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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.

Ice cream or broccoli? Pizza or brussel sprouts? Steak or liver? Life is full of choices and some are easier to make than others. I would never choose brussel sprouts over pizza but many times I would choose broccoli over ice cream. I actually love broccoli served any way other than absolute mush. Our food choices can seem like a have-to vs. a want-to. We want to eat ice cream, pizza and steak but broccoli is typically more in the have-to category. Of course, we don't

have to in terms of our life depending on it, but we have to in order to choose good foods over not so good foods.

All of life is like this and our decisions are usually a mixture of have-to and want-to. If you are a bread winner in your household, why do you get up and go to work every day? For the bread, right? Moola. Dinero. Greenbacks. We work so that we can eat. We work to provide the essentials of life and to take care of ourselves and our family. But is there also a want-to mixed into that daily decision? We hope that there is. We can usually get enjoyment and sense of purpose from our professions. Some days that comes a little easier than others but most of us have it at times. Or we should at least be fighting for contentment and battling the temptation of a complaining spirit. So it's a mixture of both.

This is true with my job as well. I am extremely grateful to have ministry as my vocation. It is a high privilege indeed. There is a lot of want-to in this job, but would you believe me if I told you there is also some have-to at times? Take one of my favorite parts—doing what I am doing now—preaching. I love to preach. I enjoy the learning that goes on in the preparation of a message. I enjoy the process of digging deep in order to present a message that is Biblically faithful, interesting and applies to our every day life. It's a privilege to try to bring God's word to life for you. But it's also a challenge. There are days when I feel like I am wading through mud as high as my waist. The computer screen stares back at me and snickers. Words are stuck in my little head and refuse to come out. There is the have-to—Sunday morning, I have to give a message. And there is the want-to—I really love the process and end result of preaching.

You could also talk about it in terms of punishment and reward. If we don't go to work, we will be "punished" by losing our jobs, not being able to care for our family as well as carrying the burden of losing our job simply due to laziness. But the positive Aspects of our job can be a type of reward. We get a sense of accomplishment of a job well done, of helping others, of advancing the goals of our employer, whether that is open heart surgery or sweeping a floor. Both can be rewarding.

Punishment and reward is also how much of parenting works. If your children disobey, there needs to be some sort of punishment built into the process. It doesn't have to be a spanking—though it may be on occasion, but loving discipline must have actual discipline in the equation. We really enjoyed spending time with the Alvidrez family last weekend. Apparently, Albanian families in general are very poor disciplinarians. They were telling us how parents just let their kids do basically whatever they want with the excuse that, "They're too young to understand right from wrong. They'll learn eventually." Absolutely frightening. Discipline as punishment is needed at times but we also know that children are motivated by rewards. The reward might be popsicle, a trip to the park or playing catch with dad. Children and adults alike are generally more motivated by the promise of a reward than they are by a fear of punishment.

This is just how life works, am I right? Want-to and have-to. Punishment and reward. It's no wonder that karma is such a popular belief. Karma is not a hard and fast universal principle, but it is basically true. In general, if you treat people nicely and do the right thing, your life will go better than someone else who does not.

Since life works this way we tend to carry this over into our relationship with the Lord. We know too much of our Bible and enough theology to ever say that God works on a system of karma but when the rubber hits the road, this is essentially how we think God works. If we tow the line, we will be rewarded but if we step out of line, that's when the hammer falls. So we often end up obeying God because we have to, not because we want to. Following the Lord is more of a duty than it is a delight. We stay out of trouble, but we grit our teeth while we do it.

This gets us back to verse 15 that we focused on two weeks ago. *If you love me, you will keep my commandments.* I spent the entire sermon on that one verse. My paraphrase was this: "The one who has been loved by God will keep my commandments." As 1 John 4:19 states, "We love because he first loved us." I used a phrase that my friend shared with me—Rules without relationships leads to rebellion.

And here's where duty and delight enter into the picture. If you obey God's commands in order to earn his love and acceptance, it will feel like duty, but if you obey God's commands because you have already been loved and accepted, obeying will be a delight. I explained that our obedience is not the condition of our acceptance; it is the consequence of our acceptance. We obey *because* we were loved not *so that* we will be loved. Our obedience to his commandments is an expression of our love not a condition of our love. When we understand and experience this, it changes our duty into delight. We want to obey more than we have to obey.

But it may still be hard to grasp the depth and importance of these truths. We can say that we are fully loved and accepted by God, but it doesn't always feel like it. We know it in our heads but not always in our hearts.

I was reminded of my first day of little league baseball. I had never played baseball before. In fact, I showed up to the first practice without a baseball glove so the coach gave me a catcher's mitt. Then he sent me out into the field to catch fly balls. That's a kid's worst nightmare, isn't it? Especially if you are using a catcher's mitt! There's nothing worse than an entire team counting on you to catch a simple fly ball. You hear the crack of the bat and you see the ball coming your way. You move into position, the sun is in your eyes and you watch helplessly as the ball drops to the ground a few inches from your glove.

That never actually happened to me because I was so bad they almost never put me in the game. But it's the set up for a perfect failure. And if it were a movie, it would go down like this. The outcast kid, who's not much of an athlete, misses an easy fly ball and loses the game for his team. The whole team is mad at the kid. Let's call him Richie. The rest of the team leaves the field all mad at little Richie, saying things like, "Richie, you're the worst. You play baseball like your grandma. Just stay home the next time and play with your dolls." Little Richie is left standing there alone with his head down. He's devastated. He wants these kids to accept him and be his friend but he just experienced utter humiliation and rejection. And then you get the classic movie response. Little Richie lifts his head and yells back at his teammates, "Oh yeah! Well at least my mom loves me." At that moment, Richie was holding onto the only thing he could think of. His mom probably does love him. Very much, in fact. But in Richie's mind and heart, was that enough? Yes, he's glad that his mom loves him but at that moment, what he really wants is the acceptance of his teammates. He wants those guys to like him.

