

# If You Love Me

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[ 0 : 00 ] John chapter 14, beginning in verse 15 and going through verse 26.

! If you would please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together. Jesus is speaking in the upper room with his disciples and he tells them, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever. 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. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.

Because I live, you also will live. And that day you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

[ 1 : 18 ] And he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus answered 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 home with him.

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. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, 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 have said to you.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Lord, would you please be seated? Now, I know that I've told you in the past that I prefer overseeing funerals rather than weddings.

And sometimes when I say that, people are shocked and they wonder if I'm some kind of wedding hater or, you know, like the Grinch of weddings, which I'm not, I'm really not.

[ 2 : 40 ] It's not that I don't like weddings, but that when I'm asked to preside over them, I take that responsibility very seriously.

So often, people involved in a wedding get entrenched in the event, the venue, the attire, the cake, the seating arrangement.

And they lose sight of the fact that two people are coming together and are covenanting to spend the rest of their lives with one another in a covenant relationship that symbolizes the relationship of Jesus Christ and his church.

I've seen brides, grooms, parents of brides and grooms lose their minds over minor details, forgetting that their son and their daughter are coming together before God to enter into a one flesh relationship that, again, communicates Christ's love for his church.

And so I see it as my responsibility to do what I can to prepare them for not just a wedding, a one-time event, but a marriage that is supposed to last for as long as they both shall live, a marriage that honors Christ.

[ 4 : 06 ] And that, to me, is a hefty responsibility. And one that honestly strikes a bit of dread into my heart whenever I'm asked to perform a wedding, unless I really know those people, like I know Max and Ashton, and I know, and man, I'm happy to do weddings like that.

And I don't know if I've, raise your hand if I've done your wedding. Okay, good. Good. I'd really feel that hefty responsibility. Now, if you want me to marry you, don't hesitate to ask me to do that.

Just know I'll take it seriously, okay? Because, again, it's not that I don't want people to get married, but I want to make sure that when a man and a woman come together to be joined in a marriage, that they take that seriously, that they take to heart the vows that they are going to make to one another, that their marriage then, they'll understand, will determine whether or not that man and that

woman who uttered those vows and made those promises to one another in the event of their wedding, whether they meant them or not.

The marriage will reveal that. But what does any of that have to do with this text? These words in John 14, 15 through 26, again, were spoken by Jesus just hours before he died, just hours before his crucifixion.

John's gospel moves us quickly through the three-year ministry of Jesus in chapters 1 through 13, but then when we get to chapter 14, it's like he presses the pause button.

[ 5 : 50 ] He slows things down. And in chapters 14 and 17, there he, inspired by the Holy Spirit, records Jesus' final moments with his disciples before his arrest and his crucifixion.

And here in these chapters, we see our Lord preparing his disciples for his departure. And so these chapters have been appropriately called the farewell discourse.

And this discourse concludes with a prayer from Jesus. And I want us to look at a section of that prayer.

And I want you to notice as we read it, a couple of prominent themes that should jump out to you as Jesus again makes his requests to his Father and his disciples hearing.

In John 17, 20 through 26, Jesus praying, says, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. That's us.

[ 6 : 51 ] That they all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and loved them, even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me, because you have loved me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

And so, as we read through that, did you see a couple of themes? One of those themes is unity.

And the unity that we experience, what keeps us together, the glue, the substance, the bonding agent that keeps us united together is love.

And so, these words that Jesus speaks here in John 14, 15 through 26, were shared just hours, again, before the greatest event in world history, the greatest act of love in human history, as the incarnate Son of God would substitute Himself, sacrificing His life in the place of sinners, so that everyone who believes in Him will be forgiven of their sins, and by faith in Him will be accepted as righteous by their Creator, the Creator of the universe, and enter into a never-ending joy and eternal life, being united to Him forever through the love of God, expressed clearly in Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 00 ] Jesus is about to do what He said that He would do in John 10, 15. He said that He would lay down His life for His sheep.

He is about to purchase His bride, the church, with His life. Something that our marriages, then, are supposed to symbolize.

Look at Ephesians 5, 25 through 27. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. How did Christ love the church?

Well, gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

And so you see from Christ's life and from His words and from His actions that demonstrated that He meant what He said, that He, without question, without doubt, loves His church.

[ 10 : 05 ] But do we, the church, express our love for Him with the redeemed lives that He has purchased through His sacrifice?

