

# True Love

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, now, we're going to turn to our Bible reading for this evening. Edward Lobb, an honorary! associate here with us, part of our preaching team, is preaching to us again this evening as we continue! our series in John chapters 14 to 16, the upper room with the farewell discourse. And we're going to read again this week from John chapter 14. So do grab a Bible. If you don't have a Bible with you, we do have visitors' Bibles spread around. If you're not sure where one is, wave your hand. Someone in the welcome team would love to grab one for you. And do open up a Bible and follow along as we read John chapter 14, verses 1 through to 24. That's page 901, if you are using a visitor's Bible. John 14, beginning then at verse 1. The Lord Jesus says,

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us.

Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen the Father, whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

[ 3 : 0 1 ] 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.

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, 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. Amen. This is God's word and we'll return to it shortly.

Amen. Miss Bennett, you must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.

So said Mr. Darcy to Miss Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. It was a declaration of love expressed in the way that you made those declarations at the beginning of the 19th century.

[ 5 : 3 9 ] I imagine that many of the men who are here tonight have made similar declarations, though perhaps using more modern language. There may be other men here who are summing up the courage to make a declaration of that kind. It is a big thing to do. So much hangs on her response.

If she gives you the red light, you're devastated. If she gives you the green light, you are the happiest man in Scotland. Now the Bible at its deepest level is a declaration of love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. So when God the Father sent Jesus into the world, he was declaring his love for the world.

Now the world was all for giving God the red light rather than the green because Jesus came and he was largely rejected by the very people that he came to save.

But there were some who turned to him. There were some who received him. There were some who recognized him. Now here in John chapter 14, Jesus is speaking to 11 men.

[ 6 : 53 ] That is the 12 apostles minus Judas Iscariot. And these men were turning to him and they were beginning to recognize him. Now their recognition is far from complete here.

We saw last week in verse 9 of this chapter that Jesus has to say to the apostle Philip, Have I been with you so long and still you do not recognize me, Philip? And he goes straight on to explain his relationship to God the Father.

He says to Philip in verse 10, I am in the Father and the Father is in me. So the apostles are beginning to know Jesus. They're beginning to recognize him.

But as we turn into this evening's passage at verse 15, Jesus asks them not only if they recognize him, but if they love him. The verse begins with four searching words.

If you love me. Because if you do love me, certain things will follow. God has declared his love for the world by sending Jesus to the world.

[ 7 : 58 ] But Jesus is now asking the apostles if they are willing to declare their love for him and to demonstrate it. Now this is the very first point in John's gospel where the question, do you love me, is raised.

Jesus has already made clear his love for the apostles. Just look with me back at chapter 13 and verse 1. 13 verse 1. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Right to the end. It was a love that did not shrink even from undergoing crucifixion. Then look at chapter 13 verse 34. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You are also to love one another. Just as I have loved you. So there's Jesus' declaration of love for his apostles. So chapter 13 has made it very clear that Jesus loves the apostles.

Verse 34 extends the idea that the apostles are to love one another. But it's not till we reach chapter 14 verse 15 that the idea of them loving Jesus is first expressed in these words, if you love me.

[ 9 : 24 ] Now my title for this evening is true love. We only have this short passage to study, but the words love, loves, and loved occur eight times in these 10 verses, verses 15 to 24.

And Jesus is the only speaker, so for him to use that word eight times in 10 verses shows how much the subject of love is on his mind. Now we'll get into the passage in just a moment.

But let's first remember that John's gospel is written as much for those who are not Christians as for those who are Christians. In fact, John tells us this clearly towards the end of the book, towards the end of chapter 20, that he has written this book with the purpose of persuading people, persuading them to believe on the basis of powerful evidence that Jesus is the Christ and truly the divine son of God, so that believing they might enjoy eternal life because of Jesus.

Now there may well be some people here tonight who are not Christians. I do hope there are. And if that's you, let me say you are very welcome. And maybe you've come along to find out more about who Christians are and what we believe.

Well, let me sum up our position like this. The central figure of our faith is Jesus himself. Christianity is all about him. And it's all about having a relationship with him, a relationship of love and trust.

[ 10 : 57 ] I have an old friend whose name is Vijay Menon. Vijay came from the southern part of India and he was brought up in a strict Hindu family. He came to London as a young man to work for Lloyd's Shipping Insurance.

