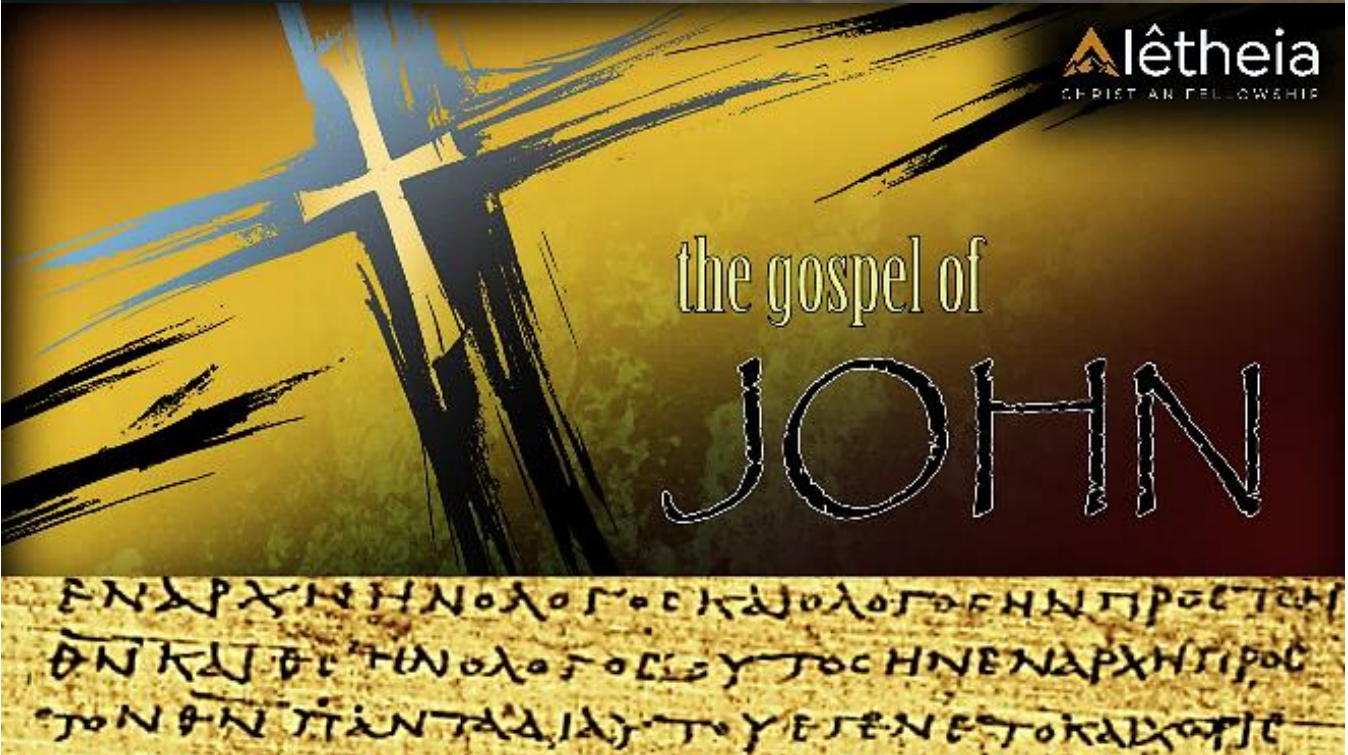




# lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



John 14:15–31, 15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may be with you

forever; 17the Helper is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him; but you know Him because He remains with you and will be in you. 18“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. 19After a little while, the world no longer is going to see Me, but you are going to see Me; because I live, you also will live. 20On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I in you. 21The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him.” 22Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what has happened that You are going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?” 23Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. 24The one who does not love Me does not follow My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. 25“These things I have spoken to you while remaining with you. 26But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you. 27Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be

troubled, nor fearful. 28 You heard that I said to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. 30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in regard to Me, 31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let's go from here.



There are a few interwoven topics in this section of the Farwell Discourse, so we'll just take them as they appear in the pericope. As mentioned last week it starts and ends with obedience being the sign of Love. Not only does Jesus start and end with that interrelated

concept, He uses it as the glue that holds this entire section together. He opened with it in verse 15 saying, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” He finished with it in verse 31, “I love the Father,” so “I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.” But holding the middle together as well we have Jesus stating in verse 21, “The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me.” And in verse 23, “Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word.”

The reason that obedience is that sign, that proof, that outworking, of Love, is because it is the ultimate, perfect, and indisputable confirmation of trust. The more selfish a person is, the more they love themselves, and the more someone loves themselves the more they trust in their own instincts to advance their cause. They obey their own instincts above all else. That’s the natural order of things and is the native human condition.

What’s counterintuitive is to place greater trust in God than in self and obey His commands even when they are at odds with what you instinctively know is in your own self-interest. That is a level of trust that comes

relationally. It is the type of trust that is relationally derived through experience. It is a reasonable trust.

Trust in someone, or in something, can either be reasonable, or it can be unreasonable. There are countless examples of people unreasonably trusting in the wrong person, or the wrong thing. There is not a person in this room who hasn't trusted in what was not trustworthy at one time or another. Here in this Biblical, relational, context, God is so good as to require a reasonable trust and what's nice about that is reasonable trust is never given, it is always earned.