So in Ephesians 5, 22 through 24, we see how wives should love their husbands, but how the church is supposed to love our Lord.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

And so like a wedding, salvation for the believer is the event, the moment you were brought from death to life, the moment when the Holy Spirit regenerated you, indwelt you, and united you eternally with Christ.

The rest of your life then gives testimony like a marriage as to whether or not you genuinely meant what you confessed in the event when you said you were saved, when you claimed to be born again.

[ 11 : 26 ] And so in this text, as Jesus comforts and prepares His confused and fearful disciples for His soon departure and later return, He tells them four times, four times in verses 15, 21, 23, and 24, that genuine love for Him manifests itself in obedience to Him.

These verses cover a whole lot of ground. They talk about Christ's love for His disciples. They talk about His disciples' love for Christ.

It talks about the coming of the Holy Spirit who will uniquely dwell in the lives of those who have been truly saved. And so when I came to this text this week, I wanted to do two different sermons. One that talks about the love that Christ has for His church and His church is supposed to have for Him and another one about the Holy Spirit. You see, the Bible is inspired. It's the Word of God. These things are together for a reason.

And so in looking at these verses, I think that there are two major points that Jesus is making in this passage that again covers so much.

[ 12 : 40 ] and the first is this, that Jesus has a unique and special kind of love for His own. Jesus has a unique and special kind of love for His own, His own being the church.

In His time with the disciples before His crucifixion, Jesus makes an explicit distinction between those who are His and those who are not His.

That distinction is described by Him as those who on the one hand have been given to Him by His Father and then those who have been called out of the world as opposed to those who remain in the world or of the world.

And so again, I want us to look at Jesus' prayer at the conclusion of this farewell discourse to see how He maintains that distinction Himself. In John 17 verses 1 through 2, it says, when Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You since You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all that You have given Him. Then in verse 6, I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me out of the world.

[ 14 : 00 ] Yours they were and You gave them to Me and they have kept Your word. And then in verse 9, I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those who You have given to Me for they are Yours.

And then in verses 14 through 16, I have given them Your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world but that You keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. So you see that distinction. He has a special unique love for those whom the Father has given to Him. So in this text, John 14, 15 through 26, we see how Jesus uniquely loves His own, how He uniquely loves His church and He uniquely loves His church in a way that He does not love the world.

Now, someone might be thinking, well, what about John 3, 16? For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Well, we use Scripture to interpret Scripture. So while that passage does speak of God's love for a world that is cursed by sin, this text describes a unique and special kind of love that Jesus has for His bride, for His own, for His church.

And you know, when we think about a marriage which, again, symbolizes Christ's love for His church, that should make sense to us. Because beginning in verse 16, Jesus describes a special and unique gift that only those who truly belong to Him will receive.

[ 15 : 35 ] And that gift that He's giving to His bride is the Holy Spirit. Now, if a married man gives a gift to a woman who is not his wife, you'd question his love for her, wouldn't you?

We expect to see, and in fact, we like to see husbands expressing their affection to their wives through gift-giving to them that, in a way, affirms the vows that they made and reveals that they honor the commitment that they made in the event of the wedding to their spouse.

You know, children, I've noticed, my own kids, and I'm sure you have too, children love to see that their parents are in love. And often, they view that through gift-giving.

Whenever, I know as a kid, we were always excited to see whatever my dad was going to give my mom. And it was something that we enjoyed seeing because we liked to see the love that they had for one another.

Now, if your father gave a gift to another woman, that would upset you and understandably so because that is not his bride whom he has committed himself to. So I hope you understand what I'm saying. Jesus has a special kind of love for his bride, a special kind of love for his church.

[16:58] And the father reserves a special kind of gift that is only for his own. So look again at verses 16 through 17. And I will ask the father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, 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.

And then look at verse 19. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more but you will see me because I live you also will live. And then verse 22.

Judas not Iscariot said to him Lord how is it that you will manifest yourself and not to the world. So these verses make it clear that disciples those who have genuinely been saved by Christ who comprise his body who are his bride the church are uniquely loved by him in an intimate way that the world does not receive as Jesus says does not see does not know and does not understand. What is promised in these verses is something that is so intimate something that is so special relational and reciprocal that is unique and special to the church alone.

Something the world cannot receive and that gift is the Holy Spirit the third person of the Trinity but who or what is the Holy Spirit?

[18:27] Well there are many misconceptions about the Holy Spirit today. Some view the Holy Spirit as some kind of a mystical force some kind of impersonal power that God makes available to certain people.

