Father will love you, I will love you, and I will make Myself intimately known to you, intimately understood by you. This is My commitment. I'm not a detached Creator who just wants obedience like Allah does. I am a loving God who's inviting you into a living relationship with Me, and so I'm saying if you love Me, I will disclose My heart to you. I want to give more of Myself to you."

He's saying this because this is what life is. When you're focused on this, the external circumstances begin to fade away. So I'm suffering, so I have cancer, so I'm hurting—whatever the circumstance is, so I've been abandoned by someone who loved me. These things are heartbreaking. There's pain and agony, but when we get our focus right and we understand that we are loved by the Father, loved by Jesus, and the opportunity of suffering is even making our vision clearer so that we're looking in a more focused way than ever we have before at the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ, it makes the suffering even a blessing.

This is why you will be able to stand up, He says, under, and you won't let your troubles trouble you. You'll have peace because if you're focusing on believing in Me and loving Me, you'll be able to stand up in any storm, because even in the storm, you'll become more aware than ever before of how much He loves you, that He loves you enough to even let you suffer what you're going through, because He knew that without that suffering, that you would not now know Him in the way that you're knowing Him.

He loves you enough to give you not what you ask for. Sometimes He gives you what you ask for, but when He does that, He only doesn't give you what you ask for, to give you something better. So He says, "I will disclose Myself to you." When you attend to His word, when you attend to obedience, He's going to make Himself known more, and more, and more to you. This is why it's so sad that people are all caught up in all these foolish things like Jesus calling and all these other things where they're seeking Jesus apart from the word of God. And He's saying, "Listen, if you want Me to disclose Myself to you, what do you do? Attend to My word. Obey My commandments. Cling to Me, and I'll disclose Myself to you." But then the wonder of His love and the experience of His love becomes even more amazing. Look what He says in Verse 23. In Verse 21 He said, "My Father will love him, I will love Him, and I'll disclose Myself to him." In Verse 22, Judas says:

John 14:22 ~ Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"

He's saying, "Hey, why are You disclosing Yourself to us and not the world?" Jesus doesn't even answer the question why. It's another silly, dumb question that we ask sometimes, and He just passes right by it, and He saying, "Let's not talk about that. Let Me tell you what you need to know."

John 14:23 ~ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me,...

He's saying, "Love ME. Stop asking about them, and you, love Me."

John 14:23 ~ ..."If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

That is astonishing. Here's another *inclusio* within this chapter. I mentioned how there's an inclusion or an *inclusio* with Verse 1 and Verse 27. "Do not let your heart be troubled." You also have an inclusion here in Verse 23 with Verse 2. When Jesus said:

John 14:1 ~ "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places;

The word dwelling place in Verse 2 is the exact same word as abode in Verse 23. When we looked at that passage earlier, when He was talking about believe and trust, that part of the stability comes through faith and love, and when He was talking about faith, He said, “Believe in God, believe also in Me, and anticipate Heaven when you will dwell with Me. I’ve got a dwelling place for you. I’m preparing a dwelling place for you where you will come,” and it’s not the mansion that the King James talks about. The idea is a wonderfully furnished area that’s particularly a place where you can remain. “And you will remain in My Father’s house. Look ahead to that.”

Now He says, “In the meantime, the way that you bear up is you love Me and understand that I have made a dwelling place for Myself in your heart. I am dwelling in you, and the Father is joining me in dwelling in you.” Such is the love of God that He not only is anticipating us coming to be with Him, but He’s saying He has already taken up residence in you. You don’t feel Him. He doesn’t have flesh and blood like Jesus did and does still in eternity. The Spirit of Christ is in you. The body of Christ is in Heaven. The glorified, resurrected body of Christ is in Heaven, but the Spirit of Christ, He says, is in you and the Spirit of the Father is in you, that when you have the Holy Spirit, what He’s saying, when you have the Holy Spirit live inside of you, the reality is that the Father and the Son also live inside of you. This is the glorious doctrine of the Coinherence of the Persons of the Trinity, the mystery of the Triune God. We come to the limitedness of our human minds, the finiteness of our minds coming up into the infinite glory of who God is, and we find ourselves to be so small, so unable to comprehend these things, but God is inviting us. He’s saying, “Listen, when you come to be a child of Mine, when you love Me, what happens is you not only have a place to come...” Like I mentioned earlier, when you’re a good friend, and the family would be like any time you’re in town, you’ve got a place to stay, right? It’s not just that. God’s saying, “I’m going to ride with you. I’m going to be with you every step of the way. All the way through your life, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Abide in My love.”

