

John 14:15-21 (NLT)

**15** *“If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. 19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. 20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”*

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Scripture – John 13-15

In this final message to His Disciples, Jesus demonstrated His words. He compassionately washed their feet. No strings attached. No commentary. No complaints.

He didn’t say a word. He never complained. He Simply loved. Unconditionally.

Then He said; *“I am giving you a new commandment: ‘Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove... that you are My Disciples.”* (John 13:34-35 NLT) and then a little later He repeated this message. *“I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you.”* (John 15:12 NLT)

LOVE AS JESUS LOVED. *“If you love me, obey my commandments.* (John 14:15 NLT)

LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Do others know we are Christians? Do we LOVE as Jesus LOVED?

It is easy to love each other in church. We all like each other. We respect each other. We seek to understand each other. We enjoy being with each other.

We may not always AGREE with each other, but we treat each other as family. And no matter what, we still love each other.

But when we leave the safety and security of this familiar place, we enter a dark and dangerous world. Not everyone likes us. Not everyone respects us. Not everyone understands us. And there are some folks who are just plain hard to love (let alone like) at times.

I don’t know about you. But sometimes, it is hard to love everyone as Jesus loved.

... when things don’t go our way... when people do things that upset or hurt us or someone we love.

And yet, that is what we are called to do, as Jesus’ followers. LOVE AS JESUS LOVED.

Sounds easy, doesn’t it? But Jesus knew His Disciples (and all of us) would not always find it easy to live a life of love and grace in this world.

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you... the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth... he lives with you now and later will be in you... I will not abandon you ... I will come to you.”* (John 14:16-18 NLT)

“Jesus ... promises that the Spirit ... will continue to be present as we live into His command to love (as)... He loved ...” (Dawn Chesser, Discipleship Ministries)

JESUS LOVED His disciples by giving, by serving, by putting them first.

“Jesus loved all kinds of people... the poor, oppressed, outcasts, the sick and diseased, mentally ill, the blind, lame, deaf, and dumb. He loved women and children. He loved those inside his faith community and those from outside it. He loved people from cultural and ethnic groups other than his own.”

“Jesus gave himself in love to others by teaching them, healing them, and ... hanging out with them. Jesus didn't surround himself with the successful people of his generation.” He didn't hang out with the bold and the beautiful, the rich and famous, the powerful and elite.”

“Jesus chose to spend his time with the rejects of His generation... He gave himself to anybody and everybody who needed someone to love them...” He loved all people, by sacrificing His very own life.”

The good news is... we are not alone in loving as Jesus loved. God has sent the “Spirit...to strengthen and lift up our hearts” As we strive to love others. (Dawn Chesser, Discipleship Ministries)

LOVE AS JESUS LOVED.

Story of John Wesley. the father of Methodism.

For most of his life, he dedicated himself to Loving as Jesus Loved through his teaching, preaching and advocacy.

He is perhaps best known for his life philosophy: *“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”* (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/denominationalfounders/john-wesley.html>)

LOVE AS JESUS LOVED.

Charles Swindoll tells of a time he was reflecting on his life. One evening he recalled a children's story entitled *The Giving Tree*, about a tree who loved a little boy. (The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein © 1964; HarperCollins Publishers)

Swindoll, reflecting on this story, wondered if he had been more like the tree or the boy. And he had been both. *“How many giving trees have there been in my life?” “How many have given of themselves so that I could grow, accomplish my goals, find satisfaction?”* (Stories from the Heart, The Original Collection; ed. Alice Gray, © 1996, 2001, Alice Gray; Multnomah Publishers, Inc., “Reflections,” from *The Finishing Touch*, Charles Swindoll; pp. 128-129)

LOVE AS JESUS LOVED

Followers of Jesus choose a different path. They live holy lives. They live counter to the culture in which they live. They don't react in the same way that others do when things don't go their way. They forgive. They care. They understand. They accept and welcome all people. They strive for harmony and peace with everyone. They live differently, because they Love Differently. They Love as Jesus Loved. Unconditionally. Unashamedly. Extravagantly. Sacrificially.

*“The greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends.”* (John 15.13 NLT)

Friends, let us change our corner of the world by living and loving differently.