



August 6, 2023

*“Love, Church, Purpose”*

*SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.*

News:

★ **Memorial Service, August 19 at 2 pm** ★ **Church Camp August 24-27** ★

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ [www.myaletheia.com](http://www.myaletheia.com)

Like us on Facebook (aletheiachristianfellowship) Listen on PodBean (Aletheia Christian Fellowship)

Emails: [pastor@myaletheia.com](mailto:pastor@myaletheia.com), [stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com](mailto:stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com)

**JOHN 15:12-17 ~**

What is meant by the word TEAM?

The commandment of Christ is that we love one another. John 13:34&35, “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.”

We see clarification and outcome, which both hint at purpose.

What is the way that we are to love one another?

What is the given result that comes from loving one another?

What purpose does that suggest?

Jesus has loved us in the greatest possible way... He “will lay down his life for his friends” - for us - for you. The result is that “all people will know” that we are the \_\_\_\_\_.

The thing that makes the church recognizable as \_\_\_\_\_ church.

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

Your personal positive involvement in \_\_\_\_\_ shows the world that you are someone who believes in Jesus, someone who takes Jesus seriously, and someone who \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus enough, to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus enough, to \_\_\_\_\_ what Jesus wants you to do.

What does Jesus want? He wants all of His followers to actually \_\_\_\_\_ His example. To “love other Christians in the same \_\_\_\_\_ and to the same \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus loves Christians.” The natural context of that kind of devotion between Christians is \_\_\_\_\_.

What Jesus wanted was groups of Christians caring for each other, each in their own gifting, for the betterment of the group and for an example of His love to the world. Such a group of well-led Christians serve as proof that Christ does indeed continue to live in this world through His disciples.

The reason we are to be easily recognizable as Christians is to openly \_\_\_\_\_ Christ.

The purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_ the Kingdom of God on earth - grow the church.

Eternal meaning is found in fulfilling God’s \_\_\_\_\_, which is simply to respectfully \_\_\_\_\_ Him enough to obey Him.

In verse 12 the type and the degree of love is His love - His love is the standard. We can’t do that on our own as Jesus said. It is only in \_\_\_\_\_ to Him that His love can become ours.

There’s a huge and obvious difference between being a slave and being a friend. Our submission or obedience to Him is not to \_\_\_\_\_ His friends, but because He already \_\_\_\_\_ us His friends.

Verse 16 is bold, blunt, and there. You \_\_\_\_\_ choose Jesus. God chooses those who choose Him when He chooses them.

Not only were we chosen by Jesus we were \_\_\_\_\_ by Him.

What is that job?

-----  
Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



**Jon  
Sat,  
Aug 19  
@ 2pm**

John 15:12–17, 12“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends. 14You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 17This I command you, that you love one another.

Self-centered people who are successful at something want the spotlight on them and don't want to share the glory with their teammates who helped them make it

possible. Such people don't like the saying, "There is no I, in team." Shaquille O'Neil, better known as Shaq, famously said that to his teammate Kobe Bryant, a basketball player widely known for being a ball hog, as well as a glory hound. Kobe responded to Shaq, "maybe not, but the letters do spell me." Another way people respond to "There is no I, in team," is, "Yeah, well there ain't no we either."

Of course, a team is made up of individuals, but for it to truly function as a team, each person must give up their own individualism in favor of working together. That's really what Jesus was talking about here. We are supposed to be a team. A team with our Heavenly Father as the owner Jesus as the Head Coach and all of us working together with them through the power of the Holy Spirit to get the job done - which in this case, is to do God's Will. We're "Team Jesus" That means the church universal (all the thousands of churches worldwide) and the church particular (Alêtheia), made up of the Children of God, working together in the family business.

The commandment of Christ is that we love one another. Here we see it given unambiguously given as an imperative commandment directly from Jesus for the second and the third times in three chapters. The

first time came in John chapter 13 where Jesus said, “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another” (John 13:34&35).

I read two verses there because we see a clarification and a result of our love for one another which hints that our love for one another has a purpose. There is a way that we are to love one another and there is a result that comes from loving one another, and that hints at the purpose of loving one another.



