

John, Part 40 — The Revelation of Jesus Christ — Connected By Love

Jesus is revealing the strong connection that believers have with God and with one another. In our previous study, Jesus demonstrated the wonderful relationship believers have with Him. He is the True Vine and His Father was the vinedresser. Jesus indicated our total reliance on Him for life and fruitfulness. The connection we enjoy is a direct result of the Father's love for His Son and the manifestation of God's love.

John 15:9-17 NKJV As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹²This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another.

Jesus is demonstrating the change He expects to have believer's relationship and fellowship with Him. We are connected by love. First, we are connected to Him and the Father, and then we are united and connected to one another.

In the first part of John 15, He told us that He chose and appointed us to bear fruit. God expects that our connection with Christ will produce a great change in us. By choosing and appointing us, He has taken us from death into a life of blessing and abundance.

For this blessing and abundance to happen, we must make a life commitment to Him. This commitment is formed on the basis of love. The first commandment that God gave was for us to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul and strength, (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37). Jesus restated that command and now He is building upon it. When this happens, He will keep us flooded with His love, joy, and blessing. These blessings are a result of our deep fellowship with the Master.

John 15 shows us various degrees of this commitment. Often when we think of commitment, we refer to our relationship with God. It is true and necessary for believers to make a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Above our commitment to Him, God has made promises regarding His commitment to us. Isaiah was prophesying the end of Israel's exile, and their redemption and restoration.

Isaiah 49:13-14 NKJV Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted. ¹⁴But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me."

After a long period of suffering, God was comforting His people and having mercy on His afflicted. Their trial and tribulation was a result of unbelief, but instead of repentance toward God, they complained of being forsaken and forgotten by the Lord. As a response to their complaint, God told them how much He has loved them and has committed to them. He said His love exceeded a mother's love.

Isaiah 49:15-16 NKJV ¹⁵"Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. ¹⁶See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me. God's message of commitment and love is clear.

He said, "I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before me." God was showing the security of believers. God was telling them that regardless of the extent of their devastation, their walls were ever before Him.

God said they were "engraved on the palms of His hands." This is a sign of the closest identification with God Himself and His unchanging love. We have been engraved on the palm of His hands.

After His resurrection, the eleven were gathered together in Jerusalem. They were amazed that Jesus had appeared to Simon and also to those on the road to Emmaus. All of a sudden, Jesus appeared in the room with them and said, "Peace to you." They were terrified and frightened thinking they had seen a spirit. Standing in the midst of them, He said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself."

God said we were "engraved on the palms of His hands."

- He wrote our name in His Book of Life.
- He put our names on His breastplate and the shoulder pieces of His high priestly garments.
- Throughout the Bible, God reminds His people of His intimate knowledge and care over them.
- In Genesis 28:15, He promised, "I am with you and will keep you wherever you go... for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."
- In Deuteronomy 31:6 He said, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid... for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

God keeps telling His people, "I know you by name," and "You are mine." He says, "I know your works and where you dwell." He promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." The Lord God Almighty made a commitment to be constantly mindful of us. We are ever before Him.

Often, in our unbelief and forgetfulness, we lose sight of how precious we are in His sight. Listen to this commitment from the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 15:9 NKJV As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

John 15:13-16 NKJV ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. Jesus wants you to know the depth of His love for you.

It is difficult for many people to accept the fact that the Lord loves you. The Lord is telling you how fair you are in His sight. He wants to bathe you in His grace.

Ephesians 1:4-6 NKJV ⁴Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

- If you listen to what others say, you may be discouraged, frustrated and hopeless.
- If you listen to yourself, you may feel like you cannot measure up.
- You may feel defeated and that nothing good can happen.

You need to believe God's Word and rest in His love. Let your heart listen for His voice.

Listen to His Word and you will hear His voice and His heart. You cannot see Him physically, but you can still love Him. The Holy Spirit addressed this in the epistle of Peter.

1 Peter 1:8 NET ⁸You have not seen Him, but you love Him. You do not see Him now but you believe in Him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.

It is somewhat difficult to explain the relationship we have with Jesus now. In this world, we do not see Him. That is, we do not see His body or feel His flesh. We are not able to put our finger in the print of the nail that is in His hand. He has given us His Word and we can see Him in His Word. We can see Him in the world He has made. By faith we can know that Jesus is committed to us and loves us fully. We can know favor and care every day. We know His love and care in every aspect of our lives.

Tell Him that you love Him! Do it right now!

This takes us to John 15:9-17. As a result of our commitment to Him, Jesus will take us to another level of love, joy and fellowship. If we continue responding to Him, we will enjoy the favor of His blessings. In John 15:9, Jesus told us that while He was here on earth, everything He did was directed toward pleasing the Father. He was keeping His Father's commandments and was abiding in His love. His actions are the key for us to live the life of abundant love, joy and fellowship. We must live to please Him. We seem to flounder and fail, and we don't know how to please Him.

Here are some keys for success.

1. Keep His commandments.
2. Abide in His love.
3. Allow Him to take your relationship to another level.

God is going to have a relationship with you. There are several choices.

- If you refuse to keep His commandments and abide in His love, He will be your Judge and Jury.
- If you know Him as Savior, Lord, and Christ, you will know His forgiveness, compassion, and grace.
- Jesus is ready to take that relationship to a higher level, He wants to bring you by grace into the fellowship of friends.

This is above and beyond servant hood. This is beyond legal obedience. This is a life of love. You are His. He is the lover of your soul. Jesus loves you. He will cultivate your life and make you fruitful as you connect with Him. When the Lord comes to you, you need to tell Him that you love Him. Have you found the joy of living in His love?

John 15:9-11 NKJV ⁹“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If 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 remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

A life of fellowship with Christ is a life of joy, peace, and love. Jesus wants you to enjoy a life of His joy, peace, and love. There is no way to enjoy that fellowship of His love, joy, and peace and avoid the fellowship of loving one another.

In the next verse, Jesus ties this together.

John 15:12 NKJV This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

If we are going to keep His commandments and abide in His love, we must love one another. This is not by chance, at random, or an illogical thing. This is His commandment. If we love Him, we will love one another. This is what He chose for us.

John 15:16-17 NKJV ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another.

We are to love each other just as He has loved us!

Jesus qualified this kind of love in two ways. It should be as He loved the Father, and it should be a love that you would lay down your life for. To love as Jesus loved is elevating our love to a very high level. Only the Spirit of God can produce such love in our lives.