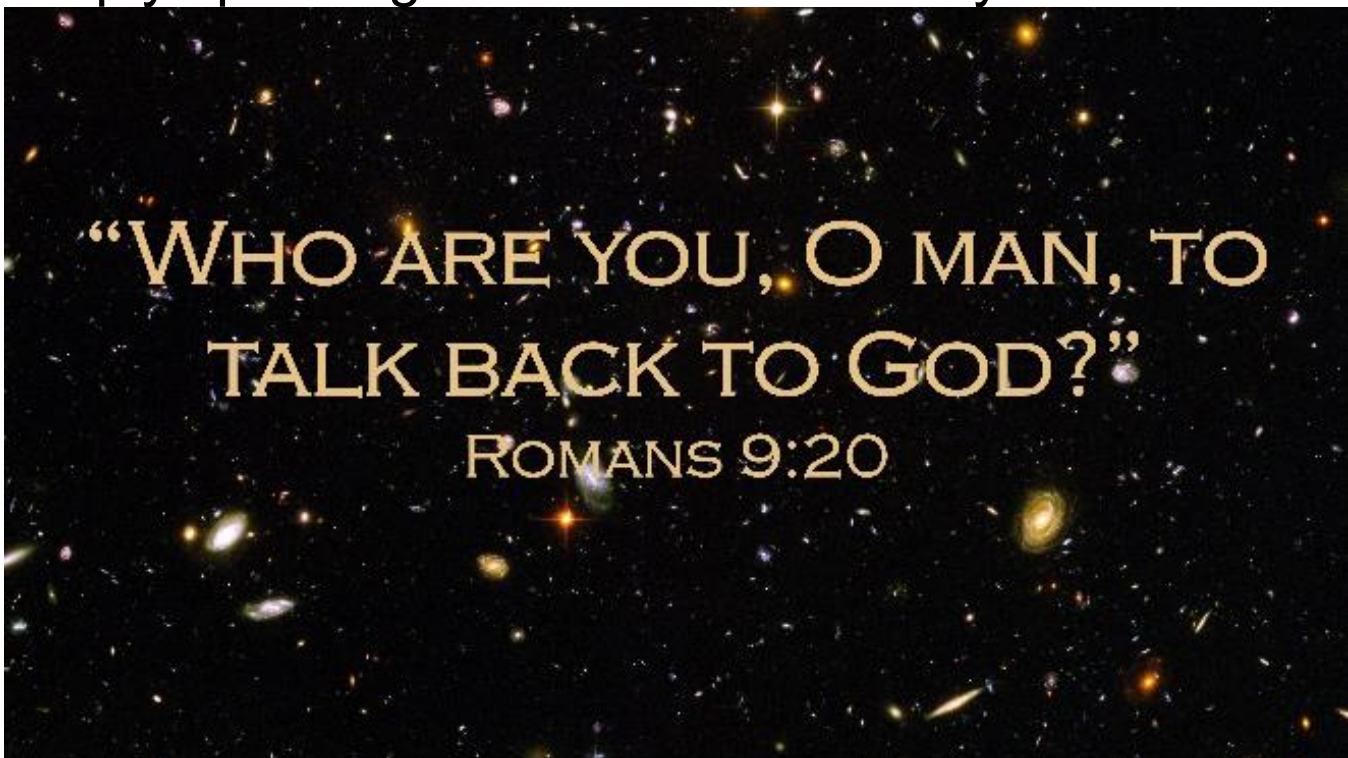
I just want to make sure we understand before I move on... Take respect for someone as an example. There is unreasonable respect that can be given to someone

due to deception or ignorance. There is also the kind of official respect that is given to someone purely out of duty or loyalty. The respect that is the highest, noblest, and truest respect of all, is the respect given to someone who has repeatedly earned it through demonstrated respectable action.

Likewise, the highest, noblest, and truest trust is earned by someone through consistent, repeated, demonstrated, trustworthiness. Such trust then, is by definition relational. It is relational because it comes as the result of coming to know, over time, the track record of the one in whom trust is placed as they have proven to be trustworthy.



Now, there are many types of relationships, like that between friends, or between spouses, or, for that matter, even between enemies. What we're talking about here, is the relationship between an omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (all encompassing), immutable (un-changing), pure and perfect Being Who created the entire physical reality by simply speaking it into existence and you.



We project our human misunderstanding on God and then wonder why our relationship with Him is so unsatisfying. Make no mistake about it, you don't know anything at all compared to God - to question Him, to distrust Him, to disobey Him is stupidity on steroids.

Yet, what is also true is that this unfathomably wise, terrifyingly powerful, ubiquitously present God wants to be your Heavenly Father, your Lord, Savior, and Friend, your constant Companion, Counselor, Encourager and Teacher.

All of that to say that the proper response from us to Him is absolute unquestioning obedience. We should just shut up, pay attention, and blindly obey whatever God would ask, no matter how outlandish it might seem to us. Yet, instead of simply being an authoritarian dictator as He rightly and justly could, He chose to Love us as our God.



My point is the type of relationship we're talking about is that which most closely resembles the idealistically



pure parent-child dynamic. In such a relationship Love and trust go hand-in-hand. To relationally know God is to accept His Love and Love Him in return. To Love God is therefore to know Him well enough to trust Him. To trust God is to obey God. Obedience to what God asks is therefore proof of trust, which is proof of Love, which is proof of relationally knowing God. The greater the obedience in both attitude and degree the greater the Love.