This is what Paul was saying in that passage we read earlier, that we might be granted by God’s power through His Spirit in the inner man, to be able to understand and to experience the love of Christ, and to know the breadth, and width, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. Jesus says, “This is what I have for you. This is why it is better that I go away. This is why you need to not let your heart be troubled. God’s plan is much better than your plan for Me.”

The disciples said, “Please don’t go, Jesus. Stay with us,” and Jesus says, “No, I must go. If you love Me, you’ll understand that I want to be with My Father personally again, face-to-face now, on this side of Calvary, and you would be happy for Me. But if you had any sense (He doesn’t say it like that, but the idea is), if you really had a sense of going on, you would be so happy that God is doing this. He’s giving you so much grace, so much more than you asked for.” So he says, “Listen, what you and I are to be about is loving Christ.” That’s the exhortation. Love Jesus more.

As life gets tough, what do you need to do? Love Jesus more. How do you love Him more? You focus on His love. You set your eyes upon His word. And the way you express your love is you attend to His word, and as you attend to His word, what you do is you find you’re loving Him more, and you’re wanting to obey Him more. And what becomes the issue in any circumstance is, “How can I be faithful to You? How can I honor You in this circumstance?” And when your heart is like that, your heart is then able to experience the reality of what’s already there. The Father and the Son are there, but when your heart is surrendered to Him, you will begin in moments when God wills it, He will let the fullness start overwhelming you.

Have you experienced those times? It’s my experience that He doesn’t give them often, but isn’t it amazing how in certain moments of agony or great stress, that when you keep looking at Jesus and you keep sort of preaching to yourself the word of God, preaching to yourself the truth of the Gospel, and you keep clinging to Him, and praying to Him, holding onto Him like Jacob when he was wrestling with the Lord—remember, “I’m not going to leave You until You bless me,” and then suddenly He bestows His blessing, and you’re filled up for a moment. You feel it. The reality is you’re always filled up like this, but in this moment you feel it, filled up to the fullness of God. He says that is what Christians should be living for, to know Him and to get to know Him, and to love Him, to obey Him, and then you experience Him when He’s ready. What a wonderful Gospel. What a wonderful Savior. How He’s so much more than we would ask or imagine, isn’t He?

Let’s go to Him in prayer...

Father, we stand in awe of who You are. We worship You as the one who has planned this glorious plan of salvation. Lord Jesus, we worship You as the one who has undertaken the great work of salvation. You purchased us, and we praise You, Holy Spirit, because You’re the one who applies our salvation to us. You

make it real in our hearts. You take what God the Father has planned and what God the Son has accomplished, and You make application to us. And Triune God, we stand in awe of You. We worship You, and we acknowledge that You are more wonderful than our minds could ever have conceived. Lord, we ask that You might work in the hearts of everyone here to have Your perfect will done. Grant repentance, grant faith, to those who need to be saved, and grant repentance and faith to those who have been saved but need to keep on growing in You. Help us to love You, Lord Jesus, more, and to demonstrate that love. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

This audio presentation, description, and transcription by Providence Church in Duluth, Georgia, USA, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 License.

 Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

Attribution:

Based on work at Providence Church, Duluth, GA, USA and found online at <http://www.providenceduluth.org>. Permission for use beyond the scope of this license may be requested by contacting Providence Church, Duluth, GA through their website.