The way is “just I have loved you.” Bringing that part forward to today’s verses, He has loved us in the greatest possible way proving that He “will lay down his

life for his friends” - for us - for you. The result is that “all people will know” that we are the followers of Jesus - Christ’s disciples - so, Christians. This divine unconditional love for one another is demonstrated, or displayed, in tangible, or visible, real acts of self-sacrificing service for one another. That is the thing that Jesus said would make the church recognizable as His church.

See that? What Jesus was telling them and by extension what Jesus is telling you right now, is that your personal positive involvement in church shows the world that you are someone who believes in Jesus, someone who takes Jesus seriously, and someone who loves Jesus enough, to trust Jesus enough, to do what Jesus wants you to do. What does Jesus want? He wants all of His followers to actually follow His example. He wants all of us to engage with each other as a church family and build each other up, instead of tearing each other down. Helping each other out, instead of making things harder for each other.



Specifically, He wants our mutual Agapê love, which can only come through connection to Him, will make all of us Christians identifiable, even to non-Christians, as Christians - as Christ's very Own disciples. As the children of God busy doing what He wants... Which is our purpose.

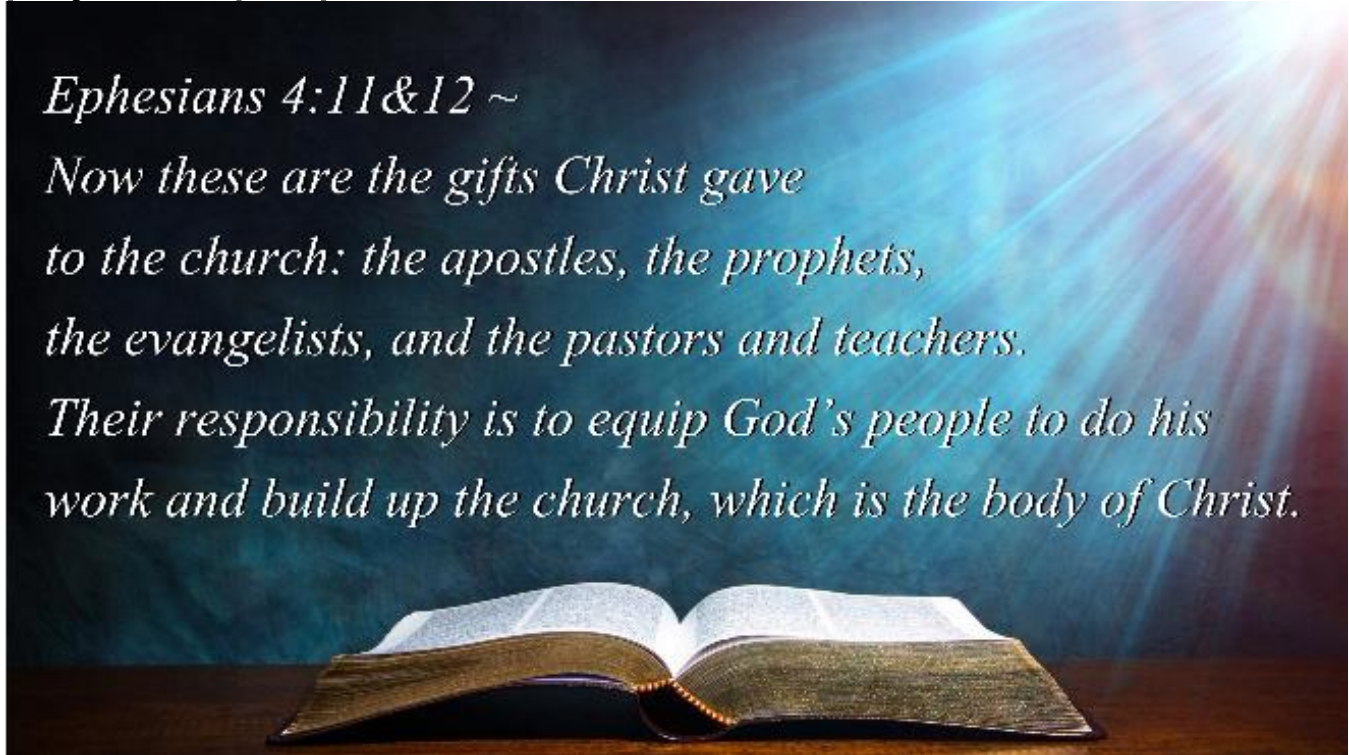
That result, that "all people will know that you are My disciples," hints at the reason and therefore that purpose - our purpose - your purpose that I keep talking about. God doesn't do things without a reason - He always has a purpose in mind. God literally knows everything. He acts with the entire sweep of all time, all places, all people, all everything, well accounted for. He's never surprised or caught off guard. He "works all things, and that is literally, all things, to the ultimate

