

“Trust and Obey”
By Rev. Frances Savill
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Readings:

John 14:23-29

In years past, preachers put a lot of emphasis on the rules of the Christian life focusing on moral and just living.

It was drilled into peoples’ head that they were to keep the commandments and teachings of Jesus. But there is a way to keep the letter of the law, that can be unloving, inflexible and frankly unchristian.

Today, there is a great emphasis on loving.

Love God, love your neighbour.

And that’s all good.

But one of the problems I see is that “love” comes to mean thinking kindly about, or have nice feelings about God and neighbor.

And we don’t engage in the sacrificial love that the Bible calls us to.

And when we talk only about love, there is a whole part of the scriptures that can be ignored.

Judaism, the faith of Jesus that he came to fulfill, is a moral faith and a generous and just faith.

This morning's passage teaching by Jesus, brings things together in a way that holds all of this as one.

Jesus says to his disciples, on the night before his death, after he has set the disciples an example by washing their feet, Jesus says; "those who love me, will keep my commandments."

And that sounds a little strange to my ears. Linking love and following Jesus' teachings doesn't entirely jive to my way of thinking at first blush.

But, reflecting further, parents do the same kind of thing with their children.

We urge children to follow the rules they were taught, because the rules are for their safety, for things to run smoothly, and for everyone's good – at least if they are good, wise parents.

Jesus' teachings are for our good, they are the things that lead to life and well-being, for us and for our community.

Notice what Jesus does not say. He doesn't see; "Keep my commandments or else." This is not a threat, but an invitation to live life God's way, the way Jesus lived, the way we were intended to live from the beginning.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

For a minute I'd like to consider how we learn to love Jesus.

Sometimes our hearts grow cold, and we don't love Jesus as we once did, or as we want to.

But that love can be rekindled when we spend time with Jesus in prayer, when we spend time reflecting on Jesus' life and teachings.

Examine the wonder and beauty of this world around us.

Spend some time with the cross.

Read the reflections of someone else who loves Jesus deeply, and the ambers of love will burst into a blaze again.

Spend time daily thanking Jesus for the gifts that are yours today.

Then out of love for Jesus, out of thankfulness, begin to obey his commands and teachings.

The Apostle Paul was taking up a collection for destitute Christians in Jerusalem.

He wrote a letter to the church in Corinth asking them to give generously to help those who were in great need.

But as Paul writes, he asks to the church to consider the incredible gift they have been given by Jesus.

Jesus left heaven, was born into lowly circumstances, he gave up everything to fully live our life, and then he gave up his life and died that we might have eternal life.

And Paul asks them to think on this gift, the overwhelming generosity of our Saviour, and then out of love for Jesus, to give their gift.

The law will ask us to give 10% but loving Jesus will ask us to give sacrificially, 10% or more, and whatever our gift it will be given in love of Jesus our Lord, in response to all he has done for us.

The law teaches us to love our neighbour, but Jesus taught that we are to love our enemy and pray for those who persecute us.

Jesus himself prayed for those who put him on the cross; "Father forgive them".

Jesus says to us: If you love me, then for my sake, for the sake of your love for me, begin to forgive your brother, or sister, or neighbour, or enemy, and pray for them.

And here's the key, because we can't do this in our own strength.

Jesus says:

Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.

But he goes on to say:

My Father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them.

Then Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit who will dwell in those who love him and obey his teaching.

The Holy Spirit helps us to follow Jesus' teachings more fully.

The Holy Spirit also enables us to love more those we do not love.

The Holy Spirit enables us to be generous, less fearful and more faithful.

And as the Holy Spirit lives and works in us, we are joined more to our Lord, helping us more and more to love Jesus, and obey his commandments.

But it is always our choice.

The Holy Spirit acts as we ask and pray.

If you want to love Jesus more, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the Holy Spirit's love for Jesus, the love that dwells between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If you want to be more loving of others and learn to walk in Jesus' way, learning to trust and follow his commands, ask the Holy Spirit for help today.

God will not override our choices.

Sometimes my prayer is simply; God, help me to want to trust you more, help me to know that Your way is the best way, Shepherd me so that my heart and my mind will be changed, give me Your love, that I might love.

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. The words you hear me say are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵ "I have spoken all these things while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Father will send the Advocate in my name to help you. The Advocate is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid

Remembering Jesus' love, we start to follow, we begin, to put our steps into His, we start to follow his teachings because we love Jesus a little and would like to love Him more.

We start and the Holy Spirit helps us- showing us how to love Jesus today, how to trust and follow His teachings and commands.

This is how we were intended to live, this is the path that leads to life.
This is the path to peace, and an untroubled heart.

Thanks be to God.