

Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for his visible departure. The new command to love one another also means loving him and his Word. Loving Jesus means obeying his teaching. We do not fear at the thought of this impossible task. The gift of the Spirit comes to bring knowledge and peace. With untroubled hearts, we believe.

²³ 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.

Dear Friends in Christ who dwells in your hearts by faith in Him,

Recently, in our Wednesday Evening Bible Class, we’ve begun our study on Solomon’s Temple. What a great temple it was! Some estimate its value in today’s money as costing over three billion dollars. But that was not its true value. Its true value was in this, God himself dwelt in that temple in the Holy of Holies. On the day of Dedication of Solomon’s Temple God entered the temple in a dark cloud of smoke. The Bible says that the smoke was so thick the priests couldn’t do their work! (2 Chronicles 5:13, 14) After Solomon’s prayer on the day of Dedication he offered up as sacrifices 22,000 head of cattle, 120,000 head of sheep and goats. God himself sent fire from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. God Himself dwelt with his people in that temple in the city he had chosen from all the cities of the world.

Unfortunately, that temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon because God’s people forsook the LORD and disobeyed his commandments. They chose to worship other gods in the very temple that God Himself had dwelt.

This morning Jesus is talking about another temple that he and the Father want to come into. That temple is your and my hearts. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, “**Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.**” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17) God dwells in our hearts by faith in Jesus. All three persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit dwell there. But that temple can become a place that God no longer desires to dwell in, so that the Triune God will leave. When he leaves us we are destroyed forever.

How do we preserve this sacred temple, that is, the LORD dwelling in our heart, God dwelling in us? Jesus tells us how in our text this morning. Before he ascended into heaven he stressed to his disciples the importance of continuing to love him. He teaches us 1) *what it means to love him*, 2) *what blessings we have when we love him*. So let’s consider Jesus’ words in our text with the following outline:

If you love me...

- 1...this is what that will look like;
- 2...these are the blessings you will receive;

1

Solomon’s Temple was destroyed because God’s people continually disobeyed his commandments, especially the First Commandment, “*You shall have no other gods!*” Likewise, God’s temple in our hearts will meet the same end if we also continually disobey Jesus’ teachings. So Jesus teaches his disciples that if they love him ...they will continue to obey his teachings: ²³ Jesus replied, “**If anyone loves me, he will obey my teachings. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.**”

The “*teachings*” that Jesus is referring to are the teachings which Jesus himself taught them and which the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, will teach and remind them of after Jesus returns to the Father. Jesus said, 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.**” Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to them on Pentecost Sunday, 50 days after his resurrection, to guide them in all truth. You and I know these teachings because the Holy Spirit inspired

these apostles to write them down for us in what we call the New Testament. Everything the LORD wants us to know is written there for our learning. All of it agrees with the Old Testament Scriptures which Jesus himself used and verified for us as truth.

Jesus says that if we love him we will “*obey his teachings.*” The word “*obey*” literally means *to watch over, to guard*. With reference to Jesus’ teachings, his doctrine, the word means to *obey* or *observe*. The word “*teachings*” is more encompassing than the word *commands*. In other words, Jesus is referring to everything he has revealed to us, not just his Law but also his Gospel message, all of his Logos, all of his Word, and what he has revealed to us. When we continually do this, guard and keep this Word, he promises to make his dwelling in us. So a true disciple of Jesus is one who continues in Jesus Word, all of it. (See also John 8:31) God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit dwell in the heart of such a disciple. That’s what a person in whom the Triune God makes his temple looks like, he continues to hold to the teaching of Jesus and does them.

Is God dwelling in your heart? To help you answer this question listen to what Jesus said next in our text: 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.** Those who do not love Jesus do not *keep*, that is, *guard* the teachings of Jesus. This is an action they do not *continually do*. In other words, they persist in not guarding Jesus teachings. Certainly, because we are sinners, we often show by our words and actions that we are not keeping Jesus’ teachings. For example, we know that Jesus taught that we are to “*love the Lord our God with all our soul, all our heart and all our mind,*” and that we are “*to love our neighbor as ourselves.*” But who of us can say that we have never put ourselves before God and our neighbor. Instead of confessing the truth to my neighbor and confessing what we believe according to what God has told us, we sometimes think about what people will think about us when we confess the truth, how they might reject us or ridicule us and so we remain silent to preserve our standing in their eyes. That’s not love toward God; that’s not guarding the teachings of Jesus. That’s guarding our own skins, our own reputation. If we continually do this unloving thing, God is not in our heart.