And he became a Christian very suddenly and rather unexpectedly from his point of view. And he was a man who was always delightfully frank and forthright. He would say, for example, to complete strangers, complete strangers, did you know I was once a Hindu and now I'm a Christian?

Well, of course they didn't know, but they felt they had to ask him out of politeness. And he was always forthcoming. Anyway, Vijay became a preacher. And one of the things that he often used to say in his sermons was this, Christianity is not a religion.

It is a relationship. And that is so deeply true. To be a Christian is to enter a relationship with Jesus himself. It's a relationship of being loved by him and loving him in response.

Now, of course, he's not with us physically. He ascended to heaven some 2,000 years ago. But he is with us in a way that our passage is about to teach us. It's a relationship of love.

[12:14] It's a relationship of true love. What he said to his apostles, he says to us who follow him today, chapter 13, verse 34, I have loved you.

And now he says in chapter 14, verse 15, if you love me. So if you're not a Christian and if you're intrigued by this idea of being loved by Jesus and loving him, keep listening.

And you may find that Jesus himself, by his words, persuades you to put your trust in him. He's instructing his apostles here on the night before his crucifixion.

And these three chapters of instruction are designed to prepare these men for everything that lay ahead of them. Now, in our passage, verses 15 to 24, there are two main strands of teaching.

There are two powerful ideas here which lie at the heart of what Jesus is saying. The first is the loving command from him to obey him. In verse 15.

[13:17] And the second is the heartwarming assurance that those who do love him and obey him will receive the Holy Spirit. Verse 16 and onwards. So obedience to him and the Holy Spirit.

These are the two big ideas here. And both of these ideas are governed and controlled by the opening phrase, if you love me. So the thinking of the passage, to put it simply, is like this.

If you love me, you will demonstrate your love by keeping my commandments. And to help you to love me, to help you to keep my commandments, you will receive the Holy Spirit whose role will be to strengthen you.

So let's begin with verse 15. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And you'll see that he says almost the same thing again in verse 21.

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And again in verse 23. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. And then Jesus expresses the same idea, but in negative form in verse 24.

[14:27] Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. In short, our love for Jesus is demonstrated by our obedience to his commandments.

So this means that the true Christian life always has a deeply moral quality about it. To love Jesus involves developing a profound sense of right and wrong.

And that sense of right and wrong is not shaped by the ethics of the world. It's shaped by him, by his commandments. The ethics of the world and the commandments of Jesus do sometimes overlap, but very often they clash irreconcilably.

And when they clash irreconcilably, our love for Jesus will always be tested because we have to make some sort of a decision. Do we go the way of the world and forsake the commandments of Jesus?

Or do we stick to his commandments and risk incurring the hostility of the world? To show our love for Jesus by obeying his commandments will sometimes be costly.

[15:34] I think that the Lord's teaching here in verse 15 is harder for us today than it was for Christians two or three generations ago. Think of it like this.

Back in roughly the middle of the 20th century, the values of the secular culture were much closer to the Bible's values and teaching than they are today. For example, back then, there was more of a sense that appropriate authority was a good thing for society.

And this was a reflection of the authority structures that are taught in the Bible. So in the family, the importance of honoring father and mother was more generally upheld.

In schools, discipline was more widely respected and it was easier to run a school because the behavior and language of the pupils was much more restrained.

In the commercial world, business was conducted with a greater sense of truthfulness and trustworthiness than it is today. Two businessmen would agree a deal with a handshake, just a handshake, and they would stick to their agreement.

[16:44] When it came to sex and marriage, biblical teaching, of course, was not always followed, but there was a much more widespread acceptance in society that the Bible's teaching was right

and good.

For example, in 1936, the new king, Edward VIII, not yet crowned, abdicated the throne because he wanted to marry a woman who had been divorced.

And the consensus of society based on Jesus' teaching would not allow him to make such a marriage and ascend the throne. Such values do not persist today.

So which commandments is Jesus referring to in verse 15 when he says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments? Well, we can be sure that he includes the Ten Commandments because although they were originally given by God to Moses, by the Father, back in the book of Exodus, we know from our verse 10 here in this chapter that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in him.

So if Jesus fully expresses the nature of God the Father, then the Father's Ten Commandments are as much Jesus' commandments as they are the Father's. But look also at verse 23 where the wording is slightly different.