They understand the Holy Spirit in a way that I think better describes the force in Star Wars that like the force the Holy Spirit just kind of is in everything and all that lives and if you have a certain amount of a high amount of midichlorians in your bloodstream you can manipulate the force to do whatever you want.

That's Star Wars. That's not the Bible. The Bible describes the Holy Spirit in a much different way. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit isn't some kind of impersonal force but that the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is divine. The Bible describes him as a person a being with a mind with emotions and with a will.

And so if you go to our website [highlandparkbaptist.net](http://highlandparkbaptist.net) and you click on the tab about us it will take you to a drop down that says what we believe.

[19:54] And if you click on that you will find a seven paragraph statement that brings all of scripture to bear all that it teaches about the Holy Spirit and what we therefore affirm about him in our church.

but I want to read to you the first paragraph of that statement. We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person eternal underived meaning not a created being possessing all of the attributes of personality and deity including intellect 1 Corinthians 2 10-13 emotions Ephesians 4 30 will 1 Corinthians 12-11 eternality Hebrews 9-14 omnipresence that God is everywhere Psalm 139 7-10 omniscience that God knows all things Isaiah 40 13-14 omnipotence that God has all power Romans 15-13 in truthfulness John 16-13 and it continues and all of the divine attributes he is co-equal co-eternal and equal in divine substance with the Father and the Son and the reference verses for that Matthew 28-19 Acts 5 3-4 Acts 28 25-26 1 Corinthians 12 4-6 2 Corinthians 13-14 Jeremiah 31 31-14 and Hebrews 10-15 through 17 so if you want to know who the Holy Spirit is I would direct you to the Bible but then I would direct you to that statement as well as the Holy Spirit relates to our text this morning though given the fact that he inspired it it's that Jesus speaks of him in a way here to encourage his troubled disciples and communicates his great love for them so again look at verse 18 and 19 Jesus says to them I will not leave you as orphans I will come to you yet a little while and the world will see me no more but you will see me because I live you live also so here's the sequence of thought in verses 16-17 it runs something like this Jesus has promised to ask the father to send another counselor who is the spirit of truth who will be with his disciples forever verses 16 and 17 and so that should encourage them because his helper like Jesus is divine and will be with them forever however when we get into verse 18 Jesus anticipates in fact he knows the concern that is now running in the minds of his disciples because Jesus has been telling them that he is leaving and that he will be leaving them soon but though he's told them

that already and prepared them to know or told them that he had a place prepared for them that as he goes that that will accomplish the preparation for their place to be with him eternally though he's told him all of those things and that he will come again that he will come back that he will take them to be with him forever in his father's house this was still an awful lot for the disciples to take in at once and so when

Jesus says in verse 18 I will not leave you as orphans I think that he says that because that's probably how some if not all of the disciples were feeling orphaned abandoned and though the spirit had dwelled with them as Jesus says to this point he had not yet dwelt in them and that wouldn't happen until after Jesus resurrection and ascension on the day of Pentecost which is recorded in Acts chapter 2 and so Jesus is here reassuring them in verse 19 of his love for them he is telling them I will not abandon you like a father who loves his children or a mother who is concerned for their children they will make preparations for them if they are to leave even in their will should it be that they die and so

[ 24 : 26 ] Jesus is promising his disciples that he will not abandon them that he will not leave them as orphans that he will go to the cross he will die but he will be resurrected and he will ascend to the father but because of his union with the Holy Spirit in the Trinity!

Jesus would also abide! in them through the indwelling of his spirit and this is a mystery for sure but Jesus goes on to say in verse 20 that what baffled them in the present as much as it was difficult for them to take this all in in this moment he tells them that soon they will fully understand what he's saying in verse 20 he says in that day you will know that I am in the father and you and that day is a reference to his resurrection that day will serve as the turning point for them they'll know beyond a shadow of a doubt on that day that Jesus is God and they'll know that all that he's promised to them would no doubt come to pass as

I was studying this this text this week I really appreciated and was helped by R.C. Sproul's comment on verse 20 it's a little lengthy but I want to read that to you because I think it provides a lot of helpful clarity about how we apply this verse and this passage to our lives so quoting from him R.C.

Sproul said Jesus said at that day you will know that I am in my father and you in me and I believing for the church this means that if you are a Christian you are in Christ and if I'm a Christian I am in Christ as a result we have a mystical union not only with Christ but with each other and that union transcends all other human relationships he continues on this this has staggering implications if I hate someone who is in! Christ I am not only sinning against that person I am sinning against Christ himself how can I despise one in whom Christ resides that's why we are called to have an extraordinary love for one another if we cannot love another person for his or her own sake we must do it for Christ sake loving the person because Christ indwells him or her this mystical!