good.” There is a reason that people are not instantly transferred to Heaven the moment that they accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and it’s because God has a physical purpose for us to fulfill on earth.

*Ephesians 4:11&12 ~*

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

*Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, which is the body of Christ.*



The commandment is to “love other Christians in the same way and to the same degree that Jesus loves Christians” The natural context of that kind of devotion between Christians is church.

Unless it’s impossible due to circumstances beyond your control, you cannot tell me, and more importantly, you cannot tell Jesus, that you love other Christians as He loves them, and then not participate with them in a local Christian group. A local Christian group by biblical definition is a church with a pastor. It’s popular in our society to have home churches, or small groups, or



Bible study fellowships, or parachurch gatherings, or just Christian friend circles as a modern substitute for church. It's partially a refusal to submit to authority, it's partially to limit the group to people you find easier to get along with, and it's partially due to ignorance and laziness.

One the same end of the spectrum, but seemingly on the other end, is participation in a very large church where it is every bit as easy to do your own thing, interact with a select sub-group, and still be ignorant and lazy.

What Jesus wanted was groups of Christians caring for each other, each in their own gifting, for the betterment of the group and for the example that such a group would provide to the world. Such a group of well-led Christians serve as confirmation that the Holy Spirit enables people to love those whom they would otherwise not love. It's proof that Christ does indeed continue to live in this world through His disciples. That's the result.

# got purpose?

*WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU HERE FOR?*

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,  
which God prepared in advance for us to do.

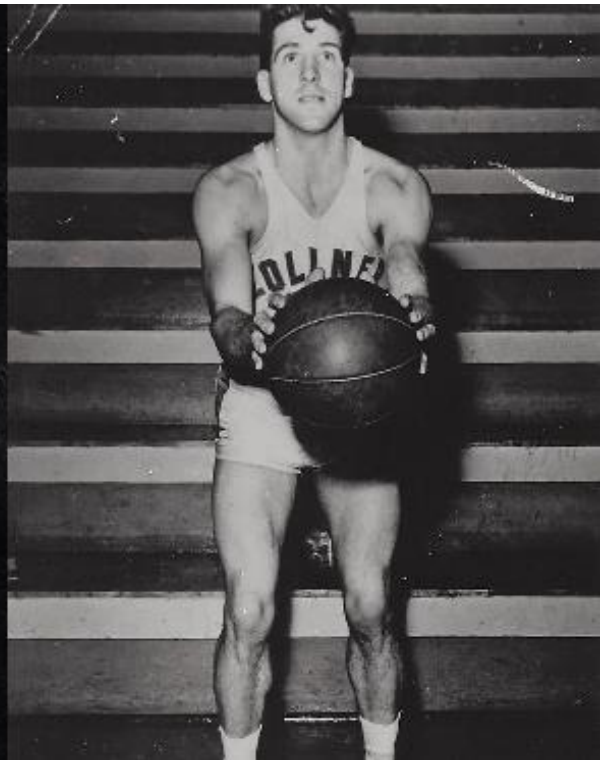
Who cares if the world - if non-Christians - know that we are Christ's disciples? I mean if you read ahead a bit in John it would be far easier if non-Christians couldn't tell that we are Christians. Well, that's the hint at the purpose. The reason we are to be easily recognizable as Christians is to openly share Christ.

The purpose is to build the Kingdom of God on earth. Each Christian busy about the Father's business in obedience to Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit within them is building the Kingdom. Such people have a purpose, their life then has purpose and so their life then has meaning.