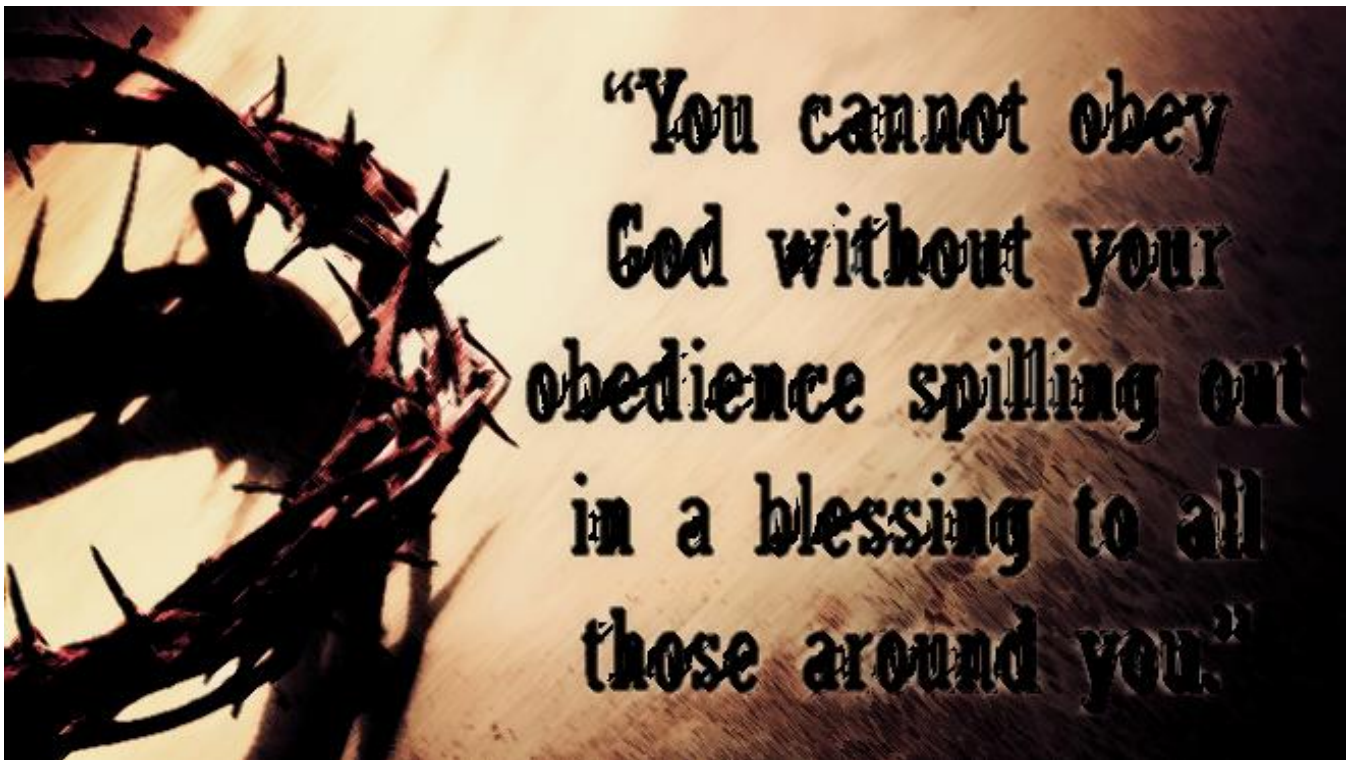


What does the mean? The quicker a person obeys, the greater the Love they have. God's commands are never wrong even in the slightest degree, so to waste time debating God about His orders, or to waste time building up the resolve to obey, demonstrates weaker trust - obviously. If I tell you to do something it would

probably be reasonable to ask some questions, but when the Ancient of Days asks... Hello.



Additionally, the more outrageous the order from God that a person obeys, the greater the Love they have - again, obviously. Obeying God's command to regularly attend church services is one level. Obeying God's command to abandon everything that you know and go out onto the mission field in a Muslim country... Well, that's another thing.



In this context, when Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father even unto brutal torture and ruthless, sadistic, and humiliating, death on a Cross, it physically, and so, unquestionably demonstrated His full trust in the Father. It was an extreme command, and it was obeyed instantly when the time came. Jesus did not resist the Cross and what was the result of trusting the Father? For Jesus... horrific suffering and death, but also glorious Resurrection and victory over death. For mankind... the offer of amazing grace and eternal life!

Jesus' trust was not a contrived thing, it was genuine. He said from the Cross, "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). It was, despite what some say, an application of Psalm 22, which ends

in triumph. But it also shows the depths of human suffering and the horror Jesus endured. By stating “My God” twice, Jesus not only referenced the Psalm that He was thinking about, but also affirmed that while feeling abandoned by God, God was still His God. Jesus wasn’t abandoning Him.

As I mentioned, the Psalm concludes with victorious deliverance - everything turns out well in the end - and the fact that Jesus was thinking in these terms of faithfulness and trustworthiness of the Father is well attested by the very last of Jesus’ seven statements from the Cross. “Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit” (Luke 23:46). It was His trust in the Father that held Jesus on the Cross - it was His trust in the Father that enabled Him to “Breathe His last.” That Trust that was born out of a relationship of Love. A confidence in the Father’s plan that was great enough to risk everything - literally everything.

Jesus, we discovered in the opening verses of this Gospel is eternally God. He took on humanity and lived among us as one of us. Of all that He gave up and all that He accomplished, the most striking of them all was committing His spirit into the hands of the Father and breathing His last.

Jesus voluntarily gave up His life and trusted that it would be restored to Him. That's extreme trust and once again, it is the kind of trust that was proven actual by physical obedience and as such, it was the proof of Love. A Love born out of the abiding relationship of knowing God and trusting His plan to "bless all the nations through Him."

