

Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”<sup>24</sup> He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> “All this I have spoken while still with you.”<sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

<sup>28</sup> “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”<sup>29</sup> I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. (NIV84)

Theme: Faith in Christ leads to Love for Christ.

1. Love results in obedience.
2. Faith receives peace.

How can you tell if someone is a believer or not? You can’t see someone’s heart. You don’t know what they truly believe. But in a way, we can still tell. **By their fruit you will recognize them**, Jesus says in Matthew 7. While only God ultimately knows for sure, by someone’s words and actions we get an indication of what is truly in their heart.

A believer loves God. And he will indicate his love for God by what he says and does. A believer shows his love for God by obeying God. So those that obey God are believers. But what about you? Do you always obey God? That question sends shivers down our spine. So Christ reminds us of his love. Today we see that faith in Christ leads to love for Christ. Love results in obedience and faith receives the peace of forgiveness.

Jesus said in the first verse of our text, **If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching**. It’s as simple as that. Believers love and obey Christ. They love him for everything he has done for them. For he

gave up the glories of heaven for life on this sin-filled earth. He willingly suffered and died to take away our sins. Then he rose from the dead to give us eternal life. Jesus did this for sinners. He did this for his enemies. He showed love to us when we didn’t care about him or want anything to do with him. So because of the love Christ has shown us, we want to show love to him.

And those who love God obey God. So faith in God results in obedience to God. And this is something Christian gladly do. As John says in his first epistle, **This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.** We willingly and cheerfully obey his Word. We strive to do what he commands. It’s not something that we hate to do, but love to do. For we love his Word—all of his Word. As the psalmist wrote in Psalm 119, **Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.** And love for God and his Word shows itself in obedience to his Word. And those that love God are those that believe in him.

If that is true, then the opposite is also true. Those that don’t obey God don’t love him or believe in him. They can’t love God. They don’t know what he has done for us. They’ve either never heard of his love and grace, or they have heard it and rejected it as false. So if they don’t believe that Jesus is our Savior and has given many great things to us, then they have no reason to love God. And they have no motivation to obey him. And so they don’t. As Jesus said in verse 24, **He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.** It’s as simple as that. Those that believe in and love Jesus obey his commands; those that don’t obey his commands don’t love him or believe in him. And there are no exceptions. You can’t choose to obey God in something, but not others. You can’t say to God, “I don’t agree with this rule so I’m not going to follow it.” Or, “that law doesn’t apply to me—but for other people.” You can’t be an open unrepentant sinner and a Christian at the same time. You can’t be like some who think they can knowingly continue to commit a sin and yet still claim to be a Christian. For instance you can’t live with someone outside of marriage and be a Christian at the same time. Or there is no such thing as a homosexual Christian. For those that believe in and love God

obey his commands. For they obey their wants and desires instead of God. They bow down and worship the god of their opinions and feelings. And those that willingly and openly and continually live in sin, don't love God and thus they don't believe in him.

But what does that mean for you? If you're anything like everyone else, you can count numerous times just so far today that you have failed to obey God's commands. In fact you commit so many sins each and every day that they are too numerous to count. When you look back at your life, you often are ashamed at some of things you have done. Instead of obeying God, you obeyed your own wants and desires. You did what you wanted to do—whatever felt good or right, at the expense of God's will. You failed to show love to God by disobeying his commands. And that isn't just the case throughout your whole life. But that stands for each and every day.

And you just heard that those who don't obey God don't love him and don't believe in him. So you take a look at your life, and you may wonder, "does God consider me a believer?" You may be to doubt your own faith. You can say along with Paul in Romans 7, **The evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.** Like Paul you must admit that there were many times you failed to obey God. And thus there were many times you failed to love him. But does that mean that you aren't a believer? Was Paul not a believer?

There is one key difference between you, like Paul, and unbelievers. Believers do commit sins—just like unbelievers. And unbelievers do not care if they sin. They know what they do is against God's Word, but they have no plans on changing their ways. So they willingly continue in their sin. There is no repentance or obedience; and thus there must not be any faith. But unlike unbelievers you don't try to commit sins. When you sin you go to God in deep-felt sorrow. You confess your sins and repent. And you strive not to sin again. And when you fall into temptation you know that Christ has forgiven you.