[ 18 : 01 ] If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. That surely is a broader thing than just the Ten Commandments. I think what he means is he will allow the full pressure of all my teaching to shape his moral life and his decisions.

Jesus' teaching, of course, includes the Ten Commandments, but it goes even further. For example, he teaches by word and personal example the importance of humility.

humility. Just look back to chapter 13 and verse 14. He's just washed the feet of the disciples and he says, If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

Now you won't find the ethics of servant-heartedness in the Ten Commandments, but Jesus teaches it here with great power. Other examples could be added.

The compassion that he showed to seriously ill people. His respect for women and for little children. His love for Gentiles, for outsiders, for those who are ceremonially unclean.

[ 19 : 09 ] His undaunted courage in the face of religious opposition. His unshakable resistance to Satan and temptation. His willingness to suffer and to die in order to fulfill his father's purpose for his life.

Even his love for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. All of that surely is summed up in my word in verse 23. It's my words in verse 24.

He's surely talking more about much more than just the Ten Commandments, but he certainly includes them. Now let us think for a moment of a few of the Ten Commandments so as to help us to grasp what verse 15 is likely to mean in practice.

I'll just pick out three of the Commandments. The first Commandment says, you shall have no other gods before me or besides me. That is a penetrating Commandment because it challenges our deep inclination to have some kind of an idol which upstages the true God in our thinking.

So let's now have a three-second pause for silence in which each of us can think of the thing that we might be tempted to idolize.

[ 20 : 28 ] One, two, three. Have you got that thing now in your mind? Are you training your telescopic sights upon it?

So there it is in your mind, this thing. You're tempted to love it, to wrap your soul around it, to cling to it, to have it in a sense define what your life is all about.

You're tempted to say to it, oh, thing, oh, thing of all things. You are the thingest thing of all things in the world to me. That's what I think of you. And that's the idolater speaking.

He's wanting to wrap his soul around this thing. The truth is he loves the thing. But Jesus says, if you love me, you will keep the first commandment and the Lord your God will be the chief delight and joy of all your heart.

Let's think now about the seventh commandment, you shall not commit adultery. Why should the Lord put that commandment into the ten fundamental rules for a happy and godly society?

[ 21 : 39 ] Well, the answer is that if we break our marriage vows by committing adultery, it makes for an unhappy and ungodly society. And it defies the very nature of God because God is himself always faithful and true.

But all of us, all of us from time to time are assailed with adulterous temptation. Is that not true? So when that happens, what are we to think of such thoughts?

Jesus says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. So for us, we've got to be ruthless with ourselves. We need to take a double-barreled shotgun to such temptations and reduce them to

ashes.

Adultery brings misery. The tempter will tell us it will bring joy. It will not. The man or woman who commits adultery becomes wretched. A case of adultery within a Christian congregation always brings pain and sadness to the whole congregation, not just to those involved.

Marital fidelity within a congregation is a culture which is developed over time and it's a sweet and lovely thing. So we need to nourish fidelity and cultivate it in every way we can.

[ 22 : 54 ] And when fidelity is highly cultivated, highly valued in a congregation, it means that we can trust each other. The women trust the men. The men trust the women.

The women respect the men and have confidence in them that they're not going to start flirting or making unwholesome suggestions. A church that is filled with marital fidelity conveys a powerful message about God's fidelity to the world around us.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Resisting temptation is a striking expression of love for Jesus. Now the ninth commandment.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. In other words, you shall not say false things about somebody else in a court of law, but equally, you shall be truthful in what you say about your neighbor in the regular ins and outs of daily life.

But to be always really truthful in what we say about other people can test our integrity almost more than anything else does. We all know the pressure to be untruthful.

[ 24 : 04 ] A whole variety of motives can produce that pressure. So we might want to gently smear somebody else's character so as to make ourselves look better by comparison. Jealousy can motivate us.

We see somebody who's more competent than we are, more efficient, more gifted, and we feel rather crushed. So we say things out of spite which are not really true. The desire for money, the desire for business, can lie behind telling lies.

I knew a man years ago, a Christian man, who worked for a big, well-known company down in England. And his immediate bosses in the company wanted to secure an important contract.

Now this was a big contract, but the company knew that they didn't have sufficient resources to get the work done within the required time frame. So my friend's bosses said to him, look John, go to this company that we're negotiating with and even though we know and you know that we can't do the work in the time stated, tell them that we can.

