
JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

BLESSINGS & MARKS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
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INTRODUCTION

We know that God's gracious love extends to the whole world (Jn. 3:16; Matt. 5:43-48). This fact is a great comfort and a warm encouragement to those who may feel unlovable. However, this doctrine of God's universal love is sometimes presumed to be scarcely different from God's distinct and Fatherly love for His children (1 Jn. 3:1, 4:9–10). It is a mistake to think that God's love for each person is exactly the same. In this message, we shall consider the promises Jesus made to His disciples in John 14 and the special way in which Jesus distinguished His disciples from the world.

MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

Jesus said, *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him"* (Jn. 14:23).

We know that God's gracious love extends to the whole world (Jn. 3:16; Matt. 5:43-48). This fact is a great comfort and a warm encouragement to those who may feel unlovable. However, this doctrine of God's universal love is sometimes presumed to be scarcely different from God's distinct and Fatherly love for His children (1 Jn. 3:1, 4:9–10). It is a mistake to think that God's love for each person is exactly the same.

Jesus' promises in John 14 are words of reassurance for His disciples (i.e. those who love and believe Jesus). Jesus lists numerous blessings, calling their attention upward to the panoramic view of God's extraordinary love. Each blessing highlights the exquisitely intimate relationship God has with His children. But these blessings are not for everyone without exception.

God's Fatherly presence, Christ's gracious union, and the Holy Spirit's indwelling nearness is only for those who love Christ; these blessings are not for every person in the world. Rather, those of the world do not lovingly see Christ (v19-21), cannot receive the Holy Spirit (v17), and are excluded by the Father (v24).

May God humble us, satisfy us with His love, provoke love for Him within us, and motivate us to love others.

JOHN 14:12-31 (ESV)

12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever believes** in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

15 **“If you love me**, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom **the world cannot** receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while and **the world will see me no more**, but **you will see me**. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, **he it is who loves me**. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?”

23 Jesus answered him, **“If anyone loves me**, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 **Whoever does not love me** does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come 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 takes place, **so that** when it does take place **you may believe**.

30 I will no longer talk much with you, for **the ruler of this world** is coming. He has no claim on me, 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY

Glorious blessings are promised to those who believe... those who are marked by true belief.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) CHRISTIANS DISTINCT IN THE WORLD

(2) THREE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

(3) SIX BLESSINGS FOR THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

(4) SOME APPLICATION

MESSAGE

(1) CHRISTIANS DISTINCT IN THE WORLD

- ***Jesus reassures His disciples here, but not the world***
 - Jesus speaks here to “**whoever believes in me**” (v12).
 - Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to those who “**love me**” (v15), and Jesus says that “**the world cannot receive**” the Holy Spirit (v17).
 - Jesus distinguishes between His disciples and the world by saying, “**the world will see me no more, but you will see me**” (v19).
 - Jesus said, “**anyone [who] loves me**” will be loved by the Father (v23), but there are those in the world who “**do not love me**” (v24). And, presumably, these are not loved by the Father (at least some distinction must be made).
- ***God's distinct people in the world – a major Bible theme***
 - This concept of God's people as distinct from the world is not only not new... it is one of the major themes of the Bible.

- **God separated Noah** from all other people in the world, **saving him and his family** from judgment, but no one else (Gen. 6-9).
- **God separated Abraham** from all other people in the world, **making an entirely new people-group** from this one man, who would bear the name of God's people (Gen. 12:1-4).
- How about in **Exodus**, when **God plagued the Egyptians** and **rescued** His people from the **bondage of slavery** (Ex. 1-18)?
- How about the way in which **God marked off His people** in the Old Testament by giving them a whole slew of **civil and ceremonial laws** that **made them peculiar** in the world (Ex. 20-40; Lev. 1-27)?
- Think about the **numerous times God judged His people** in the Old Testament **for not maintaining their distinct and peculiar status** among the peoples of the world (Judges 1-21; Isaiah 1-8; Jeremiah 1-28).
- **And now, in the New Testament, God continues His call and practice of making His people distinct** in the world!