Think of the degree of faith, the fullness of trust, and the richness of belief required to voluntarily undergo such a thing without complaint. Not because He was stoic, or suicidal, or fatalistic, or irrational, or insane, but because He trusted that the Father had a plan, that the plan was perfect, and that the plan would succeed. He believed that because He loved the Father, and He loved the Father because He knew the Father relationally. He said as much many times. He said as much right here.

Jesus has not asked you to do anything that He Himself has not already done. If you Love Him, you will obey Him because you trust Him because you have come to know Him, which enabled your love for Him.

That final element is the plain and simple reality that Love entails relationship. To say that there is Love without relationship is utter nonsense. The reason we study the Bible and delve deeply into the Truth it contains is to know Him more thoroughly and accurately. so that we Love Him enough to trust and obey. When you do that God blesses others through you.



To further explore this vital link, let's take a lesser example than Jesus sacrificing Himself for you and me. Roughly 4,000 years ago, God told Abraham that he and his wife Sarah would have a son in their extreme old age when such a thing was physically impossible and yet, surprise, surprise Isaac, the son of promise was born. God promised that Abraham's descendants

through Isaac would be like the “sand on the seashore.” Then, God told Abraham to sacrifice his Isaac before Isaac had become a father, now that was a surprise! When Abraham was about to plunge a knife into Isaac’s heart, God stopped him and said to him “now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (Genesis 22:12).

That seems strange and even evil to the uninitiated. The Bible reveals the reason Abraham was willing to kill his son at God’s command, and in a word, the reason was trust. Hebrews 11:17–19NLT, 17It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God’s promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, 18even though God had told him, “Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted.” 19Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead.

Abraham, through his actual obedient action had proved that he “feared God,” which is another way of saying that He trusted God as God. That trust is fully proven in the explanation we read in Hebrews. It was

never about human sacrifice, in fact that was part of the reason that Abraham knew that God would somehow intervene. God, unlike the man-made pagan gods, forbid human sacrifice. What Abraham further knew after decades of coming to know God and so, Love God, was that God was trustworthy. “Abraham believed God and it was credited to Him as righteousness” (Romans 4:3).

God didn't test Abraham's trust in Him until he was well over 100 years old. It took a lifetime of smaller tests and God's faithfulness through those tests to get Abraham to the place where He would trust this much... It took a century of getting to know God before Abraham loved God enough to trust Him enough to obey Him with something like this.

Many ill-informed people perceive a disconnect between James, the brother of Jesus, in his eponymous Book and the Apostle Paul, particularly in his Letter to the Romans. Paul is all about “Grace” and James is all about “Works,” so they say. James in writing about Abraham stated in 2:21–23, 21Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22You see, his faith and his actions



worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God. 24So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

The Apostle Paul wrote about Abraham in Romans 4:20-22, 20yet, with respect to the promise of God, Abraham did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. 22Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness.

Paul emphasized a faith real enough to produce actions and James emphasized actions that proved real faith - both of them were in perfect agreement. Actual physical obedience, called works, or deeds, or fruit, proves faith, or belief, or trust in Him who is eternally trustworthy.



Another thread woven through this passage is the idea that we humans can't do what Abraham did without supernatural help. Especially given that we live less than half as long as he did - that's less than half the time to get it right. We see in verse 16&17, that Jesus "will ask the Father, and He will give" us "the Spirit of truth" This other Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, is unavailable to the "world," but He will be "known by" those who "love" and "obey" Jesus and because of that He will "remain with" and "be in" such people "forever."



The primary means used by the Holy Spirit within the Believer to increase obedience is to increase true knowledge of Who God is and that knowledge is called the Truth, with a capital "T." We saw Jesus say back in John 8:31&32, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. And then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free."

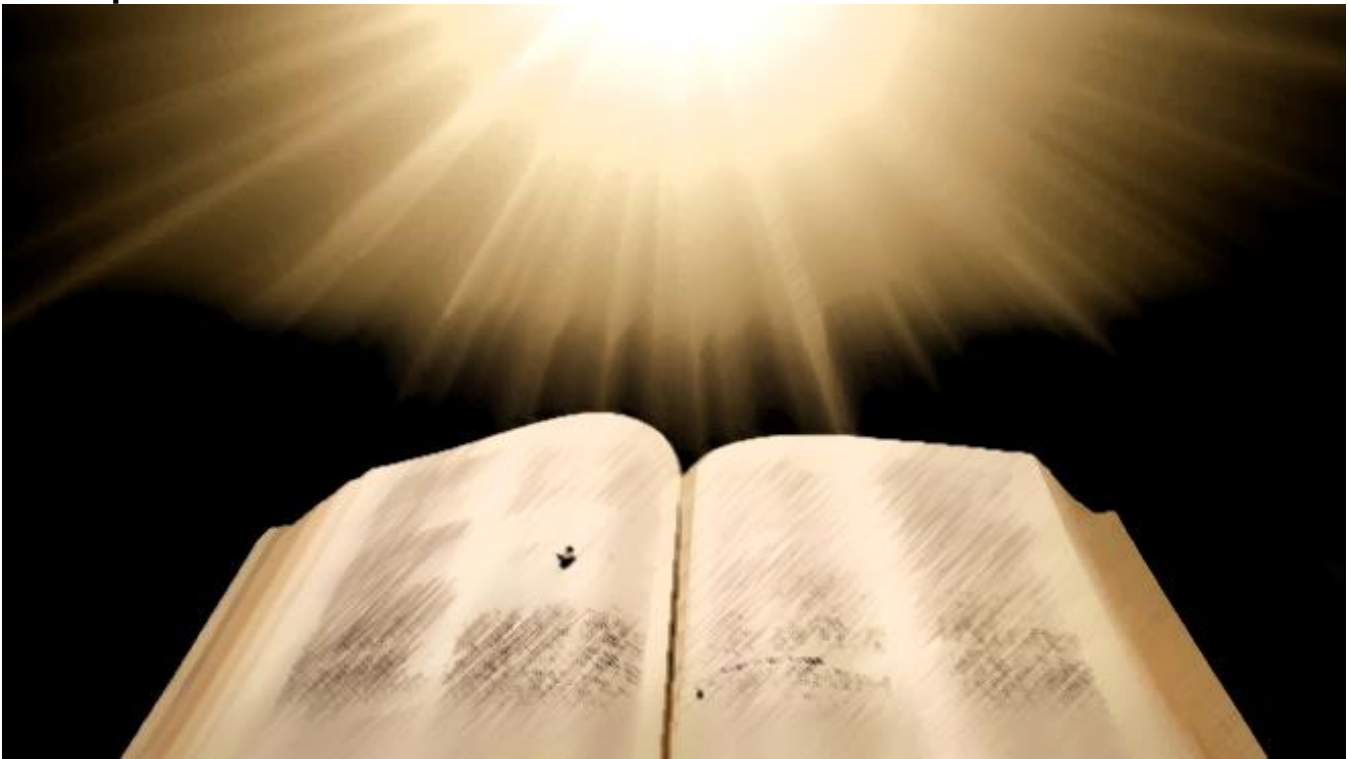
The Truth about who you are in comparison to Who Jesus, Who the Father, and Who the Holy Spirit is, will set you free from sin, death, and the grave. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father at the instigation of Jesus and He comes in Jesus' name. Again, that means that what the Holy Spirit is in us, is the "Spirit of Christ" - the "Spirit of Truth." Remember, Jesus came in the

