

## **SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES**

— **February 25, 2018** —

*Pastor Les Smith*

**SERIES: Making True Disciples**

**SERMON: Following the Discipleship Course - Part 4**

**TEXT: John 14:15-24**

**“From Loving to Obeying”**

### **Central Message:**

Our current series, “Making True Disciples,” has been our attempt to answer the question, “How can we develop faithful followers of Christ, build authentic relationships, and accomplish it in the context of the local church?” We have tried to lay out the fact that establishing real relationships involves a four step “stair step” process that begins with knowing Christ. It begins with accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and develops in the four progressive and iterative steps. We first have to come to know Christ...not know about Him but know Him intimately and personally. After we begin to know Christ, we can begin to trust Him, and the more we trust Him, the more we will love Him. Once we know Him and trust Him and love Him, the more likely we will obey him. But obedience for believers is not automatic, as we will discover in our text for today. Jesus has promised the indwelling Spirit who enables us to obey Christ. As we have articulated in the past, discipleship happens in the context of small groups. But the question that needs to be answered is, “How do we have authentic, meaningful relationships with other believers?”

We follow essentially the same steps when we are building relationships with

other Christians. First, you have get to know them, then you begin to trust them, and after you trust them, you can take their advice. If we try to skip a step, the whole process spins out of control. Each step builds on the previous step. Today, our focus is on trusting Christ. We are able to handle any difficulty that life throws our way once we have confidence in who Christ is and what He says.

In our lesson for this week, we pick up again with Jesus in the upper room with his disciples. Jesus was only hours away from His passion on the cross, and He sought to comfort His friends. There are at least three principles that emerge from our text today that, if understood, will move us to a closer relationship of obedience with our Savior. The central message of today's text is this... the true blessing in obedience is that it allows us to express our love for Christ and it enables us to experience His love for us.

**Principle #1: Obedience is the expression of our love for Christ.**  
(John 14:15, 21, 23)

The point of these verses is that we cannot separate our love for Christ from our obedience to Christ. It is also true that we cannot separate loving other believers from our claim of loving Christ because He commanded us to love one another. John 14:15 states this message as succinctly as it can be stated. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep My commandments." In other words, we cannot claim to love Him if we are unwilling to do as He commands. A little girl claimed to love broccoli, but when the plate was passed at the dinner table, she did not take any. When asked why she took none, she said, "I love broccoli, but not enough to eat it." The same is true of Christians...we claim to love Christ and to love His word, but we don't love it enough to obey it.

**Principle #2: Obedience is enabled by the indwelling Christ.**

(John 14:16-18, 23)

Jesus promised that He would not leave His disciples as orphans. He planned to send "another Comforter", the Holy Spirit, who would be with them, but even more significantly, He would be *in* them. In the Old Testament, believers had the presence of the Holy Spirit, but it was not a permanent indwelling. With the coming of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, He was available to enable believers who chose to abide in Him. Unfortunately, some believers have received the gift of the Holy Spirit but chose not to "walk in the Spirit", which is a choice we can all make. Jesus is telling his disciples that He will come and take up residence in their lives in the person of the Holy Spirit, and as they yield to His control, they will be able to obey Christ completely.

**Principle #3: Obedience is evidence that we have come to know Christ.**

(John 14:18-21)

In Luke 10:22, Jesus says, *"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."*

The message from Christ is clear...only those to whom Christ has chosen to reveal Himself can come to know Him or have a relationship with Him. Why is this so? Unbelievers cannot know Christ because, according to Scripture, they are dead in trespasses and sin. The God of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't know Christ, and they cannot understand spiritual things. It is only when Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, removes the "scales" from our eyes that we are able to see the glorious light of the gospel. When we obey the commands of Christ, we are demonstrating that the "scales" have been removed from our eyes and that we have come to know Christ, trust Christ, and love Christ, and we can do what He commands us to do.