Robert McDermott

Professional Basketball  
Player 1934-1950

Only 4X Consecutive MVP  
in History (43'-46')



I mentioned a couple of basketball players earlier... Ever hear of Bobby McDermott? He is considered to be the best professional player of the 1940's and the only player to ever be named the league's Most Valuable Player 4 times in a row. What a remarkable achievement and only a few years later practically no one has ever heard of him and in a few more years no one will be alive who knew him or saw him play. As the wisest man to ever live wrote in the opening of His Book, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?" (Ecclesiastes 1:2&3).



Eternal meaning is found in fulfilling God's purpose, which is simply to respectfully love Him enough to obey Him. To obey Him is to actively love other Christians and you cannot do that from the bleachers. That wise man's Book ends, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13&14). What are His commandments? They are all entirely subsumed in "Love one another." Truly do that and everything else will fall into place naturally. To "Love one another," is the only thing that the Christian Community must do, and it is the only thing that we cannot seem to do.



The reason that the church universal has done such an abysmal job at building the Kingdom is that we are all shooting at the wrong target. We're great at developing rituals, traditions, rules, regulations, prohibitions, and punishments. We excel at fostering religious legalism and rebuilding barriers that Jesus already broke down. What we can't seem to figure out is how to genuinely Agapê each other.

When we do, the world sees, and it then knows, that Jesus has true followers on earth. That result hints at the purpose of presenting Jesus as still physically existing now through His church.



That's the true meaning of all these "name it and claim it" verses that people misuse. Jesus promised in chapter 14 that that He would do greater things through His disciples than He ever did as a single individual physically inhabiting a body. That's what it means when He says to us, "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." He did not say "if you ask Me anything I will do it," He specifically added the condition that the request would be in His name. It means that He lives through us because we seek what He seeks. Our will is conformed to His Will which is identical to the Father's Will.

That's confirmed by the fact that the very next words out of His mouth were, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." All of that is tied together. We

allow Jesus to love His church through us by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and lives are changed... Not just the lives of Christians, but the lives of others as they see evidence of God's love manifested on earth through His kids.



Despite what some people think, Christianity isn't just a warm fuzzy love fest where everyone sits around holding hands and singing Kumbaya. God has real purpose in pouring out His Love. His real purpose is to pour out His love even more. We're here to be the conduits for that.



What we were told in the beginning bits of chapter 15 was that our entire responsibility is abiding, or remaining in Jesus, connected to the True Vine and that if we do that, then by very definition Jesus remains, abides, and is connected to us. If a branch can be said to be connected to a vine, it is just as true to say that the vine is connected to that branch.

In those first 11 verses of this chapter, we saw Jesus define the fruit as love. He said again in verse 10, "If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love." The commandment of the Father that Jesus kept was Love. He allowed the Father to Love the world through Him and that is



precisely what is being asked of us. There's a purpose to love.

If we allow Jesus to love others through us on behalf of the Father, we can only do so as connected branches in the True Vine. Being thusly connected means that Christ is equally connected to us and that is perfect assurance. So, the personal benefit of producing fruit, which again, is allowing Jesus to love others through you, is that you have internal proof of your eternal Salvation.



So, to recap, we see in our passage today starting in verse 12, Jesus repeated His commandment from chapter 13, along with His clarification of the type and the degree of love that He was talking about. It is His love - that's the standard, right? His love is the

standard, and we are not going to get there on our own and He said that. It is only in connection to Him that His love can become ours.

In verse 13 He pounded the truth of that home by giving the example of Himself - what He was staring at in just a couple of hours - His self-sacrificing death on our behalf. He gave an example to show what His type and the degree of love entailed.



We generally award the Medal of Honor - the nation's highest award for gallantry - to people who sacrifice themselves for others. I'm the last person on the planet who would minimize such a sacrifice, so understand I'm not minimizing that, I'm maximizing what Jesus did. To jump on a live grenade to save your friends, knowing that you're not coming back from that - at least

not whole - is insanely heroic, but it is nothing compared to volunteering to take the sin of the world upon you as though it were yours, and then submitting yourself to hours of torture, mutilation, and horrific death so that your friends don't have to.