Father's name and that's why to know Jesus is to know the Father.



In verse 26 Jesus said of the Holy Spirit that He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.” There is very often a difference between the people Jesus was directly talking to at the time and all of us to whom He speaks through them. Here, it is an important distinction, where we must distinguish between the original audience and the subsequent audience. The Holy Spirit cannot remind you or me of what Jesus said to us directly, because Jesus has never spoken to us directly in the same way as He was speaking to the 11 in the Upper Room.

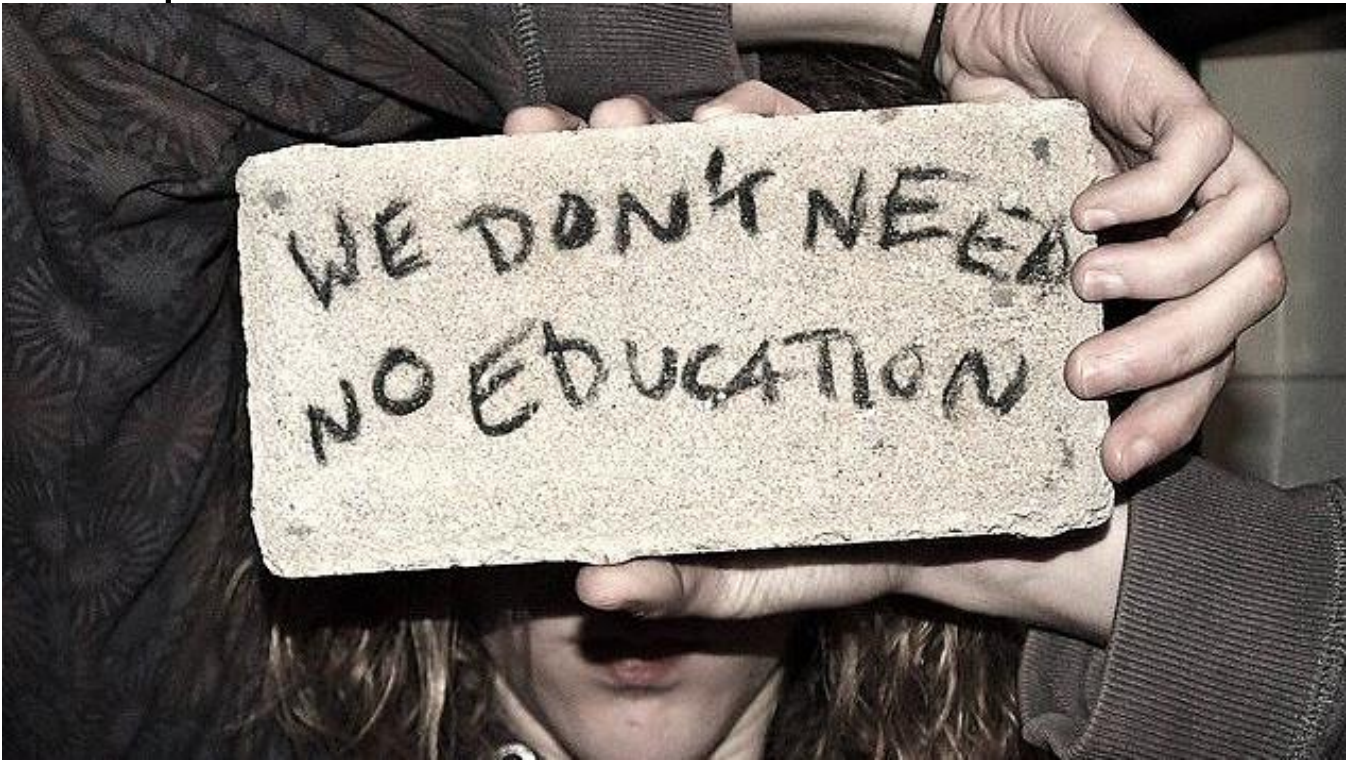
While the Holy Spirit can and does remind everyone willing to learn and relearn Jesus' Words, it is His Words recorded by those who actually heard them. The Apostles heard Jesus speak many times more Words than they were able to record. It was the job of the Holy Spirit, "teaching" and "reminding" them to sort through all of Jesus' many Words to produce a coherent Gospel.



