

Our Relationship With Jesus

Sunday, 5/6 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 5/7 at 7 PM

Sixth Sunday of Easter – 2018

Join us on Ascension Day: Free Meal at 6 PM; Divine Service at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: **Relationships** are important for many reasons – for ♦communication, ♦encouragement, ♦assistance, ♦etc. For example:

- ♦ If I need something hauled, I am blessed if I have a relationship with someone who has a pickup truck!
- ♦ Since I desperately need to have my sins removed, I am blessed if I have a relationship with Jesus – who took away the sin of the world!

Last week, we focused on **abiding** in Jesus – He being the vine and us being the branches, *as well as the fruit that is born by such braches who abide in Him*. Today, we continue in **John 15** with *more aspects of the vine—branch relationship* as we focus on the topic of **love**.

1. **Abide in My Love:** ⁹ **As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.** // Jesus identified love in this order: Father > Son > Disciples (> Others); there is a parallel: As the Father loved Jesus because He took away the sin of the world, *so Jesus loved His disciples because they would tell others about His saving work!* So how do we abide in Jesus' love? By helping others know ♦who He is and ♦what He did!

- a. Abiding involves keeping my commandments:
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.** // When we understand who Jesus is – *our only Savior*, and the HUGE benefit we have from Him – *ETERNAL LIFE*, we are filled with love for Him! That results in a desire to please Him, *thus to keep believing Him, following Him, serving Him!*
- b. You will have much joy: ¹¹ **These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.** // For those who know Jesus, *they have* ♣ *forgiveness and* ♣ *the assurance of eternal life!* **That is JOY;** and how does that joy become full? When 😊 we share God's Word and 😊 *the Holy Spirit brings others into a saving relationship with Jesus!*

2. **Take Loving Action:** ¹² **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.** // Love is a **broad** and **wonderful** reality, *but it is also oftentimes misunderstood.* **True love** is taking sacrificial action to help someone in need; true love expects nothing in return! **False love** is merely saying, “I love you,” or taking selfish action in order to get something in return! *True and false are very different!*

- a. The greatest way to love: ¹³ **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.** // That is the ultimate sacrifice – *one person voluntarily giving up his life so that someone else may continue to live!* When a person does that for someone he knows, *that is*

extraordinary! But think about Jesus' sacrifice, He gave up His life for people who ☹denied Him, ☹were opposed to Him, and ☹hated Him.

Nevertheless, He did it anyway *in order to make the way for everyone to* ✦be His friend and ✦be blessed forevermore! Also, *on the topic of being friends with Jesus*, let us never pull Him **down** to our level, but *let us rejoice that He has pulled us up to the honored status of being His friends!*

- b. The way we show our love for Jesus: ¹⁴ **You are my friends if you do what I command you.** // And what has Jesus command? *Love one another!* In other words, see the needs of others, *especially their spiritual needs*; then show them **true love** by *kindly sharing Jesus and His work to remove all sins!*

3. Our Friendship with Jesus: 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, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.** // In the grand scheme of things, a servant has a very small role – *and is unaware of the big picture.* However, for those who **know** Jesus, *He makes a full disclosure!* He wants them to know the big picture – about ✦creation, ✦the fall, ✦His saving work, ✦the importance of all people being in relationship with Him, ✦His current reign as King, and ✦His return in glory! Now, for us – *knowing that big picture* – we are blessed to be †Jesus' friends now and †His brothers and sisters for ever and ever!

4. **The Fruit We Bear Should Continue:** ¹⁶ **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.** // Since we were dead in our sins, **God** chose us and made us alive through our relationship with Jesus! Now, as branches abiding in the Vine, we are called to be fruitful – to show forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) in our daily lives, even as we pray in Jesus' name! As we live such lives, people learn about God's love, God is glorified, and some are transformed into God's holy children!

5. **Summary Statement:** ¹⁷ **These things I command you, so that you will love one another.** // So what did Jesus command?

- a. Abide in my love – so continue in a saving relationship with me! And how does that happen? As we continue to be open to God's work – through Word and Sacrament – to keep us spiritually nourished and healthy!
- b. Bear fruit – so continue living for me! As we do so, the fruit will naturally be present!
- c. Love one another – so tell others who I am and what I have done to remove all sins! As we do, **we** will have joy and **others** will be blessed!

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, help us to ever-continue in Jesus, bear much fruit, and truly love one another! In Jesus' name!

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