

The Perfect Word of God

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 1/19/2019

During His earthly ministry, Jesus gave us many commands.

The Bible is **the Perfect Word of God**. (Today's title)

The Bible is how God speaks to us – indicating what His will for us is.

Luke 22:19 And [Jesus] took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

When Jesus says to us "Do this," ...let's always treat His words as **commands** for our lives. Jesus Christ's directives to us are not options or suggestions, and not mere sentiments (as most of the world treats His words) – but Christ's words are actually dictates that we are commanded to follow.

John 15:9 Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

The world basks in the warm glow of that verse as an emotional sentiment. I've heard people say, "I can feel Jesus' arms around me – He loves me just as I am." They most often neglect to read on...

John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

But, here is what so many overlook... Here is where so many make a wrong assumption... They assume that they are **already** in the love of Christ – when they have no idea what that means. Jesus is not saying that we are to simply stay in His love. He is saying that we are to possess and retain – the same Love that He, Jesus and the Father have for each other. And, yes, that is the same Godly love as He and the Father hold for us.

Do we have a love like the love God the Father and Jesus share? We will answer the question, "How is the LOVE of God perfected in us?" Godly love is the greatest Love that exists in the Universe. We are to have it – use it – display it in our lives.

Before we can abide in God's perfect Love – we have to attain to it. Where does it come from? We do not begin with God's love, so how do we get there? We have to get Godly Love somehow – we are not born with it, are we?

When Jesus says to us, "Abide in my love,"... He is saying that His Love, the Father's Love... that same Godly Love must be internalized by us as a way of life – who and what we are. Pure Godly love must abide, dwell, persist, endure, stand, continue, be internalized by us as a way of life.

SPS: How do we come to have the Love of Christ in the first place - that we might "Continue and abide in His Love?"

The world thinks that they know Jesus - but they do not. John expounds on these same words of Jesus in his letters to the saints:

1John 2:3 Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments.

Not just the Old Testament Ten Commandments.

1John 2:4 He that says, I know Him, [you and me Lord] ...and keeps not His Commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. [Do this...]

We come to the answer to our question, "How is the **LOVE** of God perfected in us?" It is by keeping ALL His commandments – like [when Jesus says Do this...]

1John 2:5 But whoso **keeps His word**, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

When we are "**in** Jesus," we live and die just as He did. Notice:

1John 2:6 He that says he abide in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

1John 2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old Commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old Commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

1John 2:8 Again, a new Commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines.

John is referring to the words of Jesus that he has in the Gospel account.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

This so-called new Commandment has to do with our relationships with one another.

1John 2:9-11 He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Would you put it all on the line to save a person? Would you put your life on the line to enable someone to be in the Kingdom of God?

1John 2:23-25 Whosoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father: (but) he that acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Let that... [what is "that" – it is that perfected Love of God – the Father's Love – Jesus' saving Love] therefore **abide in you**, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even **eternal life**.

1John 2:28 And now, little children, **abide in Him**; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

God calls us. Those who cooperate with the beast power fight against Christ - Christ overcomes them...

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him [we dwell – we are with Him] are called, and chosen, and faithful. [Called Chosen and faithful]

We see the process here: called, and chosen, and faithful. Called -by whom, Chosen - for what? Called how – God put it in our heads as real and factual – tangible. We must go through this process - a wonderful invitation from God - Plan and Kingdom of God.

Matthew 22:14 For many are called [invited], but few are chosen.

For us, the Gospel rang true – We felt, “that’s exactly right when we heard it.” It was compelling – a pearl of great price that we had to have. When we responded - it was like an Ephesians’ first love – that’s a calling.

God calls us specifically and individually – God invites us – and more.

God has the highest standards for those he calls – you might not know it if you measure Christianity by those in the various churches of God.

Ours is not a pretense religion. Calling = "invited" in the Greek. But, our Calling is not like an invitation that might come in the mail – it is more a specific **appointment** by God to be in His family.