To teach them and to remind them and ultimately to inspire them to record what was necessary for the subsequent generations to be taught and to be reminded.

Yes, the Holy Spirit within you as a Christian teaches you and reminds you, but please get this... Please

understand... It is for all of us, who were not there that night 2,000 years ago, a teaching, and a reminding, limited to the Revelation available. The revelation that the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostles to record for us their spiritual descendants in the New Testament.



So many people think that they have no need for scholars, no need for teachers, no need for pastors, no need for anyone else because they have the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will teach them everything that they need to know. That flies in the face of everything that the Bible teaches. It is the epitome of human ignorance driven by human arrogance that refuses to be taught by the Holy Spirit through His appointed teachers of Jesus' Word. It's a refusal to submit to the methodology that God has ordained.

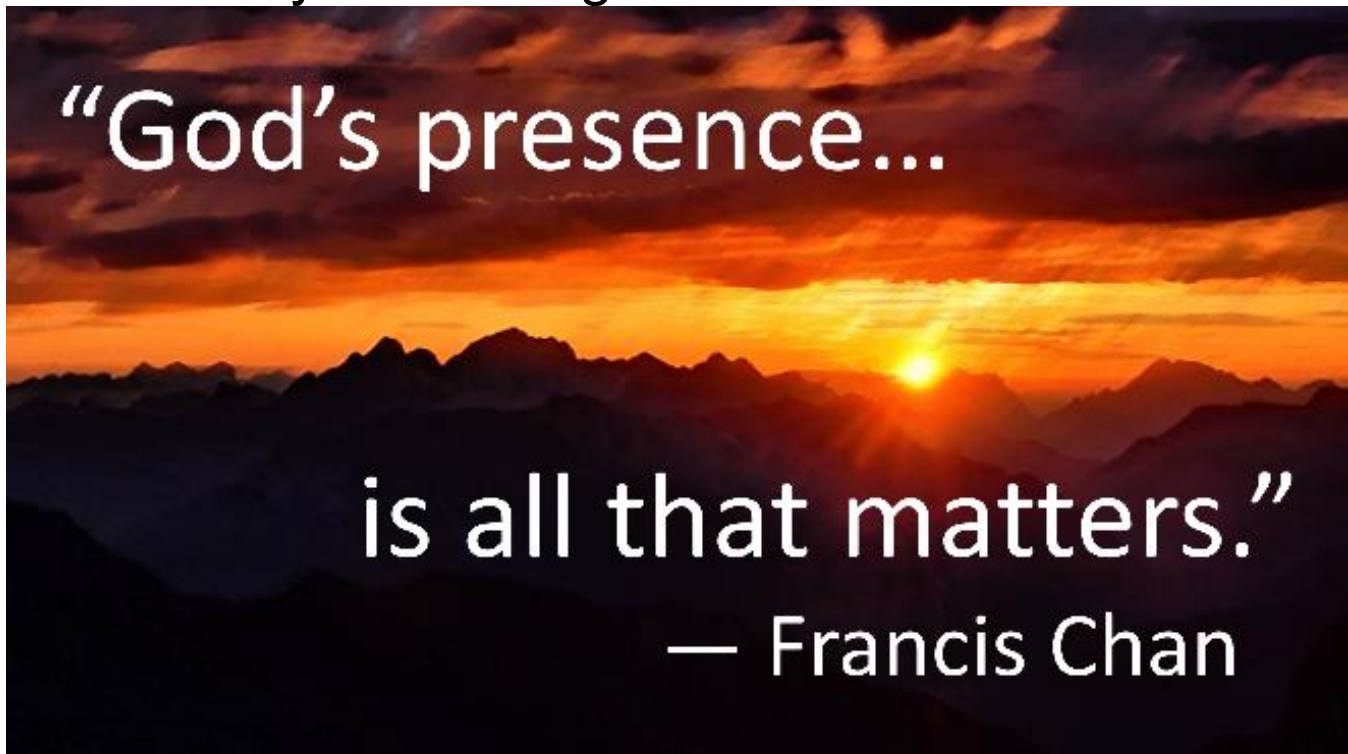
You may disagree with God's wisdom of using human beings to teach other human beings His Word, I think it's a bit crazy myself, but that's the way He wants it and so we either submit, or we operate as our own teacher, appointing ourselves as our sole arbiter of truth, thereby making us our own god.



When you allow the Holy Spirit to teach you, and to remind you, through His earthly agents what you then find is peace. When we come to know the true Jesus of the Bible by being teachable, we come to Love Him for Who He is and therefore to Trust Him as He is, enabling us and Obey Him as He's commanded. Living in right-relationship with God enables a peace that passes all understanding. There is no more fear in the

perfect Love of God. A person who is certain that they are right with the One and Only true God will experience more peace in prison awaiting execution, than a non-believer will experience while partying on their mega yacht off the coast of Monaco.

Beyond the spiritual help provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit, there is the simple reality of personal connectedness with God. God the Spirit is living within, so of course, it is the beginning of our direct personal relationship with the Almighty, which begins immediately and then grows from there.



