

## ***TO LOVE JESUS IS TO OBEY HIM***

Those who really love Jesus show it in a desire to OBEY Him. Jesus is the “author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” (Heb. 5:9). Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (Jn. 14:15). 1 John 2:3-4 says, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” This is the fruit of true faith!

For the true believer, OBEDIENCE flows out of two founts: 1) Our love for the one Who paid our incalculable sin debt, 2) Our recognition of His Lordship. Both cause us to worship, for He alone is worthy. We believe in Him! We love Him. We obey Him. We worship! True faith results in knowing Christ, which results in loving Him as seen in obedience.

Do you believe in Jesus? Put it to the test! Do you sincerely love Jesus as seen in obedience? That is telling!

Many people claim to “believe” in Jesus, and yet their profession of faith never seems to impact their lives. They say they know Christ but live like practical atheists. Many, it seems, think that mere mental assent is the equivalent of saving faith. It’s not! Even demons have mental assent, and an emotional experience (they tremble - cf. Ja. 2:19), but they are not saved. They have no real allegiance to or love for Christ. Jesus said on Judgment Day that MANY will say, “Lord, Lord” and Jesus will respond, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (cf. Mt. 7:21-23).

For too long, evangelicals, in general, have made an UNQUALIFIED faith in Christ as sufficient. We have glibly referred to what amounts to “dead faith” as saving faith! If someone says, they “believe” we affirm they are saved whether there is any fruit to back it up or not.

Now, I totally affirm that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (cf. Eph. 2:8-9). However, I also affirm that it must be the right kind of faith. The expectation throughout the Bible is that an authentic faith will bear fruit.

We are not saved by the fruit, but the fruit does testify of the reality of a living/saving faith. It was Jesus Who said, “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.” (Mt. 12:33).

One of the key fruits of regeneration is LOVE – a love for Jesus. We are saved by faith – not by love. However, if we have true faith then the outflow of that will be a love for Jesus (cf. Gal. 5:6). This is Paul’s inspired teaching in 1 Corinthians 16:22.

In the context of 1 Corinthians 16, Paul, via dictation to his secretary, has just been emphasizing the proper expression of Christian love among those in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 16:19-20). Suddenly, Paul takes pen in hand and in 1 Corinthians 16:22 writes, **“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.”** The word accursed is literally “*anathema*”. As used elsewhere by Paul, *anathema* denotes a person consigned to damnation or eternal destruction (cf. Gal. 1:8-9). Paul does not extend warm fellowship greetings to those who don’t love Jesus. Rather, he says they are under the curse of God (cf. Jn. 3:36).

Perhaps in addition to asking people if they believe in Jesus, we should follow up with, “Do you love Jesus?” In the case of true saving faith, the one naturally follows the other. In 1 Cor. 8:3 Paul says, “But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.” Those of precious-like faith, LOVE Jesus (cf. 1 Pet. 1:7-8). “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 Jn. 4:19)

Paul characteristically uses the Greek word *agape* when expressing love in the most intense manner (cf. 1 Cor. 13, Gal. 5:22-23, etc.). However, in 1 Cor. 16:22, he uses another word for love, the word *philei* (only used twice by Paul, cf. Titus 3:15).

“He does not speak of the absence of some special degree of love, but of the lack of love for Christ at all.” – **Leon Morris**

On some level, all believers LOVE the Lord Jesus (cf. Jn. 21:15-17). To know Him is to love Him!

In the last days, people will have a form of godliness and yet be defined by being “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”. (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5). It appears that many involved in the “evangelical machine” are going through the motions with no real love for Christ. God knows (cf. 2 Tim. 2:19). However, 1 Corinthians 16:22 shows that faith, without love for Christ, is bogus!

What a tragedy to know about Christ, and yet not really know/love Him (cf. Titus 1:16).