We are hand selected by God at this time – because He has Plans for us – to grow into Godly people – set apart from this world. God is “hands on” in a Christian’s life. But we are not along for the ride – we are to be very active participants. That would also be a good title - The Love of Christ.

God's great purpose is to give salvation-eternal life-to all mankind.

Jesus said, "I will build my church." The Greek word for "church" is *ekklesia*. It means "a calling out" or "called out ones."

Jesus warned that "narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14).

The idea that one must be "called" and "chosen" originates with Jesus Himself. He told His disciples, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). "Called" and "chosen" are legitimate biblical concepts. But they are rarely understood and incredibly misused. Let's get it straight!

God has some straight forward stringent, idealistic, Godly requirements for His people. God has a hands-on calling with His continuing involvement.

Called:

People are "**called**" by the preaching of the Gospel (the good news of the Kingdom of God).

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Only those who are called by God grasp the truth and understand it.

Chosen:

2Thessalonians 2:13-14 We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **chosen** you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called [calling is first] you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who respond are "chosen" for salvation. How? By believing the truth and by being sanctified (set apart) by receiving the Holy Spirit. **Chosen** means a positive decision to yield our will to God’s will.

Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him . . ." (John 6:44).

Then He adds, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father" (verse 65). God draws us to Him. He grants us the desire to learn His ways, to submit our wills to Him. We naturally resist submitting to God's laws (Romans 8:7).

Yielding our will to God is truly a miracle, "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13.)

Only a few respond. Those few truly repent and surrender their wills to God. They make a commitment to obey God's commandments. Those who respond to God's "calling" are chosen by God because they choose to serve God.

Faithful:

Those brethren who are with Christ are not only called and chosen but they must remain - faithful. Being "called" and "chosen" is not the end of the story.

2Peter 2:20-21 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

There are two sermons on line explaining Called – Chosen and Faithful. Let's look at how we are to remain faithful.

Lay Down Your Life:

Not laying our lives down as Jesus gave us example to do may be the biggest shortcoming in the Church of God today! We must be sure that we have a Godly love like Christ does before we can continue in it. We've seen it a thousand times where Jesus explained that we as Christians must have a **love like His**:

John 15:12-13 This is my Commandment, That ye love one another, **as** I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man **lay down his life** for his friends."

Let's not pass over this too quickly – saying to ourselves – "I know that Scripture already." Let's analyze these verses a little bit. The first thing that we must take to heart is this: "This is my commandment..." It is a commandment of Jesus Christ! Let's make sure that we understand what is being said here.

Next, "That ye love one another..." Who among us seriously examines ourselves as what loving one another according to the Scriptures entails?

No matter how loving we may think we are, this kind of love that Jesus is speaking of does not come naturally for anyone – we must acquire Godly love.

Then, Jesus adds, "As I have loved you." If we are reading closely, we would ask ourselves, how was it that Jesus loved us? "As," means in the same way. We are to love others with the exact same love that Jesus loved us. Jesus died for us – that is the way He loved us. You might say, "Surely, Jesus does not expect us to literally be willing to die for one another" – but He does.

So as to remove any doubt as to what He meant, Jesus concludes this short passage with, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is starting to become fairly clear that Jesus is commanding that we lay down our lives just as He laid down His life.

In the past, if we thought about laying down our lives at all – perhaps we viewed it as giving of our time, money and encouragement. Cards, emails, and phone calls. That is laying down our lives – daily – for one another. It is only a beginning point.

Have there ever been times when you were praying fervently for a loved one, or for someone in the Church who was dying, and you said, "Father, please take my life – and spare this person to go on with their life?" And really mean it? Can we say, "I will give up the rest of my life here and now – so that another person could go on living?"

God doesn't usually work that way – but He expects us to love as He loves – and He appreciates the willing attitude. If someone has a genuine need – Job – health – relationship problem. Actually getting involved in other's lives - Christianity is not a spectator sport – it is definitely "Hands-on." Helping them work through the situation – even if it costs time and money – that is laying down our lives.

