

Simple Faith – Part 2

Beholding and Becoming

I. The Work of God Is To Believe

1. In the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus summarizes the requirement of the New Covenant as **love**, but more than that, He specifies what kind of love and where it comes from. It is the love of God that comes from **believing** that leads to **abiding**, and that is only attainable through **asking**. The love that God is looking for is a **love born of faith**.

*Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only **faith working through love**.*

2. Faithless love falls short in that it carries in it a false testimony about God and a spirit of independence. That's why God calls everything that does not come from faith – even if innocent or “good” of itself – sin.
Romans 14:23 ...for whatever is not from faith is sin.
3. The root of sin is man choosing to obtain “the knowledge of good and evil” via a means other than gazing upon His maker and believing He is altogether good. Even if we arrive at a right answer, it's not righteousness if we were asking the wrong question. If we're asking “what should I do” and not “what is the Father doing,” we're eating from the wrong tree.

4. That realization greatly, greatly simplifies walking with God. It's how Jesus answers what is probably our most commonly asked question, “what should I do?” He doesn't. Instead He redirects that question to, “Who do you say that I am?” We have but two great calls in the New Covenant: to behold the glory of God so that we can believe, and to love, **because we believe**.
John 6:28 Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

5. The end game, for God, is not people treating each other better or kingdom work getting done. It really isn't. His end game is hearts becoming one with Him in love, through hearing Him declare His name. Man's wisdom says the way in which we get there isn't that important so long as we arrive at the right destination. God's wisdom cares more about the process of encounter that leads to our action than about our actions themselves.

John 17:25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Luke 18:7 And shall God send justice on behalf of His elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will send justice speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

6. There's a simple test for simple devotion to Christ. When we're living in simple devotion, God gets what He wants. Every other yoke ultimately deprives God of what it is He's really after. God wants a relationship that draws us in to “walking humbly with our God” - being humbled before the revelation of the beautiful, holy God and walking in awe that we get to know Him and be with Him.

John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

II. Believe in Me

1. **Believe** is not the first command that Jesus gives in the Upper Room Discourse, but it is the central one. Jesus talks about “believing” 7 times in the Upper Room teaching, almost all of them in one section at the start of *John 14*.
2. Jesus introduces the New Covenant way of life by demonstrating our need for a New Covenant – one that doesn't just **call** us to love, but **empowers** us to love. Jesus demonstrates the nature of the love of God by washing the feet of His disciples, and then commands His disciples to **love** one another as He has loved (*13:1-35*). He immediately follows that command by informing them that they cannot follow Him – they don't have the love they need, but says this: “*you shall follow Me afterward.*”
John 13:36 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”
3. That's the context Jesus speaks into as He backs up from the commandment that summarizes where it's all going to end – **love** – to teach His disciples how to actually enter into love by the way God has made: **believing** that leads to **abiding**. He shifts the conversation from where man **truly is** meant to live, to the role God wants to play in us having that life, and what we're called to do to cooperate with Him.

John 14:1 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, **believe also in Me.**”

4. Jesus sees the fear in their hearts, and He commends them for rightly believing in God – for having the fear of the Lord that there is a holy God in heaven who will not accept those who do not become love as He is love – but then He urges them “**believe also in Me.**” **I, your Friend,** your Shepherd, who came to show you the way, **am God. Believe God is for you.**

John 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

5. I love this statement, because Jesus is basically saying, “You thought you were going to make it in because you were one of the strongest and fastest... actually, you're going to make it in because my Father wants a big family and He and I are making room for even you because we want you in it.” **Stop believing in you and start believing in Me.**

John 14:4 “And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

6. Both where we're going and how we get there is **Him**. It's not about a place that we go to if we live a certain way. **Eternal life is being with Jesus, and we get there by being with Jesus.** It's not about a place, it's about a Person, and it doesn't happen by doing the right things, it happens by being joined to a Person. **Believe I am the end and I am the means.**

III. Believe That I and the Father Are One

1. As He declares Himself the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus makes a transition to the second major command to believe: He commands us to believe that He is one with the Father.

John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 **Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.**

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2. The first call to believe is about the **why**. Why must it all be rooted in belief? Because it must be about His desire for us, not ours for Him. It must be about His love for us, not ours for Him. It must be His story not ours. So Jesus asks us to believe in Him as our advocate and intercessor – to believe in the strength of His love, not ours. He is the life.
3. The second call to believe is about the **how**. How can it all be rooted in belief? By the life of the Incarnate Son of God who is the way by being the truth. By revealing the Father, He opens to us the door to know God and be found in Him – to believe and to abide. So Jesus asks us to believe in Him as the faithful witness of the Father.
4. Jesus as He prays just before going to the cross summarizes His mission on earth as making known the Father so that He could be known. And He prays that the Father would again glorify Him with the glory He had at the beginning – that Father would declare and demonstrate Jesus to be God, so that the Father would be glorified as men believe that Jesus and the Father are one.
John 17:1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. 6 I have manifested Your name to them...”
5. Jesus concludes His prayer by praying for men to be one with Him as He is one with the Father – to be invited into the holy fellowship of love that's in the Godhead – to be adopted into the Father's family. **This is what eternal life is: we get God and He gets us.**
John 17:20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”
6. And then He prays that we would get to be with Him and see Him and know Him, because that's how we come to be in Him and one with Him and full of His love. **Eternal life is being with Jesus, and we get there by being with Jesus.**
John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

IV. A Walk of Faith

1. **Believing** in Jesus – not just believing **on Him** for salvation, but believing **in Him** as God Himself perfectly revealed in human form – is how we grow as Christians. As we come to know Him by being with Him, we become more and more one with Him and more and more like Him. Jesus' prayer gives us a simple pattern of knowing that softens our hearts to truly love Him above our flesh that produces a yielding that lets Him possess us.
2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2. This is the joy and the glory of what man was created for. Man was made to know and worship God, but more specifically, to do so in a way that only those made in the image of God could. God is spirit [pneuma - **possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting**]. He's a **Person**, and He made us in His image so that we could **know** His Person, and more remarkable than that, He made us capable of being filled with His Spirit so that we could worship this Person we know by **choosing** to wrap our person in His Person.
John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
3. The worship we're made for is centered around the nature and Person of God, and expresses itself not just in reverent fear of a God who is holy and humble recognition that we are not, but in wholehearted love of His Person and deep gratitude in embracing His gift to us – **Himself**.
4. **Believing**, for us, is meant to lead to **asking**... because Jesus has promised us the Holy Spirit. Faith in Him – who He is and what He's like – is our path forward. We don't have to shape ourselves into something that looks like Him. We get to know Him, agree with and love who He is, and with profound gratitude and total surrender say yes to Him being Himself in us.
*John 14:12 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who **believes** in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you **ask** in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you **ask** anything in My name, I will do it... 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*
Colossians 1:27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.
5. The **new** of Jesus' command to love in the New Covenant isn't the love your neighbor part. It's the as **He** loves part that's new. It's about the glory of God in a people who would choose to wrap themselves in His nature, which is love.
John 13:31 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him... 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples...”
6. Jesus backs up to describe a life of faith – **believing, asking** and **abiding** – because His intent is not that His commands would be burdensome. When they are, man's purpose is left unfulfilled. We were made to worship Him in the way that we **love** and **choose** His nature. He's given us a yoke that is not only light, but our eternal glory – the same glory that the Father and Son have known for eternity: to gaze upon the beauty of the One we love, to see in Him that which is altogether desirable, and to ask for it, knowing that He loves us and that love means He's given us Himself. That's the new and living way He opened for us at the Cross.
John 16:21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. 23 And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full... 27 for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me...