Segue: So, **what are some marks** of distinction among **God's people – Christ's disciples – True Christians** in the world?

(2) THREE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

1. Prayerfully Working for God's Glory in Christ

- “whoever **believes in me** will also **do the works that I do**; and **greater works** than these will he do, **because I am going to the Father**. 13 Whatever you ask **in my name**, this I will do, that the **Father may be glorified in the Son**. 14 If you ask me anything **in my name**, I will do it.” (v12-14)
 - Not miracles or signs... these were to validate Jesus' person.
 - Jesus said, “**Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves**” (Jn. 14:11).

- “works” which “glorify the Father in or through the Son” (v13)
 - Jesus spoke more explicitly in the next chapter, saying, “**By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples**” (Jn. 15:8)
 - The context is abiding in Jesus as the vine, which causes disciples to bear fruit (Jn. 15).
 - There is a strong emphasis on love for one another as united in Christ as the vine.
 - What is the work that Christ in association with His disciples is doing in the world?
 - I think the answer to this question is found in the Great Commission!
 - “**And Jesus came** [after His resurrection] **and said to them** [His disciples], **‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations** [ethnos or peoples], **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age**” (Matt. 28:18–20).
 - If we understand **disciple-making** as an **optional door-to-door or telemarketing** ministry for some Christians, then **we will miss the point** entirely here.
 - If we understand **disciple-making** as an **all-of-life endeavor to follow Jesus and lovingly help others to follow Jesus**, then **we will do well** here.
- Friends, **are you prayerfully working for God’s glory** in Christ in the world?
 - **If you are not a Christian**, what is the **purpose** of your life? What **gets you out of bed** in the morning?
 - **Will that thing last? Is it truly meaningful?**

- **If you think you are a Christian**, do you **primarily** understand **yourself** to be an **ambassador** for Christ in the world?
 - **If not, why not?** What is **more important** to your **identity** or your **life mission** than this?
- **What might you need to change** about your **weekly** schedule, your **spending** habits, or your **thinking** and **speaking** in order to **live primarily** for God’s glory in Christ – as the **central theme** of your life?

2. Conforming to Christ’s Commands

- **“If you love me, you will keep my commandments”** (v15)
- **“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me”** (v21)
- **“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word**, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 **Whoever does not love me does not keep my words”** (v23-24)
 - The message is simple... Love is necessarily followed by “keeping” or “observing” or “obeying” or “living by” Christ’s commands – Christ’s words.
- Friends, let me cut **straight to the application** of this point...
 - **If there is not a strong desire in you** to hear and obey Christ’s words, then **there is no love for Christ in you**.
 - Oh, let us **stop with this silly idea** that your **feelings** are **worth more** than your **soul!**
 - Are you **seeking to know Christ’s words** that would **regulate your life?**
 - Do you care what **Jesus says about** what it means to be a **godly woman** or a **godly man?**
 - If your **loved one is resisting obedience** to Christ’s commands, will you consider the likelihood that they are in **desperate need of conversion** – not firmer rules?

3. Love for Christ

- “**If you love me**, you will keep my commandments” (v15)
- “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, **he it is who loves me**” (v21)
- “**If anyone loves me**, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (v23)
 - Love produces obedience!
 - Love for worldly things = bondage
 - “**Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For **all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world**” (1 Jn. 2:15–16).
 - Love for God/Christ = victory/freedom
 - “**For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.** For everyone who has been born of God **overcomes the world**” (1 Jn. 5:3–4).
- Friends, **what do you love?**
 - Do you love the **same things your worldly friends love?**
 - Are your affections stirred for **wealth, notoriety, personal success, social status, political security?**
 - Do you **love Christ and His body – His Church?**
 - Are your affections stirred for a **deeper knowledge of Christ, a truer application of Christ’s word, a magnetically loving church family, an honest openness about our own shortcomings and Christ’s faithfulness?**

Summary: Christ promises blessings for true Christians, and not for the world.