And yet, we may still doubt—for our sins are so numerous. That is why Jesus sends us his Holy Spirit. As Jesus says in verse 26, **the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.** The Holy Spirit not only reminded the disciples what Jesus taught them, he shows and reminds us of everything Jesus

said and did. That includes his suffering and death on the cross. For on that cross Christ took all our sins upon himself. He was forsaken by his Heavenly Father because he became a sinner for us. He suffered through hell so we wouldn't have to. And then he gave us his perfect life. Through the shedding of his blood he made us pure and holy in God's sight.

The Holy Spirit also reminds us of Christ's resurrection. Three days after he died he rose from the dead. He defeated death and crushed Satan's head. And he gives that victory to us. Through his resurrection from the dead we know that we too will rise from the dead. Christ will raise our bodies to be like his glorious body. And so we will live with him in heaven forever. It is through the gospel that the Holy Spirit reminds us of Christ's love for us and thus he strengthens our faith. And so we are led to obey God's Word.

For faith in Christ leads us to love Christ and to obey him. And it is faith that receives the peace of Christ.

Jesus doesn't just send us his Holy Spirit to remind us what he did for us. He sent his Holy Spirit to bring us to faith and to strengthen that faith. And it is through faith that we have peace. And this is not peace that the world can offer. As Jesus says in verse 27, **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.** The world can only offer a certain kind of peace. They talk about world peace—the lack of war and strife. They talk about peace that comes from having a steady—good paying job, or a lot of friends, a loving family. The world can only offer earthly peace. They can't offer true peace.

For the peace that Christ's gives is the peace of forgiveness. It is the peace of mind knowing that Christ does not count our sins against us. It is knowing that he has removed our sins as far as east is from west. That they will never return to us to condemn us. Only Christ can offer us this peace. It is found only in him and received only through faith in him. And when Christ offers us this peace, we know that we actually have it. Not like when the world offers peace. When they offer peace they can only offer a wish or a longing—they can't actually offer or give that peace. But Christ not only wishes us to have peace—he actually offers and gives it.

But the world doesn't have peace. Unbelievers cannot know the peace of Christ. They reject the God of peace. They reject forgiveness. Even though Christ died for them they don't receive the benefits. So they try to earn their own way. They try to impress God with what they can do. They point to their character. They brag about how nice they are. But they have no real peace. For they always wonder if they have done enough. They are constantly wandering if they have done enough or done the right things in hopes that God would save them. But not us—we have peace. It is ours through faith. Through faith in Christ we receive the blessings he won for us. His perfect life is now ours. For forgiveness of sins he paid for and the eternal life he won is given to us. Given to us free of charge. It's not because of anything we have done. It's not because we are such good people who have impressed God. Rather it is a gift of God, which we receive through faith. Through faith in him we have the peace of forgiveness.

And so we don't have to worry about our sins. As Jesus says in verse 27, **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.** We are afraid when we consider our lives. Our sins prove we often fail to love God; and so we worry. And rightfully so. But we don't have to worry any longer. Our hearts don't have to be troubled. We have nothing to be afraid of. For through faith we have the peace of forgiveness. Nothing is left to condemn us. Christ has forgiven us for all the times we failed to show love to him and failed to obey him. And now, through faith, we have Christ's obedience. And there is another reason we don't have to be afraid—Christ is coming back. He's gone now. On Thursday we'll celebrate his ascension into heaven. But he won't leave us on this earth forever. On the last day Christ will return to this earth. And he will take all believers to live with him in heaven forever. So we don't have to be afraid. We don't have to let our hearts be troubled. Soon Christ will return. Soon we will live with him in heaven forever. So whatever we face we don't have to be afraid of or worry about. For a perfect life with our Savior awaits us.

How can you tell if someone is a believer if you can't read their heart? Faith in Christ leads to love for Christ which shows itself in obedience to Christ. Someone should be able to tell you are a Christian by the way you act. Yet we often fail to love and obey him. But faith not

only leads to obedience but it also receives peace. Peace which only Christ can give—the peace of forgiveness and eternal life forever. Amen.