That's a glimpse of the love of Jesus for you and therefore the love expected from you. That's why in verses 14 and 15, Jesus declared that His friends were indeed His friends, not merely His property, His duty, His family, His responsibility, but were in fact His friends.

See, there's a huge and obvious difference between being a slave and being a friend. The Apostle Paul constantly talked about being slaves of Christ and his favorite self-description was one that I also use, which

is, δοῦλος θεοῦ (dü-lōs thē-ü), God's slave. The thing is we submit ourselves as His slaves because He has elevated us to be His friends.

We are also family. This is a nice example of how the Bible must be taken in context and with understanding of the dynamics intended. You cannot rightly understand God's Word if you merely take everything literally. It's one of the bigger problems with untrained interpretation. If we take Jesus only literally and without any nuance of intended meaning then we say that Christians are not slaves, but friends. That would mean that Paul was wrong to call us slaves and that this same author the Apostle John was wrong in His First Letter when he called us His children, and Jesus wrong when He called us His Brother. Contextually we are God's friends because we are His trusted children who, in-turn, trust Him so much that we willingly, readily, and eagerly, submit ourselves to Him as His slaves. Context and nuance.

It is not a submission or an obedience in order to become His friends, but a submission and obedience because He has already made us His friends.



Verse 16 is bold, blunt, and there. You did not choose Jesus. The Bible is crystal clear on this point and not just here, but everywhere. You are not a Christian filled with God's Spirit, living in union with Him forevermore because you were smart enough to accept Jesus.

"There but by the grace of God go I," is a fantastic saying even though originally it had a different meaning. You are not one tiny bit better in any way shape or form than the person who will end up swimming in the Lake of Fire. "You are Saved by the grace of God through faith in the completed work of Jesus and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God." The Bible passage goes on to specifically say that it is "not by works, lest anyone boast" (Ephesians 2:8&9). Your wisdom in choosing to believe would be your work

which is explicitly excluded. So, what's the deal? If it is only God's choice, why would He choose one person over another?

What's also Biblically clear is that God chooses those who choose Him when He chooses them. That's more profound than it probably sounds and if you don't get it, you've got plenty of company. Maybe the easiest thing to say is "I don't know why God chose me but I'm sure glad that He did."



**We are his workmanship, created  
in Christ Jesus for good works.**

Ephesians 2:10

Not only were we chosen by Jesus we were appointed by Him. Technically these words were for the Apostles, but we can rightly extrapolate them out to cover all Christians and when we do we see that the reason He chose us was to appoint us and that means that we have a job to do.

What is that job? Well, in verse 16 Jesus plainly tells us that it is to go and bear fruit. We already saw that the fruit is love and we already saw that the focus is on loving our fellow Christian.

