

Unplug: Abiding in Christ

I. SHARING IN HIS NATURE

- A. Jesus in this invitation to ***“Come to me”*** is offering to teach us, as his apprentices, how to please The Father perfectly. He wants to teach us the ways and precepts of God, not just in behavior but in heart, that it may become our nature as it is His nature to love and enjoy God’s ways.

“28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30)

- B. Jesus brings His disciples away from the crowds. After sharing about His return, but before He talks about enduring in His absence, Jesus does an amazing act set on communicating His love and hope for them. This sets the tone for what Jesus will say to them in the Upper Room. John records this moment with such tenderness:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end...3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” (Jn. 13:1-35)

- C. The disciples are clueless and likely even embarrassed by their Master lowering Himself to the place of a menial servant before them. However, Jesus expects them to submit to Him washing their feet in faith. As the disciples cannot yet understand how the One whom they revere as the Messiah must go to the cross, they also cannot understand the symbol-laden acts that anticipate His ultimate sacrifice. Jesus does this symbolic act to, one, give them handles to understand what will happen to Him just hours after their supper and, two, to aid them in enduring and turning back to Him upon His resurrection.

- D. Scholars teach that there are three applications of the foot washing that Jesus performed. The washing of feet was normally reserved for the lowliest of menial servants.

1. In washing feet, Jesus displayed His love.
2. In washing feet, Jesus displayed the humble nature of the invisible God.
3. In washing feet, Jesus displayed the saving cleansing through His cross.

- E. The act of washing, first and foremost, was an act of love for His disciples. He knew His climatic hour had come and that He was going back to the Father. He was aware of what season and pressures His disciples were about to face. He was washing their feet, laying aside the honor and reverence that He had gained in their eyes, to communicate a simple and powerful truth, “I love you.”
- F. *‘The eternal divine love reached its complete and unsurpassable expression in the death of Christ, which was at the same time the death of a man for his friends’¹ - C.K. Barrett.*
13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friend...15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends... (Jn. 15:13-15)
- G. This love that Jesus displays for us is the foundation of our obedience in knowing Him, following His ways, and learning to observe all His commandments. He is requiring an obedience motivated not from a pharisaical work of the flesh, but from our hearts. An obedience from our affection and responding love for Him with a genuine gratitude for His painful and humiliating sacrifice that He endured for our redemption. It’s responding to His love that compels obedience to Him.
- H. Jesus does a powerful thing here. This love-inspired obedience is not only reserved for the disciples in the Upper Room but He makes His fellowship accessible to **“anyone”** that would follow Him and obey His commandments. To this same effect Paul pleads for our submission.
“14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.” (Jn. 15:14)
“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.” (Jn. 14:23-24)
“I appeal to you...by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual (or reasonable) worship.” (Rom. 12:1)
- I. Jesus commanded the disciples not to let trouble dominate their hearts (Jn. 14:1). John 14:1 is not a salvation appeal to become born again. Many in Israel, including the Pharisees, believed in the God of Moses without having seen His form (Jn. 5:37). They had faith in an invisible God. Jesus is saying, *I’m not going to be with you any more in person, and just as you’ve had faith in the invisible God, you will need to have faith in me.*
1“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God [a fact], believe also in Me [a command]...
27My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled...” (Jn. 14:1, 27)
- J. Jesus proceeds to declare four core truths in John 14:2-3 that His disciples were to embrace to overcome a trouble-dominated heart.

¹ C. K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and notes on the Greek Text (pg. 476).

“...Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” (Jn. 13:36)

2In My Father’s house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you...3I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (Jn. 14:2-3)

1. ***Truth #1—My Father’s house:*** The Father’s house is the New Jerusalem. The redeemed will live together with Him forever in His immediate presence as part of His family.
 2. ***Truth #2—I am going to prepare a place for you:*** Jesus went to the cross to prepare our place in the Father’s house. He secured the way for us to enjoy the Father’s house forever.
 3. ***Truth #3—I will come for you:*** He will come to His people physically at the end of this age but He comes to us spiritually in this age by the indwelling Spirit (14:23).
 4. ***Truth #4—That where I am, there you may be:*** Here, Jesus gave one of the reasons for going to the cross. He desires His people to be with Him even more than they desire to be with Him.
- L. Jesus teaches His disciples that abiding in His love and in His promises will anchor our hearts for the tempest of pressures within the last days of the age before His return. These truths are the foundations of our life in prayer; His love for us, His promises to us, and His impending return.