We need this contract. It's going to bring us a lot of profit. Now all credit to my friend because he said to his superiors, no, I'm not going to tell lies in order to secure this contract.

[ 25 : 23 ] and he resigned. He was prepared to lose his job and his income rather than be untruthful. If you love me, says Jesus, you will keep my commandments.

It can be very testing, costly, to show our love for Jesus. Now the pattern that Jesus sets for us in verse 15 is actually the pattern of his own life and practice.

Just look on to verse 30 in this chapter, verse 30, where Jesus is talking about the ruler of this world who is the devil. And we know that the devil has been tempting Jesus earlier in his life to do things which would go against the will of God.

But Jesus says here of the devil in verse 30, he has no claim on me, which means he has no power over me. Yes, he has tempted me, but he has not scored a single point.

And then in verse 31, Jesus explains why the devil has no power over him. He says he has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father.

[ 26 : 36 ] So do you see the pattern there? I love the Father and that's why I do as he commands. And in the same way, if we love Jesus, we will keep his commandments. Obedience to the commandments is how we express our love for Jesus.

So our love for Jesus is shown in a thousand different decisions that have moral backbone in them. The tempter will tempt us to be idolaters, to be adulterers, to be liars, to break every one of the Ten Commandments, and to disregard the example of Jesus in humility and compassion and courage.

Keeping his commandments will be costly and demanding for us, but if we're learning to love Jesus before anything else, our appetite for keeping his commandments will grow as the years go on.

Well, now here's a question. Look again at verse 15. Is it an ethical imperative or is it a promise?

Well, surely it's both.

As you read it, you feel the driving force of the ethical imperative. You say to yourself, the Lord Jesus is saying, I've got to learn obedience. If I'm to say with integrity, I love the Lord Jesus, it's not a question of just fuzzy, wuzzy, warm feelings in my fuzzy, wuzzy, warm heart.

[ 27 : 55 ] It's a question of learning to resist the devil and to do something which may be painful and costly. But think of it like this. Verse 15 is also a kind of promise, an assurance.

If you love me, you will learn to keep my commandments. It will happen. Just as the appetite comes with the eating, so the desire to obey will come as we practice obedience.

We set ourselves personal precedents in life. If we obey today and it's costly for us, we'll find it easier to obey tomorrow. If we disobey today, we're more likely to disobey again tomorrow.

So we create our own precedents. Let's turn back for a moment to chapter 13, verse 34, because that provides us with an essential ingredient in the commands of Jesus and that is the new commandment.

So verse 34, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

[ 29 : 07 ] Now we're bound to ask in what way is this commandment new? After all, the Old Testament clearly commands God's people to love, to love God and to love our neighbor.

Well this commandment is new in two ways. First, Jesus raises the bar to the highest level. He says, you are to love me, to love one another just as I have loved you.

Now that is a standard higher than anything in the Old Testament. If we love one another to the same standard with which Christ has loved us, it means that we'll be prepared to lay down our lives for each other.

Just look on to chapter 15 verse 13. Greater love has no one than this that someone lays down his life for his friends. That's the level of love that Jesus is talking about in chapter 13 verse 34.

It's a new standard. But secondly, this new commandment speaks of a new order. John's gospel is the gospel of the new creation.

[ 30 : 15 ] Jesus came to bring the new birth, to cause people to exit the realm of death and to enter the realm of life. So we're beginning to experience the life of the new world even while we're still living in the old world.

So the love that Christians have for each other breathes the atmosphere of the new creation. We are journeying together out of this world eventually, headed for the Father's house.

And as we journey together, we take each other by the hand. We support each other. We sing together. We laugh together. We bear one another up in times of sorrow.

We share a great deal of our lives together and we learn to love doing so. We eat together. We chill out together. We didn't have a picnic together today, did we? Anyway, we would have got damp, soggy.

So we do all sorts of things together. We go to weddings together. We go to funerals together. We lend each other things, lawnmowers, chainsaws, broody hens.

[ 31 : 18 ] We babysit for each other. We visit those who are very old and can't get out anymore, etc., etc., etc. And Jesus says in chapter 13 verse 35, by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

So this love that we share within the church is a sign to those who are not Christians. They look at the life of the church and they say there is something delightful that goes on here, something beautiful.

