

John 14:23-29 (NIV)

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24) He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. 25) "All this I have spoken while still with you. 26) But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. 28) "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29) I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

Fellow disciples of our Lord,

It is customary for us to end our worship services with a blessings and a closing hymn. We commonly use either *the Aaronic Blessing*:

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you, the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

or the Apostolic Blessing:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Often when Christians part company they may wish each other the Lord's blessings. Jesus does something similar in our text for today. As Jesus was preparing to leave his disciples for his journey to the cross and grave which would accomplish their salvation and his ultimate entry into the glories of heaven he spoke the words of our text to comfort and reassure them of God's abiding presence with them. The blessings he promises were not just intended for the twelve but for all those who love him, for his disciples of every place and generation including the members of our confirmation class for this year.

Theme: Jesus Gives an Abiding Blessing

May ...

1. the love of the Father
 2. the comfort of the Spirit
 3. the peace of the Savior
- ... be with you always!

Today's Scripture is part of an extended conversation that Jesus had with the twelve on the night before he laid down his life for the sins of the world. He wanted those who loved him to

be assured of God's abiding presence and blessings in their lives even after he would no longer be physically present with them.

At this time the 12 were still clinging to their hope that Jesus was going to establish an earthly kingdom. One of the disciples, Judas (not the one who would betray him) who is also known to us as Thaddaeus had reacted to some of the things Jesus had told them by asking, "**Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?**" (John 14:22) Based on their expectations it would be imperative for the world to see Jesus.

Jesus responded with the words of our text in which he once again spoke of the importance of not rejecting him through unbelief. It was in this context that Jesus offered the blessing of his Father's love to those who loved him and obeyed his Word.

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24) He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Jesus links himself to believers through the Word. Ultimately it is the Word which creates faith and love in our hearts for Jesus. Our love and obedience flows from our hearts as a response to the Word. The Word is a source of blessing for us as Jesus himself has said, "**Blessed ... are those who hear the word of God and obey it.**" (Luke 11:28 NIV)

Jesus promises the Father's love to those who follow his teachings. Where two or three gather together in his name both Jesus and the Father are present with their blessings. We often take comfort from that fact but Jesus seems to take things a bit farther in this text when he promises that he and the Father will come to believers and make their home with them blessing them with the Father's love.

John spoke of the Father's love this way: **How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!** It is a blessing to be a child of God.

In love, our heavenly Father preserves us by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, cattle and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. The Father also preserves us by defending us against all danger, guarding and protecting us from all evil. All this God does only because He is our good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it.

Fatherly provision and protection are the primary physical blessings we enjoy in this life as a result of living under the Father's love. Therefore as God's dearly loved children we can approach him with the confidence that together with Christ he will gladly give us all things. **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** (Romans 8:32 NIV)

Dear friends it's easy for us to get so caught up in the fact that even now we are enjoying the love of the Father that we might forget the eternal blessings we will enjoy because of the Father's love. The greatest evidence of the Father's love is that he gave his Son for us so that we might enjoy eternal life with him in his kingdom. Let's not fall into the trap of thinking that this is a worldly kingdom. Let's rejoice in our status as heirs of eternal life!

The love of our heavenly Father is an ever present and eternal love. **God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."** (Hebrews 13:5 NIV)

During the time that Jesus spent on this earth his disciples enjoyed being in his presence. He was their teacher, their confidant, their source of comfort and security. When he would no longer be with them they would still enjoy the love of the Father and they would also enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

"All this I have spoken while still with you. 26) But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

After his departure Jesus would no longer be physically present with his disciples to teach them as he had been doing. How would they remember his teachings so that they could pass them on to others so that they could love Jesus and enjoy the love of the Father? In love the Father would send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name. The Holy Spirit would strengthen their faith enabling them to call to mind the wonderful promises and comfort that Jesus had spoken to them.

The Holy Spirit does the same for us. He calls us to faith through the Gospel, assuring us of the Father's love and forgiveness for the sake of Jesus. The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures so that we have the teachings of Jesus in written form. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith in the hearts of believers by teaching us everything that is necessary for eternal life. In time of trouble, temptation, doubt or despair the comfort of the Spirit is there to lift us up, to reassure us that we are loved by the Father and that we can enjoy the peace of Christ.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The 12 disciples were about to experience the most turbulent days of their lives as Jesus would be arrested, sentenced to death and crucified on the cross. From a worldly point of view tumultuous times like that may not seem all that peaceful. And yet the fact remains that even at times of conflict and trouble believers are at peace with God because of the sacrifice which Jesus made for them.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1 NIV)

Jesus' peace calms trouble hearts and makes fearful hearts confident. His peace transcends human understanding and sustains us in all conditions. His peace keeps us at one with the Father and serene in our salvation. We do not need to be afraid or overcome by troubled hearts. As long as we have Jesus we have peace – peace of conscience and peace of mind. With Jesus we have the peace of knowing **that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** (Romans 8:28 NIV)

Today we will conclude our service as usual with a parting blessing – the blessing that Jesus holds out to those who love him in this text. Jesus Gives a Parting Blessing

May ...

1. the love of the Father
 2. the comfort of the Spirit
 3. the peace of the Savior
- ... be with you always!

Amen.