

1131 Life, Love, Suffering, and Justice - John(14)21-(15)27
(Verses refer to those in NASB95 unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First, the scripture makes it clear that loving Jesus equals obeying His Word, and discusses His second coming and we discuss the difference between viewing this matter from God's perspective and from human's perspective. Second, we see that the Lord Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches. Without being connected to Him, we would not have life. Third, we talked about our union with Him under the banner of love, and once again saw that He is absolutely sovereign, and briefly discussed that He is also a God of justice. Finally, from the scriptures we see that a slave cannot be greater than his master. The world persecuted Him, and it will also persecute Christians who are chosen to leave the world. Therefore, it is inevitable that Christians will suffer, but we must believe that He has overcome. He has given us unexpected peace that passes all understanding.

1. Loving Jesus equals obeying His Word the same

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to 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 abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 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 said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here."(John 14:21-31)

We are glad to know that the prince of this world has nothing in Jesus (see John 14:30). The prince of this world is the evil one, Satan. As the Scripture says, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."(1 John 5:19) Satan had nothing in Him. We see that although He was tempted by Satan, He did not sin. As Hebrews says, "For we do not have a high priest (Jesus) who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."(Hebrews 4:15)

He obeyed God all His life because "...I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. ..." (John 14:31) He knew that He would be betrayed and crucified in advance, but he still said, "...Get up, let us go from here."(John 14:31) On the way, He spoke many more words in John 15:1-17:26. "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His

disciples."(John 18:1) There, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, causing Him to be bound and eventually crucified. He died and was resurrected three days later.

When Judas (not Iscariot) questioned about not appearing to the world (see John 14:22), "Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; ...He who does not love Me does not keep My words; ..." (John 14:23-24) We can get that loving Jesus equals keeping His word. Why? The former says: If a person loves Me, it implies keeping My Word. The latter means: If a person doesn't love Me, it implies that person doesn't obey My Word. The logical equivalent is to take negative description and reverse the implying direction: obeying My Word implies loving Me. In short, it's a necessary and sufficient condition for these two statements. That means that obeying my Word equals loving Me.

Now we know that loving Jesus is equal to obeying His teachings, so loving Jesus cannot be just lip service. We must emphasize again and again that we must act on it. That is why the Great Commission says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; ..." (Matthew 28:19-20) Don't be like some people who think that the Great Commission has been fulfilled by simply making people believe in the Lord. There must be follow-up teaching so that they can be on the path to sanctification. Because people have free will, even if there are correct teachings, it does not mean that others will follow them. Therefore, the Great Commission only requires us to have correct teachings. There is no way to force people to believe in the Lord and obey to become true disciples.

Please note that Jesus did not answer Judas' question about not appearing to the world, but said, "...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; ..." (John 14:23) From a human perspective, He will indeed appear to those in the world who do not love Him now, just as some people have testified: When I had not yet believed in the Lord, the Lord moved me to believe in Him. This is actually appearing to that person in his mind, because He said, "You did not choose Me but I chose you, ..." (John 15:16) He has absolute sovereignty and can take the initiative. He can foresee that some people who do not love the Lord today may love the Lord tomorrow, so we must look at this issue from God's perspective.

We know that the Lord will truly appear to His disciples (Christians today), and we also know that He now dwells in believers and is with them in the form of the Holy Spirit. But sometimes people's hearts can be hardened, like Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord. Even though Jesus washed his feet and told him in advance that he was the disciple who betrayed Him, he still did not repent, and he showed it through his actions. Likewise, His appearance will have different reasons that we cannot understand. Sovereignty lies with Him, and He has absolute sovereignty. The Old Testament makes it clear, "'The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, ..." (Deuteronomy 29:29)

We know that the Holy Spirit came not only to teach and remind us of His ways (John 14:26), but also to enter into all truth (John 16:13). He promises us that the peace He gives us is true peace that is different from the world's peace. So why do we have to be troubled or fearful? (See John 14:27) He promised us that He will come again (John 14:28). This

point is also made very clear in the Book of Revelation: "He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."(Revelation 22:20) Yes, we can only say I want you to come, and what He said about coming quickly is from God's perspective. From man's perspective, it'll be, "Behold, I am coming like a thief. ..." (Revelation 16:15) Once again, we see that He has absolute sovereignty.