II. SHARING IN HIS WAYS

- A. Believing in Jesus, His hope and promises and in the knowledge of who He is, is fundamental for us to continue His works in the earth. In light of this command to have faith in Him is also for us to follow Him in love. This love is expressed in obedience to His life-giving ways and commandments and it enables us to intimately increase in the knowledge of Christ through encounter and fellowship with Him.

“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... “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. (Jn. 14:21-24)

- B. It is likened to a vow of the heart that a bridegroom gives to a bride with love and fidelity while he is away, “I am exclusively yours.” Jesus shares that this love permeates our faith that is in action. To believe Him meant also to love Him, specifically in obedience to His commandments (following Him) that we might enter into His hope and promise.

“2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord, “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.” (Jer. 2:2)

“2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:2)

17 The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (Rev. 22:17)

- C. I believe this command to love is Jesus’ way of protecting us from the greatest danger of His judgement. I believe Jesus is teaching us that actions of faith can only take us so far in relationship with His kingdom and sovereignty. Yet, when accompanied with love for God, it leads us into the soul-saving fellowship with the Godhead.

“21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.” (Matt. 7:21-23)

- D. This is the secret to fulfilling the commandments of God as Jesus did. He is inviting us to share in His ways, not just His words. This in contrast with religious teachers of the time. Jesus is calling us to avoid the pharisaical way of empty godliness. He requires that we obey Him in love, as it is the most profound interaction of heart and soul for any human.

“Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” (Jn. 15:9-11)

22 “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth...30 then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, 31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.” (Pro. 8:22-23, 30-31; cf. Jn 1:1-3, Cor. 1:24, Col. 1:15-18)

“Everyone who believes ...and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him [the experience of new birth]...3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.[the victory is that we didn’t lose heart in the pressures but stood firm in the hope and promises of Jesus] 5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? [He is who He says He is] (1 Jn. 5:1-5) [add by author]

III. SHARING IN HIS SPIRIT

- A. Jesus connected prayer and engagement with the Spirit to being filled with the power to love and obey Him in 14:15-16 in the same way that He loves and obeys His Father.

“12 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. 15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

(Jn. 14:12-16)

- B. Jesus emphasized twice that “He will do whatever we ask” in His name that the Father might be glorified (14:13-14). The greatest work of the Spirit is to empower people to love Jesus (14:15). When Jesus said to “ask anything” (14:13), He immediately focused them on the grace to love Him more (14:15). The ultimate “anything” we can ask for is the grace to walk in the first commandment. The Father is glorified most by those who grow in the grace to walk in obedient love for Him.
- C. In His work to empower disciples of Jesus to walk in loving obedience, the Spirit will...
1. Be our Teacher and gentle reminder (Jn. 14:26). He will confirm the truth about Jesus and His purposes for us and promise to us (Jn. 15:26).
 2. He will aid in the advancement of the gospel of God through conviction of the heart and mind. He will powerfully work in and through us to make us effective witnesses of Jesus. (Jn. 16:8-11)
 3. He will guide us into “***all the truth***” namely about Jesus. The Spirit of truth now leads us into the truth, the revelation, intrinsically bound up with Jesus Christ. There is no other authority of truth; this is *all the truth*.(Jn. 14:6, 16:13)
 4. Just as Jesus never spoke or acted on his own initiative, but said and did exactly what the Father gave him to say and do, so also the Spirit speaks ***only what he hears***. As Jesus’ absolute and exhaustive obedience to his Father ensures that he is not to be taken as either a mere mortal or as a competing deity, but as the very revelation of God himself, so also the Spirit, by this utter dependence, ensures the unity of God and of the revelation God graciously grants. (Jn. 16:13-15)
 5. The Spirit tells Jesus’ disciples ***what is yet to come***. This has often been understood to refer to revelation about the later stages of the kingdom within this age, perhaps in revelation about the impending return of Jesus and exemplified in the book of Revelation. (Jn. 16:13)

“10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, “Write what you see in a book...” (Rev. 1:10-11)