So the love that Christians show to each other is part of our evangelism. Verse 35, people will know that you are my disciples when they see how deeply you care for each other.

Now again, this is not fuzzy-wuzzy feelings. It's very practical. It involves sacrifice. It involves work. But it's full of joy. Well friends, we must move on to the second main strand of Jesus' teaching here. I hope we've seen that true love for him involves a fundamental reordering of our priorities. Our desires are changed. Our sense of moral determination is brought to life.

[ 32 : 29 ] We learn to live no longer for ourselves but for him. But keeping his commandments is often difficult. Not only because work and sacrifice are involved but because the devil tempts us to conform our lives to his temptations.

There is a real ouch factor in resisting temptation as you know. But Jesus comes now to our aid in verse 16. If you love me verse 15 more than one thing is going to happen.

The first thing is you will keep my commandments. And the second thing verse 16 and the promise of verse 16 still flows out of that phrase if you love me.

The second thing is that in answer to my request to the Father he will give you another helper to be with you forever. Now Jesus is emphasizing throughout these chapters that he is going to leave his disciples very soon.

One of his big purposes in chapters 14 to 16 is to prepare the apostles for life after his departure. Within a few weeks he will ascend to heaven and they will see him no more in this world.

[ 33 : 40 ] But help is on its way. Another helper the Holy Spirit is very soon to come and says Jesus he will never leave you. Verse 16 he will be with you forever.

Verse 17 he will dwell with you and will be in you. Now that is a comprehensive pair of prepositions isn't it? With you and in you.

Your companion alongside you and more than that he will take up residence in your very heart. He will be in you. Now there's a very strong link between verse 15 and verse 16.

Keeping the Lord Jesus' commandments is by definition difficult for us. The tempter dogs our steps. Our natural laziness and self-centeredness cries out to us take it easy man cut yourself some slack all work and no play makes Edward a dull boy.

Our enemies are the devil and our selfish natures but the Lord Jesus knows this and therefore he has made provision for it. The Father he says is going to give you another helper to be with you forever.

[ 34 : 53 ] Well who is he? Verse 17 he is the spirit of truth real true truth. The world can't receive him says Jesus because the world means human life lived without reference to God.

The world is ruled by the devil as verse 30 shows us and the devil is the father of lies there's no truth in him but you my disciples Jesus is saying are now to be inhabited by the spirit of truth.

So what can we expect the Holy Spirit to do for us? What will he be to us? Well Jesus is going to teach us a lot about the Holy Spirit in these chapters and we'll learn more about his reality and his power as these weeks go on.

But let's begin just with the teaching of these few verses and I want us to take notice of two great truths that Jesus opens up for us here about the Holy Spirit. First the Holy Spirit is the helper. verse 16 in fact he is another helper. Jesus is the first helper that's what he means but he's about to depart and he will be replaced by the Holy Spirit who is another helper.

[ 36 : 06 ] And the word translated another means another of the same kind as the first. It's a rather peculiar adjective this word another. Another of the same kind as the first.

at my house I have two dogs. If I show you my Labrador you'll say nice dog but don't you have a second dog? And I will say yes I do but it's a Jack Russell.

Then I'll show you the Jack Russell and I'll have to say to you here is my other dog. But I couldn't use the word that Jesus uses here to describe the Holy Spirit because my second dog is not of the same kind as the first.

Jesus is saying the Holy Spirit is of like nature with me. Father, Son and Spirit are three distinct persons but all share the same nature which is full deity.

Now this is very encouraging for us. This helper coming to the world to replace Jesus and to continue his work is equipped with all the power of God.

[ 37 : 11 ] He is God and if he is living within our hearts and personalities we have the power at work in us which will enable us to love Jesus and to keep his commandments.

And if he is the spirit of truth as verse 17 tells us he will enable us to discern the lies of the and the temptations of the devil and to resist them.

This word helper translates the Greek word I'm sorry to go into Greek but it's a word that Bible translators have found rather difficult and that's why it comes out in different forms.

They sometimes render it as counselor or comforter or advocate. But this word parakletos literally means someone who is called alongside to bring help and strength into a situation a bit like a doctor or a paramedic being called alongside an injured person.

The idea is that the one called alongside brings help from an immense reservoir of strength.

Looking back into the Old Testament helps us to understand the Holy Spirit's role better.