2. The Lord Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." (John 15:1-8)

Here we see the parable of the true vine. It was the true vine because the Father was the vinedresser during His incarnation. This is an often quoted and discussed passage, so we will briefly discuss it here. First of all, we see that the reason for pruning is to produce more fruit. If you have ever grown grape vines, you will know that pruning is necessary, otherwise the grapes will become smaller and smaller.

Branches that are not connected to the vine will not have His life supply. Without the cultivation of life, branches will naturally be cut off and withered, and will only be fit to be thrown into the fire and burned! So there will be fallen Christians. "For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." (Hebrews 12:6) So it is natural for Christians to suffer. Only by going through such a process can we be purified and conformed to the image of Jesus (see Romans 8:29). This is what He said, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:38) If we want to bear more fruit, we should do this, be one with Him, and receive His life supply. At this time, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15:7) We also see that we must become His disciples, bear much fruit, and glorify God the Father.

3. Unity under the banner of love

"Just as the Father has loved (G25, verb) Me, I have also loved (G25, verb) you; abide in My love (G26, noun). If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has

no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another."(John 15:9-17)

In the original text of the Strong's Concordance, almost every word is numbered, so it is easy to find all the passages that use a certain word. It should be noted that different words may have the same meaning. For example, here, G25 and G26 are different words, but one is a verb and the other is its noun, and the meaning is the same. Please note that there are different kinds of love in the original Greek text. It is unclear in the Union Version and the English translation which kind of love it is talking about. It becomes very clear when you look at the original Greek text in the concordance! Most of the love mentioned in the New Testament is based on G25 and G26.

We have seen that the Lord repeatedly emphasized that we must be one with God in His love. If each of us is one with Him, we will naturally be one. This is true unity, not a superficial artificial unity. Here it is mentioned twice that we should love one another. This is to be in the love of God. As we have shared before, Christians already have the love of God poured out through the indwelling Holy Spirit (see Romans 5:5). The old me who dies goes to manifest the love of God. This does not mean that we have to wait until the old self is completely put to death before we can do anything, but rather, "...whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, ..." (1 Peter 4:11) Therefore, at that time, how much of God's love we have revealed, we can do what we are able to do.

Regarding unity, we know this from what Jesus said at the Last Supper, where He said, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." (John 17:20-23) So He not only prayed for the apostles, but also for the Christians who believed in Him because of their word. Here we see that the gift of unity has been bestowed, but this does not mean that we have such a gift and can just lie down and do nothing! No, we must put to death the old self and manifest it, just like the case of the love of God.

We see that God's love includes this, "We know love (G26) by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16) We also know that "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) Therefore, God's love far exceeds man's love, because "...God demonstrates His own love (G26) toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) We have no way to be His friends before we believe in the Lord! We weren't there when the

Lord was crucified. Just because "...God so loved (G25) the world, ..." (John 3:16) He did it! Of course, the brothers mentioned here refer to male brothers and female brothers, the latter being sisters. In the New Testament's salvation plan, there has never been any distinction between the two. What God tells us through the Bible is consistent.

4. A slave cannot be greater than his master

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning." (John 15:18-27)

First of all, we see that Christians are chosen and do not belong to the world. Therefore, those who are saved must come out of the world. We see that "...He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." (Colossians 1:13) Christians have come out of the world and entered the kingdom of Jesus. This refers to the moment of belief, not baptism, because it says, "And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number." (Acts 5:14) Another place also says, "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord." (Acts 11:21) The Gospel of John also makes it clear, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) So faith comes first, and then "...be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38)