Is there some sin, some part of Jesus’ teaching that you continually fail to keep in your life? You know that it’s wrong, but you *continue* in it? You never change or even struggle, fight to change, that sinful habit? Then you are not obeying Jesus’ teaching. Jesus wants to see daily repentance of your sins. He wants to see **that you are sorry** for your sins (which means you know what is sin and what is not sin and that you know that sin is an offense against God), and **that you trust in him for forgiveness** (which means you know what the Father has done through Jesus his Son to save you). “*If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and will forgive our sins,*” the Bible says (1 John 1:9) We can be sure that God dwells in us through repentance because our sins have been forgiven and our hearts are made pure and holy. (See 1 John 1:7) But then he also wants to see **the fruits of repentance** in our lives. He wants to see us fight and struggle to avoid those sins we were forgiven of, motivated by his love for us, “*We love because He first loved us.*” (1 John 4:19) Thankful for his forgiveness in Christ we will willingly love Him and our neighbor. We will strive to sin no more. If instead, we continually give ourselves over and over to those same sins again this may be evidence of the fact that we really don’t love Jesus, that we really don’t take his teachings seriously, and that our words of repentance really aren’t genuine. The consequences of that is that God will not dwell in us. Our hearts cannot be his temple.

2

But Jesus wants to dwell in us. God wants to dwell in our hearts. In Solomon’s day God wanted to dwell with his people in the temple there in Jerusalem. He wanted to dwell there not because they were perfect. They were sinners like us. He wanted to dwell with them because their sins were washed away. The people revealed repentance through their many sacrifices to him.

You and I know and believe that Jesus gave his life as a sacrifice for our sins. We believe that Jesus redeemed us from sin, death and hell by becoming a ransom, a payment for our sins. We no longer bring a sacrifice for sins to an earthly temple to be made holy. We bring hearts to God that trust in what Jesus did on the cross. God justifies us through this faith and makes us holy. A heart that trusts in Jesus is a heart that God dwells in, a temple of God.

Because God is there, It will be a heart that is filled with treasures! In the Old Testament it is estimated that more than 16 billion dollars of treasure was stored there at the temple. The treasures stored up in our hearts are spiritual in nature. Jesus mentions some of them, *peace and joy.* 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.**

The peace that the world gives is different than the peace God gives. The peace which the world offers is fragile and can be lost when the next temper flare up or grab for power comes. God’s peace does not depend on our having harmony with God. If it did we would never achieve peace with God. No, the peace that Jesus established is **eternal**. God reconciled the world in Christ to himself. (2 Corinthians 5:19) Nothing you and I can do can change God’s peace

declaration. It's eternal. Even our sins won't change what God has declared. With this peace God is assuring us that he is with us and living in us. He is for us and not against us. His peace calms troubled hearts and makes fearful hearts confident. His peace transcends human understanding and sustains us in all conditions. His peace makes us at one with God and serene in our salvation. That peace then leads to **joy and gladness**. The disciples could even be joyful when Jesus returned to the Father because they had that peace with God.

How are these treasures evident in Jesus disciples lives today? May I use what's happening to my mom right now to explain how the treasures we have through Christ apply in our lives. Mom needs a aortic valve replacement surgery soon. I called her this past week to see how she was doing. *"Oh, I feel okay, but I'm tired."* Why is she tired? She said that she isn't sleeping well. Why is that? Because she is worried about everything concerning the surgery, etc. That worry is zapping her peace and joy. That's obvious. But here is where Jesus needs to come into her heart and fill her heart with his treasures. A quick reminder to her of Jesus' love for her, what he did for her on the cross to establish peace with God for her and how he has given her faith to believe this and that she has fellowship with Jesus through faith, that is, that Jesus is with her now, brought her comfort. Now she needs to also be reminded that Jesus loves her always and promises to be with her always. She needs to remember that Jesus has a plan for her life and that she can't add a single day to her life by worrying about this trial. Instead, cling to Jesus' promises. Remember that in life and in death Jesus is walking with her. For that reason there is nothing to fear. Jesus will see to it that all things will work out for her good. After these reminders, Mom said, "I know, I know." Her words reveal knowledge, faith and hope. Her spirit is lifted. The more she clings to Jesus' words, the more her heart will experience peace and, yes, even joy. For God blesses faith this way. *"In him is gladness,"* the Hymnist wrote (CW 346). When he dwells in our hearts and makes our hearts his temple, he brings these treasures with him.

Apply what I just told you about my mom to your own experience. What trial is causing you fear and sadness? Are you dealing with a health issue yourself or worried about a loved one's health? Are you disgusted and worried about the future of our country? Why? Are you forgetting what God tells us about the rulers of this world? He is the one who establishes them according to his purpose. (Romans 13:1ff) He is in control of them for the good of his church. That ought to bring us comfort and confidence concerning the future even though we may suffer persecution. We know that even in persecution he watches over us and works for the glory of his Name. In heaven those who were persecuted and even died for the faith are under the very altar (Rev. 6:9) and throne of God with Him. If we love him we also will experience eternal peace and joy from him along with countless other treasures that he has prepared for us. (Psalm 16:11)

One final thought on the Lord dwelling in his Temple. Why did God dwell among his people in the tabernacle, the temple of Solomon and later also in Zerubbabel's Temple built after God's people returned from captivity? Israel was to show God's glory and splendor among the nations, so that the nations would be led to know and believe in him. So also does God dwell in the temple of your heart. Jesus said, *"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:14,16) That's what will happen when people see your peace and joy and come to know what you know. That's what will happen when you continue to guard Jesus' teachings and God lives in you and makes your heart his Temple. Amen.