Sometimes that can be how we receive this message of God's love and acceptance. The world beats you up six days of the week. You feel rejected, alone and you feel like a failure. Then you go to church and the preacher reminds you, "Oh yeah, well at least God loves you!" You know it's true, but it feels a bit hollow. It doesn't feel like enough to overcome the rest of your week. It doesn't feel like it's enough to overcome the fact that your husband doesn't love you like he should or your wife doesn't respect you like she should. You feel like little Richie who is standing alone in the dugout and says, "Oh yeah, well at least God loves me" when what you really want is love and acceptance by those around you.

Now please do not misunderstand me. God's love **is** enough. Properly understood and believed, God's love is enough, not only to overcome our sin and our rebellion, but also to overcome the rejection by the world and all the pain and sorrow it can throw at us. God is enough, but we're not always at the point where it feels like enough.

So here's the context of our passage in John 14. This is the last day of Jesus' life. In chapter 13, Judas left the other disciples to betray Jesus. His death is immanent. In just a few hours he will be sweating drops of blood in the garden. A few more hours will mean flogging and a few more hours, crucifixion and an agonizing death carrying the sins of the world upon him. But in that context his main goal here was to encourage the disciples. But his encouragement was not with mere words but with his presence. After all, isn't that what we all want? We don't just want words on a page. We want a real person and a real relationship.

Dads, today is Father's Day and I'll have a challenge for you near the end of the message but let me ask you a question. What do your kids most want from you? They want to be with you. They want to spend time with dad. Of course, they love time with their friends but more than anything, they need their dad. And they don't just need you to be present with them, but they need to know that you love and accept them no matter what. They need to know that your love is given freely and does not have to be earned. They need to know that being with dad is the safest place they could possibly be. Like my friend told me almost thirty years ago: rules without relationships leads to rebellion. And if we know that it is true with our human relationships, how much more is it true in our relationship with the Lord.

And this is exactly what we have!

1. We have the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.* From Jesus' perspective, the coming of the Spirit was a future even but from our perspective, it is a past even that happened at Pentecost. Jesus called him "another helper." At least that's the way the ESV translated the Greek word *paraclete*. Here are the other translations.

ESV/NASB—Helper

NIV (1984)—Counselor

NIV (2011)/NRSV—Advocate

KJV—Comforter

Helper, Advocate, Counselor, Comforter. They are all good words to describe the Holy Spirit. He does help us. He does Advocate and intercede for us. He does Counsel and Comfort us. He is all of these things, but we must not miss the intensely personal nature of this relationship. Jesus said, *You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.* The Holy spirit is not a thing or a mindless power. He is a person and we are promised that he will dwell with us and will be in us. You see, it's not only the things that he does but who he is. It's a relationship with the Spirit. He dwells with us and in us.

2. The world does not have the Spirit.

Jesus said, *the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.* The personal, indwelling of the Spirit is only for those who believe in Jesus and are cleansed by his atoning blood. This needs to be clearly stated lest we teach a type of universalism. The liberal branch of Christianity teaches that God's love everyone the same—that all people everywhere are loved and accepted by God. But here Jesus dispelled that notion. The world—that is the unbelieving world—does not see or know the Spirit. They don't receive Jesus. The world does not receive or believe and the result is that they don't know him.

3. We have perfect unity in the Father and the Son.

"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.

Identity in Christ
Unity in Christ

Who We Are

JUSTIFICATION

- Identity in Christ
- Unity in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17

Identity in Christ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

John 14:20

Unity in Christ *In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.*

This whole passage is filled with this rich language of fellowship and love. There's a certain repetition and overlap in the language, which is exactly what Jesus wanted to convey in his last hours. He will not leave us alone. Through the Spirit, he will always be with us and in us. We are fully accepted, loved and secure in the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Now we go full circle back to verse 15. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Or in my paraphrase, the one who has been loved by Jesus will keep his commandments. We must

obey his commandments. Which ones? All of them—but chiefly summarized by the Great Commandment.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

We must obey his commandments, but in the context and foundation of perfect love and acceptance, this can turn our have-to into a want-to. It can change our duty into delight. Even Jesus experienced the joy of obedience. 30—*but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.* Jesus always obeyed the Father. Why? Love. It was never a *have to* but always a *want to*.

Why would obeying Christ feel like a have-to instead of a want-to? There’s only one answer—you are not fully believing in this perfect love relationship. There is something standing in the way. There is something that has grabbed your heart and mind and you are holding that closer than you are Christ. But don’t panic. That happens all the time and the key is to simply recognize it, turn from it and ask the Lord to renew your love. Ask him to change your have-to’s into want-to’s. Ask him to restore the joy of your salvation and change your duty into delight.

Dads, I want to leave you with an encouragement and a challenge—all rolled into one. I read Psalm 18 this week and this section reminded me of John 14.

- ³¹ For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?—
³² the God who equipped me with strength
and made my way blameless.
³³ He made my feet like the feet of a deer
and set me secure on the heights.
³⁴ He trains my hands for war,
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
³⁵ You have given me the shield of your salvation,
and your right hand supported me,
and your gentleness made me great.

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