Jesus said in verse 18 that He would not abandon those who loved and obeyed Him. Not only was He going to return for His disciples and take them to where

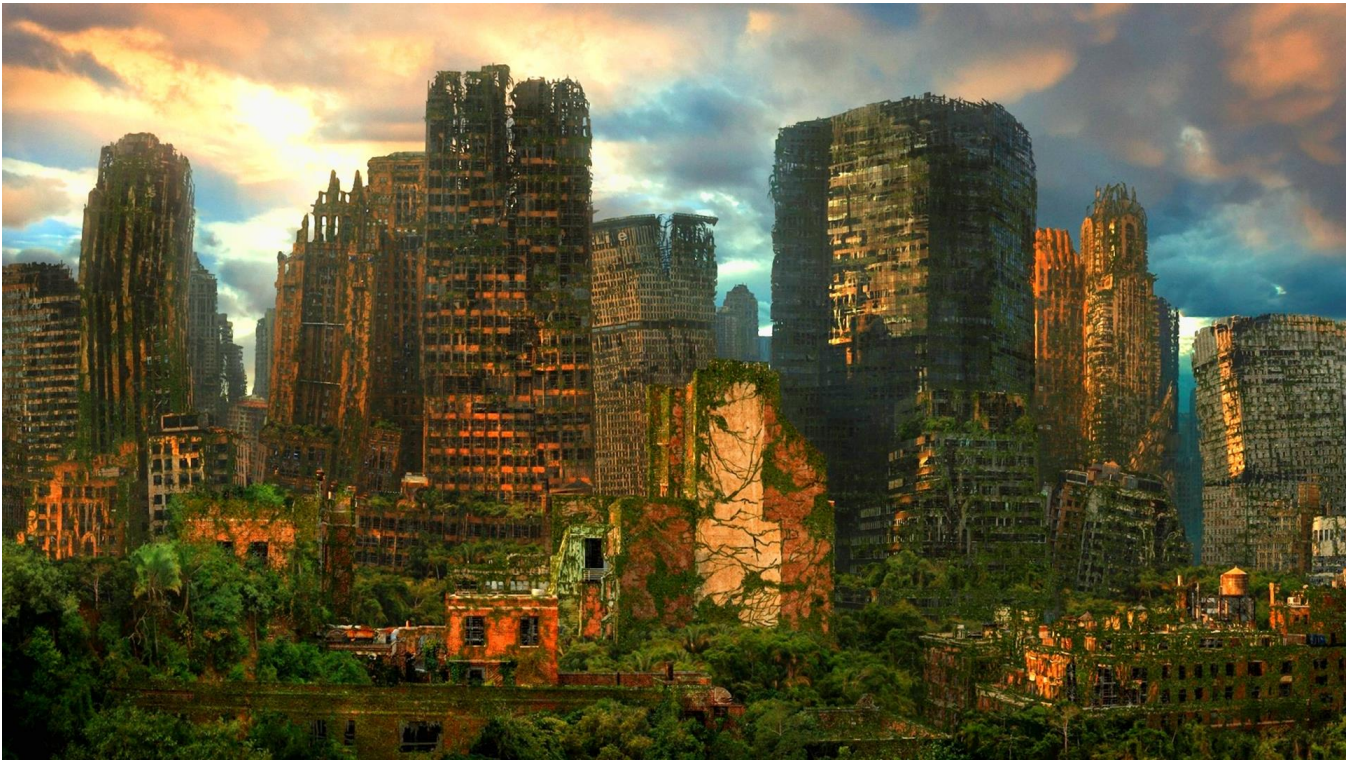


He and the Father are, but that in the meantime He was going to give them a portion of God to live within them. This is the so-called deposit on what is promised, which we see in verse 20 is nothing short of perfect unity in the presence of Almighty God in total. God will dwell together with those who love and obey Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit forevermore.

The Apostle Paul discussed it in II Corinthians 1:21&22, saying that “God has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.” Paul also wrote in Ephesians 1:13&14, “you were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

Jesus clearly stated it in verse 19 of our Passage today, “because I live, you also will live.” That’s a remarkable statement given that Jesus also said that He would be murdered in a few hours. The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus is the single most important doctrine in Christianity. Jesus proved by His

Resurrection that the Father's plan worked, that Jesus had once and for all paid the price for sin thus conquering death itself. "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow," no matter what tomorrow brings. Because He lives, we also will live.



One final note on this Passage as we look at verse 30, where Jesus said, "the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in regard to Me." This is a bit cryptic especially to modern ears, although it means what you probably intuit it to mean. The "ruler of the world," is without question, the devil, Satan. Why is Satan the "ruler of the world"? Have you ever thought about that?

I mentioned Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians earlier. In that Letter we find that if the Gospel Message

of Truth proclaimed by the Bible through the anointed teaching of Christians is veiled, obscured, hidden, easily misunderstood, by non-believers it is so because “the god of this world has blinded their minds.”