But Christians can also fall after being saved. Demas is only mentioned three times in the Bible. He was a co-worker of Paul (see Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24) and thus a Christian, but in the end, "...Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me (Paul) and gone to Thessalonica; ..." (2 Timothy 4:10) A Christian who came out of the world and then returns to the world is clearly fallen! Don't believe what some sects teach that once you believe in the Lord you will never fall. This is a lie. So Peter would say, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8) Satan will especially work more vigorously among Christians. Satan's work is not always in vain. When he succeeds, there will be fallen Christians. When the New Jerusalem comes, the fallen Christ can only stay outside the city, gritting his teeth and regretting his actions. If you read the Bible carefully, you will know that it says that people outside the city cannot enter the city, but it does not say that people

inside the city cannot choose to temporarily leave the city to take a look. This is probably not something that many people have noticed. I noticed this because my mother is a Christian who is nearly 99 years old. I am also a Christian. After the great white throne judgment, whether we are in the city or outside the city, or one in the city and the other in the city, we can always meet when choosing so.

No matter what, we must use the words of the Bible as the absolute standard to discern and grow up in Christ. The Bible clearly says, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."(Hebrews 5:14) As I have shared with you before, I know that I have not grown up yet because I often cannot discern. I believe Stephen was a mature man because he was "...a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, ..." (Acts 6:5) "And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people." (Acts 6:8) He was the first person to lose his life for the Lord (see Acts 7:57-60), and Jesus gave him the special honor of standing at the right hand of God to welcome him (see Acts 7:55-56)

Jesus said it clearly, "...A slave is not greater than his master...." (John 15:20) Jesus was certainly persecuted by the world, otherwise how could He be crucified and die? Therefore, Christians shouldn't think that the persecution of the world is rare. The Lord clearly said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:27) We are not asking for trouble or feeling that we deserve it, but we are to take up the cross that the Lord has measured for us. So the first thing is to discern and grow up.

This verse, "...but now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15:22) is another way of saying, "Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.'" (John 9:41) Although it is inevitable that Christians will suffer, we must know that "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." (John 14:27) These are the difficulties the Lord has given us, and He will definitely help us resolve them in the end, just as the scripture promises, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) That is to say, "...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

They hated Jesus for no reason (see John 15:25), because Jesus said to them, "...‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." (John 10:32-33) He was just stating the facts. But they did not believe in Him, nor did they believe that the things He did (such as the many miracles) and the words He spoke came from God. He said it very clearly, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." (John 14:11) Nicodimus is a good example about believing because of the works themselves. He "...said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.'" (John 3:2)

We do not know when he fully believed, but we know that he did reveal his belief after Jesus was dead. (See John 19:38-40)

That is, "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; ..." (John 15:24) In short, the things He did are listed in this passage, "And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Luke 7:22) We are all poor in spirit, and now we know the gospel that He preached through the Bible. Because "...He who has seen Me has seen the Father; ..." (John 14:9) Of course, "...now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well." (John 15:24)

We know that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will testify about Me." (John 15:26) "...He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you." (John 16:13-14) When the Lord was sent to become flesh, He said, "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; ..." (John 8:38) So it is basically the same lineage. The source is from the Father.

The Lord said again, "and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning." (John 15:27) This was said to the eleven apostles at the Last Supper, except Judas, who betrayed the Lord. Jesus had indeed chosen the apostles very early on, and I thought before, what is good about their being with Jesus at the beginning? We see that when Jesus was arrested, all his disciples, except Peter and John, deserted him and fled as said in the verse, "And they all left Him and fled." (Mark 14:50) Although Peter did not flee at that time, in the end it says, "And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly." (Matthew 26:75) Because Peter repented and went out, John was the only apostle left before the cross (see John 19:25-27). Although after Jesus' resurrection, "...He breathed on them (the disciples) and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22) and "...said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." (John 20:21) You may have noticed that I was very careful to make sure the Bible was talking about apostles or disciples so that you would know what the Bible is talking about. You can do this as well! It's not my patent, people have said and done this in the past.

We may doubt how such apostles and disciples can bear powerful witness for Him. Yes, they can. Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, and this promise was fulfilled on the first Pentecost after His resurrection (see Acts 2:1-11). It is truly that "...the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)