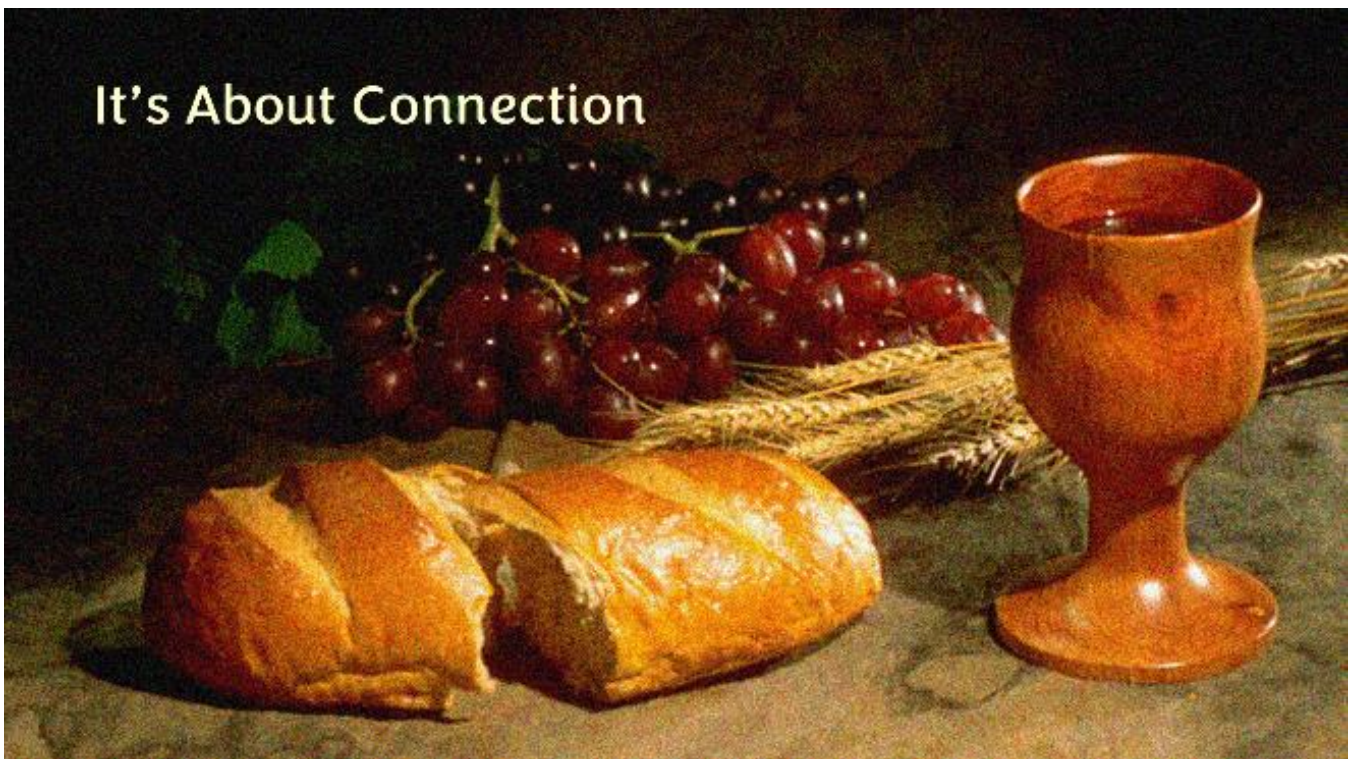
What about the word “go”? Doesn’t that mean to go? While we’re at it isn’t the greatest commandment of all to love God with everything you have? Why focus on loving other Christians when we are to first and foremost love God and we are also to go out and love the lost enough to share Jesus with them?

When we focus on loving our fellow Christian, we can only do that connected to Jesus which means that we are obeying Him which means that we are loving Him. It means that the Holy Spirit is enabling the process and the Father’s Will is done and so, the Kingdom of Heaven exists.

You cannot love the church without first loving God because the love for the church can only come from Him. Likewise, if we truly love the church the church becomes a functional body of believers who cannot possibly hide their collective light under a bushel basket. The Gospel will go forth as it is lived out in this physical reality.

That's why Jesus said again, "ask anything in My name and it will be done." See that? Love enough to obey by allowing His love to pour through you and you will be connected to Him and will therefore be producing the fruit of love and as such a group of people we can ask anything we want, and God will grant it to us... Not because He will be compelled to give us our desire, but because our desire will be perfectly conformed to His desire.

What does Jesus then finish with? What else, right? Verse 17, 17This I command you, that you love one another.




That's the way the NASB renders it and that's certainly the force of it, but once again we lose something in



translation. It is ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε, a subjunctive conditional command. What Jesus actually said is more like “these things I command of you in order that you will love one another.” The force of it, as I mentioned, is equivalent to a command just like it was in verse 12, but here the nuance is on the intended result of the command.

Jesus is saying to you and to me that the reason He commands us to love one another is so that we would actually love one another. The grammar and context make it an even stronger command and simultaneously a plea for us to do it - to really live it out - to truly love one another. Jesus is pleading with His Body to obey Him by being as loving as He is.


# my SERMON NOTES

 My favorite song today:

What it Means to Me...

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bible Book: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_  
Verses: \_\_\_\_\_  
Who's Talking? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who's Being Talked to? \_\_\_\_\_  
What's the Main Point? \_\_\_\_\_

Stuff I didn't understand...

 draw something 