[ 27 : 48 ] union is the foundation and communion in the body of Christ so two points of application before I continue is that first I know many of you have felt abandonment in your life before maybe even now someone you trusted a spouse that broke their vows to you a parent who didn't love or care for you like they should have even a close friend who who betrayed your trust that happens to us but what what Jesus wants you to know here and see here is that he will never abandon!

you he will never leave you or forsake you he will never betray you if you if you've known his special and unique love which came to you at your salvation know that he who began a good work in you will see it through to completion he will keep you from the moment of your salvation to eternity so treasure his words fill your minds with his truth he is present with you now by the indwelling of his spirit which ensures again that the work that he began in you will be completed by him one day and on that day you will see him face to face and you will embrace him and you will be in that eternal place that he has prepared for you by dying on the cross for your sins kind of love through

God saving grace who have received his Holy Spirit know that you have been called know that you have been enabled and know that you have been commanded to love Jesus in a way that forsakes all other kinds of love and attachments to this world which brings me to the second point here from this text that our Lord is making to us that the church should have a unique and special kind of love for Jesus Jesus has a unique and special kind of love for his church and so the church likewise should have a unique and special kind of love for Jesus and again he tells us four times in this passage that this love is of such a nature that it should result in commandment keeping it includes keeping his word as

Jesus says again in verse 15 if you love me you will keep my commandments and then in verse 21 whoever has my commandments and keeps them he it is who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him and then in verse 23 Jesus answered him if anyone loves me he will keep my words and my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him and then in verse 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 so obedience we must understand is what the Lord calls for here but obedience does not necessarily mean that the one that you are obeying is someone that you love you'll obey a boss or a supervisor you'll obey a coach or a teacher or a government official but by obeying them that does not necessarily mean that you love them doesn't mean that you even really like them in some cases instead as Jesus points out in verses 15 and 23 it is love for him that precedes and produces then a desire to obey his commandments keeping his word is a result of having loved him and so we could read verses 15 and 23 like this if you love me the result will be that you will keep my commandments if you love me the result will be that you will keep my word love for Jesus is a response that comes as Jesus pointed out in verses 7 through 14 from knowing and seeing him for who he truly is it's beholding Jesus as worthy of our greatest affections it's loving him because you understand that he first loved you it's admiring him it's treasuring him it's desiring him it's enjoying him it's being satisfied in him it's worshiping him because without him you understand that you would be completely without hope in a fallen world

[ 33 : 18 ] Jesus is God Jesus is excellent Jesus is pure he is perfect he is holy he is great he is glorious he is the king of kings he is the lord of lords he is righteous he is savior he is God he is all that is good and he's full of grace and truth when you are born again truly genuinely your eyes are opened to behold these things you see the depths of your depravity and you see simultaneously the lengths that Jesus was willing to go to save you from the eternal consequences of your sins you behold the beauty the majesty the awesomeness the greatness the goodness the faithfulness love of one who is willing to descend and be condescended on the cross to bear the wrath of God for your sins and to die in your place for you how can you not love someone who has done so much for you love someone and so loving Jesus uniquely and specially means loving him supremely it means desiring him and delighting in him and loving him above all other things and as we've read

John's gospel we should realize or should understand that that's how he describes love throughout this book that he was inspired by the spirit to write that we truly love what we most desire and so we see in John 3 19 Jesus speaking to Nicodemus Nicodemus says and this is the judgment the light has come into the world but the people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil people loved the darkness rather than the light meaning they desired it they preferred it they weren't loving it out of a sense of duty they were loving it because that's what they craved because that's what they wanted because that's what they truly treasure the same kind of misplaced love is described in John 12 43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from

God meaning again it was a kind of love that revealed that what they truly craved what they truly desired what they truly wanted was the praise of men they loved and they desired that now contrast that with the father's love for the son in John 3 35 the father loves the son and has given all things into his hand and we see at Jesus baptism that there the father testifies this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased and then later at Jesus transfiguration he said of Jesus you are my beloved son with you I am well pleased so from these passages we should get the idea that the way to love Jesus uniquely and specially is to be pleased with him to treasure!