[ 38 : 21 ] Let me give you one or two examples. In Isaiah chapter 11 the coming king of David's line who proves of course to be Jesus in the end. This coming king is to have the spirit of the Lord resting upon him and he is described as the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of

counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Now that is some spirit filled with wisdom and with power. In Isaiah chapter 42 God says I have put my spirit upon my chosen servant.

He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth. In other words the servant of the Lord and this proves again to be Jesus in the end is so filled with strength that finally he will be able to establish a new and perfect order for the life of the world.

The spirit gives power to the servant of the Lord. In the book of 1 Samuel the spirit of the Lord rushes upon the very young man David and enables him to kill Goliath the great Philistine.

In the book of Judges chapter 14 the spirit of the Lord rushes upon Samson because a young lion comes roaring at him out of the vineyards and he picks up the young lion and tears it to pieces with his hands.

[ 39 : 49 ] And in the very next chapter Judges 15 filled again with the spirit Samson kills a thousand enemy soldiers with the jawbone of a donkey. And in all these passages the key element is the spirit gives power to defeat an apparently invincible enemy.

And think of Jesus himself. Mark's gospel chapter 1 verse 12 the spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness where he spent 40 days being tempted by Satan.

Then Luke recounting the same episode Luke chapter 4 he says that Jesus full of the Holy Spirit was led by the spirit for 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the devil.

Well we know how that particular battle ended. Satan came second. So this is what the helper of John 14 16 is like.

He brings power into the lives of the frail disciples to help them to keep going in the midst of great temptations and testings and provocations. The hostile circumstances they are going to have to face will at times seem unbearable to them.

[ 41 : 04 ] They will say at times I can't do this too much and they will discover that they can even to the point of facing martyrdom as some of them did. The helper would prove to be a source of immense power and strength to them and he will be the same to us.

We need him in our lives if we are to persevere as joyful Christians through all the savageries that the devil will throw at us. But verse 16 Jesus has asked the father and the father from the day of Pentecost onwards has given to the Lord's people another helper has opened up for us a source of immense strength and we can say hallelujah.

We can say because of the spirit's power it's possible to be an enduring Christian. He brings power to those who are weak and fragile. now in a moment I want to point out one more thing about the Holy Spirit from this passage and it's a very wonderful thing but I'm aware I've hardly touched on verses 18 to 23 yet so we'll have a quick run through there.

Are you game for that? I'm just running on the spot to give me some mental energy. Anyway let's keep going. Pick up your magnifying glasses and focus on the text 18 to 23. These verses concern Jesus' itinerary where he's planning to go in the immediate future and in the longer term future and he explains these things to the apostles for their comfort so that they're not left in the dark worrying. So verse 18 I am about to leave you. You need to know that but I'm not going to leave you desolate like little orphans. I will come to you.

[ 42 : 48 ] I will. He means on Easter Sunday. Verse 19 after my crucifixion the unbelieving world will see me no more but you will see me.

And this happened between Easter Sunday and his ascension. Jesus appeared a number of times to teach and reassure the disciples but he only appeared to his followers not to the world.

Verse 20 in that day on Easter Sunday you will know then for certain that I am in my father. How will they know that? Because his resurrection will demonstrate his deity.

He had made that point back in verse 10 I am in the father. But verse 20 on Easter Sunday you will also come to understand not only that I dwell in the father but that you dwell in me and I dwell in you.

Now we'll return to that amazing assertion in just a moment. Verse 21 in the first half of the verse he repeats the thought of verse 15 that the one who loves him is the one who keeps his commandments but loving him has this further entailment.

[ 43 : 58 ] He says the one who loves me will be loved by my father. So the father loves the one who loves the son. But there's yet another entailment in verse 21.

Jesus says I will love the one who loves me and I will manifest myself to him. In other words reveal myself to him. And this means that the Christian life is a cumulative experience of getting to know the Lord Jesus better and better as he reveals himself to us in the Bible.

As we read the Bible the Lord Jesus reveals his features to us. His character his love for us what he values and what he commands.

Verse 22 Judas the other Judas not Iscariot asks a question and his question rightly grasps that Jesus will not only reveal himself to his people and not to the world in general but he then says how is this?

How can this be? And Jesus replies in verse 23 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.

[ 45 : 13 ] now this is the point I want to linger on just for a moment before we finish. Verse 23 to the one who loves Jesus and keeps his word and is loved by the father Jesus says we will come to him and make our home with him.