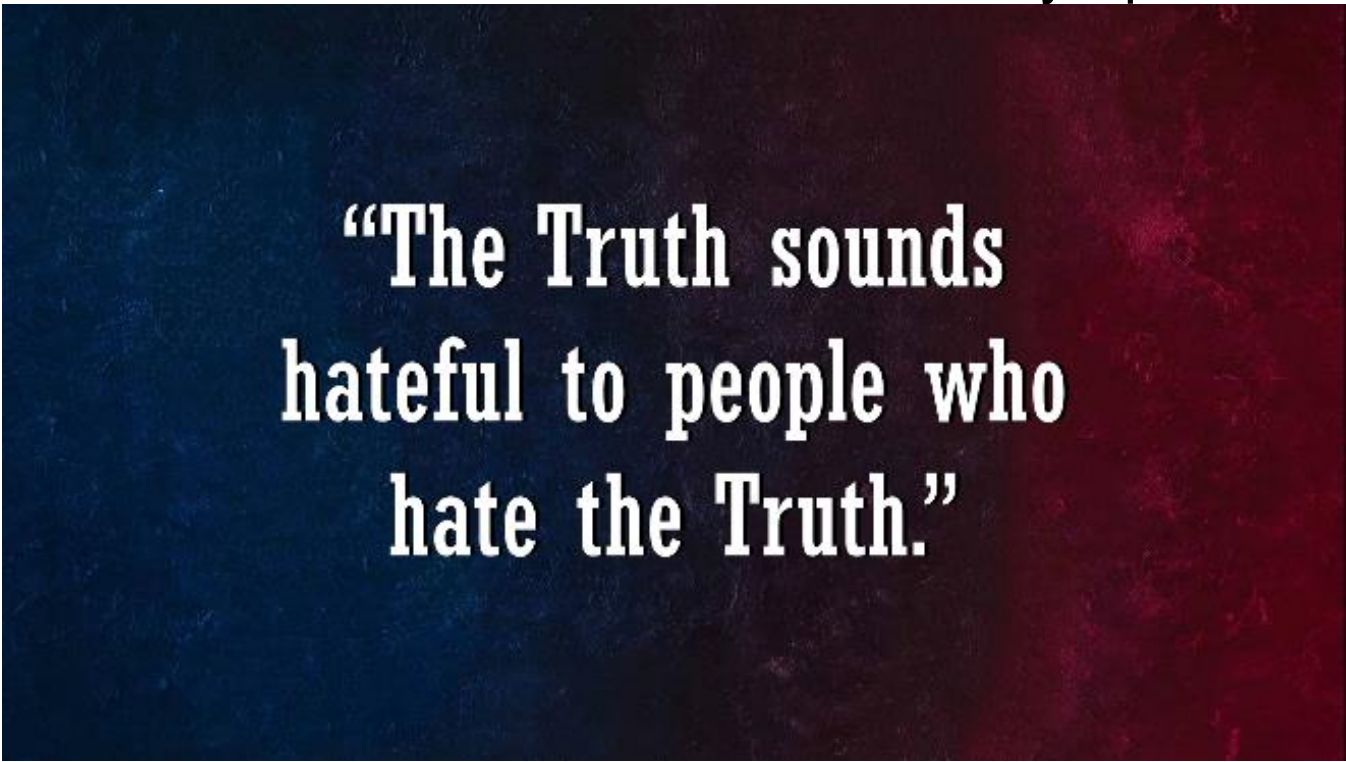
The ability for a non-Christian person to comprehend, accept, and fully embrace the Jesus of the Bible is hindered by the devil, who is Satan, the ruler, and the god of the world around us. That didn't really answer our question why, but added the question of how - how does Satan blind people, spiritually speaking?

We have also looked at Paul's Letter to the Ephesians today. Well, in chapter 2 we get some insight. There the Holy Spirit inspired Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ wrote that spiritually dead people are such because of their sin. He talks about a life of sin as walking “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” What it means is that our Accuser and Adversary, which is actually what the title the Devil and the name Satan mean, used his manipulative powers of persuasion to encourage Eve to eat and Adam to follow suit. What is even more important than the fact that Satan used no force at all,

is the fact that he was so convincing because he simply told them what they wanted to hear.

His tactics are unchanged, not because Satan cannot come up with a new bag of tricks, but because he doesn't have to. To this day we humans are susceptible to his half-truths and inuendo, to his influences and temptations, because it's what resonates with us.

Satan is the god and ruler of this present world system because we have voted him into office. Like so many things in life, once you get going down a particular path long enough it becomes nearly impossible to change course. In this case, it is literally impossible to change course without the assistance of the Holy Spirit.



**“The Truth sounds  
hateful to people who  
hate the Truth.”**

The Holy Spirit simply tells the Truth. Most people are far more interested in the hyped spiel of pseudo facts and entertainment because once again it's what we want to hear. It's difficult to ignore the slick sales pitch from the world and listen to the plain unvarnished Truth from the Bible and it usually requires a significant emotional event to trigger such receptivity.

Once the Holy Spirit gets through to a person and they embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior then the work of discipling gets started. We call it Christian maturation, or sanctification, or conformity to Christ, but it only comes by the very intentional, active, and continual, surrender or submitting to the teaching and the reminding of the Spirit of Truth through His human appointed teachers.

Jesus closed that statement by saying that the “ruler of this world,” “has nothing in regard to Me.”

In Greek, it is literally, “in Me not he has nothing,” ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν (ēn ě-moi ũk ěĥ-ā ũ-dĕn). It is a Jewish colloquial phrase with a double negation which in Greek, unlike in English reinforces the negativity instead of cancelling it out.

It is awkward in English, but the meaning is fairly obvious. The idea is that Satan has nothing on Jesus at all because Jesus is sinless perfection. Satan, the Accuser, can bring no valid charge against Him and therefore death, the result of sin, has no claim on Jesus.

Jesus had to actually give up His life - it could not be taken from Him. Jesus said as much back in John 10:17&18, "I lay down My life so that I may take it back. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it back."



It would seem as though Jesus had sinned and that the devil did have something over Jesus when He

“breathed His last.” Jesus was telling His guys in advance, just wait, it will only seem that way, but I’ll be back.