Provoking one another to love and good works. (Hebrews 10:24) Physical and spiritual. But, there is so much more.

Here is a typical opportunity to fulfill what Jesus means by laying down our lives. Sometimes, we find out that one of the brethren has a serious sin in their life – what are we to do? How do we lay down our lives in a situation like this? This is what Jesus was speaking of when He said we are to lay down our lives for others just as He did for us.

Laying down our lives MEANS it costs us something. Even if our reputation is ruined, even if we are disfellowshipped, even if all our friends abandon us, even if we lose everything – including our lives, we put it all on the line to convert the sinner from the error of his way.

James 5:19-20 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Let's look at some situations where we are required by God to lay down our lives. When a situation arises in the life of one of the brethren – a difficult situation where someone's salvation is at stake, or someone is being treated in a terribly unjust manner, what are we to do?

Suppose that a malicious minister of a congregation is threatening an innocent member – and you are the only one who knows about it – what would you do?

Sometimes – Laying down your life is a once in a lifetime test!!! [decision]

Then again --- Laying down your life is a serious daily responsibility. The answer that too many brethren come up with is, "I'll put it in God's hands and pray about it." Actually, in many cases that is simply a cop-out.

I've actually heard ministers – who were reluctant to stand for the Truth, say, "I just go along with this so I don't lose my job – AND that way, I'll have so many opportunities to teach the word of God???"

That is choosing not to take action – not to get involved – but taking the easy way out of a challenging situation. God knows all the circumstances already. God may be making the state of affairs known in order to get help for the victimized individual.

Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took some young Israelites captive:

Daniel 3:13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Daniel 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

Daniel 3:17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Daniel 3:18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Daniel 3:23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

That is the other end of the scale of Laying down your life – literally willing to die for God's Name. There are other ways we yield our bodies today.

Now we come to the hard part. What does Jesus mean by, "lay down your life?"

Paul says that we can lay down our lives – and still be alive. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1)

In other words, Jesus died on the cross – it's not asking too much of us to "die daily" in fulfillment of Christ's command (1Corinthians 15:31).

1John 3:16-17 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to **lay down our lives** for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?

Good question!!!

Incredibly, God requires that we lay our lives down to save each other! As many times as we've read John 15 let's try to see the necessity of God's perfect Love in us.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

John 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Jesus invites us to share in the very goodness and gifts He possesses.

John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Joh 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue [abide, dwell, persist, endure, stand] ye in my love.

How do we continue in Christ's Love??? By keeping all Christ's commands - not just the Ten Commandments. What other commands of Christ does He impose upon us? Let's be sure we understand this...

John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide [dwell, persist, endure, stand, continue] in my love; even as I have kept [held fast, fulfilled, maintained, guarded from violation] my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

We know how perfectly Jesus fulfilled His Father's precepts - and how perfect their close relationship is.

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy [*'chara'* cheerfulness, gladness, delight, charisma, charismatic might remain [abide, dwell, persist, endure, stand] in you, and that your joy might be full.

Jesus is going to tell us how - we come to have the Love of Christ

John 15:12 This is my Commandment, That ye love one another, **as** [in the same way] I have loved you.

All the scriptures where it says Jesus died for us - He laid down his life for us. Getting involved could get you labeled as trouble maker or busy body. We are our brother's keeper - and if we don't lay our life down for him - who will?

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

It is more than that Jesus' teachings were to affect all aspects of their lives -- we are literally commanded to lay down our lives for the brethren and for Christ's name.

John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 15:17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Yes it is a commandment... How do we go about keeping it? Jesus died so that we might have salvation. In the same way, our acts of laying down our lives are for the purpose of saving each other - making sure that we help each other into the Kingdom of God.

If we are not doing this - we are not abiding in His love.

End: The Perfect Word of God