We the father and the son are willing to take up residence in the heart and life of every Christian. Now that is an assertion so wonderful that it would be hard to believe if it had not been spoken by the one who tells no lies.

What does it mean? Verse 17 helps us. The spirit of truth the Holy Spirit cannot be received as a house guest by the unbelieving world but says Jesus to his disciples you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you.

So if we take verse 17 and verse 23 together Jesus is saying that all three persons of the Holy Trinity make their home within the believer's heart.

How do we understand that? Well the Bible teaches that God the Father is seated on the throne of heaven. He rules from on high. That's where he is. And Jesus forever fully man and fully God is seated at the Father's right hand.

[ 46 : 35 ] But the Holy Spirit is described many times in the Bible as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus. So when he comes to live in our hearts it's as though he brings with him the very presence of the Father and the Son.

Ultimately as one of the old creeds puts it the three persons of the Trinity are indivisible. You can't separate them. So while the Father and the Son are ruling the universe from heaven they are also in the person of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts if we are believers who love Jesus and keep his commandments.

The great artist Michelangelo painted the roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome between the years 1508 and 1512. And you've probably seen this in a reproduction but right up there on the roof he pictures Adam reaching out his hand stretching out towards the hand of God but not quite able to touch the divine hand.

It's a picture of man longing to be with God but not quite able to make contact with him. But Jesus says in verse 23 we will come to the believer and make our home with him.

The believer will not be left desolate will not be left stretching his hand up to heaven in vain. Just think for a moment of the whole gospel story.

[ 48 : 08 ] It's all about God and man living together in joyful harmony and love. In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve lived with God.

They knew him, they loved him and he blessed them. But then the serpent appeared and deceived them and they disobeyed God and God expelled them from his presence.

We cannot overestimate the effects of that devastating rupture. The very soil of the earth was placed under a curse and the man and woman were subjected to pain, to grueling labor, to aging and to death.

God said to them, dust you are and to dust you will return. But that dreadful situation, the human race being cast out of God's presence was not to go on forever.

The Jewish people were chosen and they were blessed. And in the days of Moses, God gave orders for a tabernacle, a tent, to be made which lived right amongst God's people indicating his presence with them in their midst.

[ 49 : 17 ] Then later in Jerusalem, the temple was built, a permanent structure which replaced the function of the tabernacle. But the people were still unable to gain access to the most holy place in the center of the temple.

So God was in a way dwelling with them, but there were still barriers to his immediate real presence. But finally, Jesus came as the new temple.

In his very own person, God and man dwelt together in complete harmony. And when he died on the cross, the curtain in the temple building which had barred access to God was ripped apart from top to bottom.

The death of Christ has opened the way for God and man to be reunited. And in John 14, 23, Jesus teaches this astonishing thing that the Spirit of God conveying the very presence of the Father and the Son takes up his residence in the heart of every believer who is learning to love Jesus and obey his commandments.

And this means that we become the temple of the Holy Spirit as individuals and as the church. But this whole process, this wonderful process of reconciliation is not yet completed.

[ 50 : 35 ] But it will be. Just listen to the book of Revelation, chapter 21, verse 3. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. Total, final, inseparable union between God and his people is in sight.

We just need to wait for it patiently. So friends, let's get these two great facts about the Holy Spirit deep into our systems. First, he brings great strength to the believer to enable us to endure as Christians and not to fall by the wayside.

And secondly, he has come since the day of Pentecost to live in the heart of every Christian giving us a foretaste in our real experience of the joys of heaven where the dwelling place of God is with man.

[ 51 : 54 ] Well, let's bow our heads together and we'll pray. Amen. our dear heavenly father, we cannot measure your grace and kindness to us, that you should look upon sinful men and women and despite our frailty, be willing to live with us and to dwell with us forever.

Fill our hearts afresh, we pray, with joy and give us such a love for our Lord Jesus that we learn to keep and to love his commandments.

And we ask it in his name. Amen. I was really enjoying the singing earlier.

Congregation was doing well, wasn't it, Matt? Didn't you give it full marks? It's great to sing together, isn't it? It's one of the ways in which we do love each other and encourage each other, so keep singing together well. In our final hymn, it's a prayer to the Holy Spirit, come down, O love divine, seek out the soul of mine and visit it with your own ardour glowing.

Thank you.