Segue: **But what are those special blessings?**

(3) SIX BLESSINGS FOR THE TRUE CHRISTIAN

1. *The Indwelling Spirit of God*

- “I will ask the **Father**, and he **will give you another Helper, to be with you forever**, 17 even the **Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for **he dwells with you and will be in you**” (v16-17)
 - **God promised** that He would **pour out His Spirit** on **all kinds of people** (Joel 2:28-32), and this outpouring was to verify that Christ had indeed been exalted by God the Father (Acts 2:33).
 - Furthermore, the **Holy Spirit indwells all** those who **repent and follow Jesus** (Acts 2:38, 5:32; Rom. 5:5).
 - The Holy Spirit **converts sinners** through the **preaching and teaching** of the words of God (Acts 10:44-47).
 - The Holy Spirit **enables Christians** to **understand** the Scriptures and to **speak wisely** according to them (Acts 6:10, 13:9).
 - The Holy Spirit **strengthens** and **leads** those who follow Jesus, **assuring** them that they are the **children of God** (Rom. 8:1-30)
 - The Holy Spirit **encourages** and **guides** the **local church** (Acts 9:31; Rom. 7:6).
 - The Holy Spirit **specially empowers some** to fulfill **pastoral duties** among the household of faith (Acts 11:21-24, 20:28).

2. *Resurrection Life*

- Jesus said, “**Because I live, you also will live**” (v19)
 - As Christ’s **death** was **substitutionary**, so His **resurrection** is **exemplary** (i.e. an example of what Christians will experience).
 - Paul, in proclaiming the central message of the gospel, said, “**I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins** in accordance

with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3–4).

- Then Paul went on to say, “If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact **Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, **by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead**. For as in Adam all die, so also **in Christ shall all be made alive**” (1 Cor. 15:19–22).
 - Therefore, “**he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us [believing ones] also with Jesus**” (2 Cor. 4:14)
- “What a foretaste of deliverance, how unwavering our hope... Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes”

3. Union with Christ

- “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and **you in me**, and **I in you**” (v20)
 - Jesus goes into **greater depth** about this blessing in **Chapter 15**, so I will only mention it briefly here...
 - Union with Christ is the **summary** of what **Christianity offers in the gospel**. It is the **relational and positional mechanism** by which all God’s **blessings come to you** – the blameworthy sinner.
 - How does God **justify you** (make you righteous)?
 - God counts you – the sinner – as **condemned and dead in Christ** upon the cross (Rom. 6:3-5); and God counts you – the sinner – as **morally just and righteous in Christ** resurrected and victorious (Rom. 3:21-26).
 - How does God **adopt you** into His family?
 - God makes you – the sinner – the **object of His decisive love** in Christ and **determines** to

transform your wretched self into the **image** of Christ (Rom. 8:29)

- How does God **make Himself known to you**?
 - Doesn't John express this best by saying, "**No one has ever seen God; the only God** [*monogenēs*], **who is at the Father's side, he has made him known**" (Jn. 1:18)
- How will God **be with you forevermore**?
 - **God in Christ will appear** to bring final judgment and reward (Rev. 21:12-13), and all those counted among the children of God **shall see Him as He is in Christ** (1 Jn. 3:2).