him to desire to know him more and to feel pleasure and joy when we gather together with his church to worship him the unique and special kind of love that the church and Christians who make up the church should have for Jesus is to desire him to serve him and worship him with our whole heart our worship should be rejoice full when we gather we pursue Christ as our treasure because we know that in him we find true and lasting satisfaction we obey him not so that he will love us we obey him because we know how much he has loved us and does love us and as the bride of Christ he lavishes us with gifts that the world cannot receive we receive his spirit at salvation who serves as our counselor opening our minds and our hearts to awesome truths about

Jesus as he says in verse 17 we have not been left as orphans the Holy Spirit's presence with us means that Christ will continually be with us and is with us meaning that we are not without guidance we are not without help we are not without protection and provision in this life the Holy

Spirit testifies to us continually that Christ has risen that he is coming back and that our lives are not wasted in the pursuit of him and that because he lives now we live too both today and forever binding us inseparably to God as verse 21 says and he continually reminds us as verses 25 and 26 say of all the things that he has done and promised to do which help us grow in our knowledge in our faith in our love for God as the Spirit sanctifies us in the truth and helps us continually to put sin to death as

[ 39 : 22 ] Jesus says in verse 25 and 26 these things I have spoken to you while I am still with you 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 have said to you which I hope and I pray he's been doing and is doing right now because look there can be no doubting that Christ loves his church that Christ loves his own but the question comes back to do we do you love him in the way that he commands you to hear is he truly your treasure is that reflected in your life when an outsider when an unbeliever gathers with us

Highland Park Baptist Church to worship do they witness that Jesus is the object of our greatest affection that we treasure him more than anything else that we that we desire unity in his body so much that we'll do whatever it takes to preserve it because we understand that we are our Lord's bride because we see from scripture that it's possible for a church to have the right doctrine it's possible for the church to love God's word and to be busy about doing good things in his name but be passionless be cold and be mechanical in their pursuit of

Christ through their worship and through their words and through their treatment of one another this is this is the case for the church in Ephesus this can happen and it happened to the church in Ephesus revelations 2 2 through 5 Jesus speaking to that church says I know your works your toil and your patient endurance and how you cannot bear with those who are evil but who have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not and found them to be false I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name sake and you have not grown weary sounds like a pretty good church right but I have this against you that you have abandoned the love you had at first remember therefore from where you have fallen repent and do the works you did at first if not I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent so brothers sisters in Christ we have been loved uniquely by our Lord and we must treasure him and that should be apparent in the way that we treat one another in the way that we treat our community in the way that we serve we want to have right doctrine we want to love his word but we want people to see and we want our Lord to be pleased!

rejoices and worships Christ Jesus our Lord and so what is the main point to take away from all of this or the main idea this is what I think it is the person or the church who truly loves God is indwelt by his spirit and delights in his son Jesus always the person or the church who truly loves God is indwelt by his spirit and delights in his son Jesus always four questions of application for you to discuss in your community groups tonight and to just think about today and later this week number one if you love someone how do you show your love when you love someone and demonstrate your love to them what kind of results does that produce in your relationship with that person in your relationship with that person question number two how has

[ 44 : 14 ] Jesus demonstrated his love for us what kind of results should that produce in our lives how has Jesus demonstrated his love for us what kind of results should that produce in our lives question number three what do do you know about the Holy Spirit what are the attributes of the Holy Spirit and then there's some scriptures there for you to study to answer that question and then finally what can you do to help those around you come to love and follow Jesus what can you do to ensure that our church does not lose its first love I'm going to pray and then we'll have our invitation hymn and I invite you to pray where you're at or you can come up here pray for our church pray for yourself if you want someone to pray for you

I'm here and I'd be happy to do that for you right now will you bow your heads with me and let's pray Lord God we are thankful to know the great love that you have loved us with that father you descended you took on flesh Lord you died in our place for our sins and that you've promised that as you rose and as you ascended back into heaven that you would send another helper who is your spirit who indwells us and we thank you for that God because so often we allow our flesh to distract us from what is true and what is good and what is worthy of our time and as your bride Lord often we we behave in adulterous ways but

Lord you continue to love us you continue to give us your word and so father I pray that today as we've heard it that it has washed us that you will renew us through it Lord that we will be the kind of bride that you call us to be who loves your commands because we know how good and how great you are that we would treasure you and delight in you and that Lord as we do so a watching world would see how different we are and how great you are and that that the truth that we have would be shared and hopefully Lord that they would know and be saved as you have called us and saved us Father use our church to make much of your name and be pleased by all that results may we love you with a unique and special kind of love that testifies that you are our greatest treasure in Jesus name we pray!  
Amen! Amen!