4. The Loving Presence of God

- "he who loves me will be **loved by my Father**, and **I will love him and manifest myself to him**" (v21)
- "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and **my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him**" (v23)
 - In these words, we hear the reversal of Genesis 3! And the promise of Revelation 21!
 - After Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed them and "**the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden** to work the ground from which he was taken. **He [God] drove out the man**, and at the east of the garden of Eden he **placed the cherubim and a flaming sword** that turned every way to **guard the way to the tree of life**" (Gen. 3:23–24).
 - **BUT, Christ promised** that those who love Him will be **loved by both Christ and the Father!**
 - John wrote of his prophetic vision of the fulfillment of this promise, saying, "**I saw a new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for

her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, **the dwelling place of God is with man**. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and **God himself will be with them as their God**’ (Rev. 21:1–3)

- This, of course, is yet to come in its fullness, but this is the present joy of every Christian now.
 - Where once there was hostility from God towards guilty sinners, Christ has successfully absorbed all condemnation for those who trust and love Him!
 - “**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself**” (2 Cor. 5:17–18)

5. The Illuminating work of God’s Spirit

- “**the Helper, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, **he will teach you** all things and **bring to your remembrance** all that I have said to you” (v26)
 - This “**taught by the Spirit**” and “**remembering what Christ said**” is especially true of the disciples in view in John 14.
 - They spoke and some even wrote the words of Christ after His departure from the world. Their ability to do this was from God’s Spirit who indwelt them (2 Pet. 1:21).
 - This is also true (in a distinct way) of all disciples / Christians.
 - Paul wrote, “**we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand** the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but **taught by the Spirit**, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and **he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned**” (1 Cor. 2:12–14)

6. *Supernatural Peace*

- “**Peace I leave** with you; **my peace I give** to you. **Not as the world gives** do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (v27)
 - **Christ’s peace is not like the world gives**
 - It is not circumstantial
 - The world’s peace is based on circumstance – the lack of an aggressor, a threat, or a disaster.
 - It is not temporal
 - The world’s peace is merely temporal – it will not last, and it’s usually short-lived.
 - It is not effort-intensive
 - The world’s peace is something you or we must fight for – it is not normal or neutral.
 - It is not unfair or partial
 - The world’s peace is always selective – it is never universal or objective.
 - **Christ’s peace is supernatural**
 - It is transcendent, eternal, effortless, and universal
 - “**Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come**, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and **from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn** of the dead, and **the ruler** of kings on earth. To **him who loves us** and has **freed us from our sins** by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be **glory and dominion forever and ever.**” (Rev. 1:4–6)
 - **When this God says “peace,”** where is your worry, my friend?

Glorious blessings are promised to those who believe... those who are marked by true belief.

(4) SOME APPLICATION

1. Are you marked as a Christian in this world?

- a. Are you **prayerfully working** for **God's glory** in Christ?
 - i. Are you self-centered or God-centered / Christ-centered?
- b. Are you **conforming to Christ's commands**?
 - i. Are you seeking to know Christ's commands better?
 - ii. Are you striving to live according to Christ's commands?
 - iii. Are you praying that God (by the power of His Spirit) will help you to live according to Christ's commands?
- c. Are you **motivated by love** for **Christ**?
 - i. Does your love for others flow from your love of Christ?
 - ii. Are you genuinely interested in Christ (knowing Him, enjoying Him, savoring Him)?

2. Do you enjoy the blessings Christ promised in the gospel?

- a. Are you **indwelt** by God's Spirit?
- b. Do you have **resurrection** life? **Will you be raised** as Christ has been raised?
- c. Do you **know what it means** to be **united** with Christ?
- d. Are you **enjoying** the **loving presence** (or nearness) of God?
- e. Do you **benefit** from the **illuminating power** of God's Spirit?
- f. Are you **experiencing supernatural peace**?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

If Anyone Loves Me, He Will Keep My Word by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/if-anyone-loves-me-he-will-keep-my-word>

Doing the Works of Jesus and Greater Works by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/doing-the-works-of-jesus-and-greater-works>

The Peace Which Christ Gives His True Followers by Jonathan Edwards

<http://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/peace2.htm>

The Promise of the Holy Spirit by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-74/the-promise-of-the-holy-spirit-part-1>

The Comforter by C.H. Spurgeon

<http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/sermons/0005.htm>