**John 14:22-24** May 26, 2019

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 *John 14:22Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”*

 *23Jesus 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. 24He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.*

Dear Friends who have heard Jesus’ voice and who listen to Jesus,

 ***“Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”*** It was a question from one of Jesus’ devoted insider disciples. Yet it sounds almost like the outsider who shouts, “If God really is up there, why doesn’t he stop all the violence?” Jesus’ disciple asked, ***“Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”*** Yet it sounds like almost the same question as the doubters challenging Jesus to his face: *“What miraculous sign will you give that we may believe you?”* One of Jesus’ beloved disciples asked, ***“Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”*** We insiders understand.

 This disciple is feeling like the Old Testament insider, Isaiah the prophet. He looked at the messed up world around him and said to God, *“Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!”* (64:1). Why God, why Jesus, do you just show yourself to us and not to the whole world?

 There may have been many thoughts behind this disciple’s plea to Jesus, but at the base of it, I think this disciple felt like we all have: “Jesus, I know you. I love you. I believe in you. I wish everyone did. Why don’t you just make it obvious to everyone who you are?”

 Good question. I know his question was a good question because Jesus answered his question. Jesus answered his disciple’s direct question like he always did, *in*directly. ***“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”*** The disciple asked about sword and scepter and Jesus talked about the classroom. Frustrated we say, “Would you, Jesus, just give us a straight answer?”

 But Jesus did. Not the obvious direct answer a second grade teacher gives to seven year olds. Jesus answers like a professor whose job is to get students to think, to understand. The disciple’s question and Jesus’ answer both talk about a kingdom. Both talk about God’s kingdom. One is asking about what he thinks God’s kingdom should look like. ***“Show yourself to the world, Jesus!”*** Jesus answers, *“This is what my kingdom looks like:* ***If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”***

**If You Love Jesus…**

**A. You Will Obey His Teaching [Period]**

 When Jesus answers that way, he explains those words we pray every Sunday and hopefully a couple times during the week too, *“Thy kingdom come.”* It is as Jesus said at another time: *“My kingdom is not of this world.”* Or another time, *“The kingdom of God is within you.”* Jesus’ disciple thought that Jesus was hiding his kingdom. Jesus says his kingdom is always on display: ***“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”***

 Some people pray for a national revival. Some think we should become a nation, a political entity, that will be the embodiment of God’s spiritual kingdom here on earth. It isn’t going to happen! God’s kingdom isn’t about politics or constitutions. It is a matter of the heart, faith. It is about the love that flows from that faith. Not of this world, it is a matter of God’s kingdom in human hearts.

 “But God, just make this nation a Christian nation”—we would like that, wouldn’t we. Then I don’t have to worry about it. “Just show yourself to the world, Jesus!” Let Jesus do all the work.

 But Jesus said, ***“If you love me, you will obey my teaching,*** *full stop, period.****”*** No ifs, ands or buts. No excuses for living in new and different times. “My people will obey me.” No complaining about how much busier we are than in the past. “My people will obey me.” No excuses for living without the family support groups. No excuses for doctor visits or youth sporting events. No excuses for living far from a church. No excuses for “times are different.” ***“If you love me, you will obey me.*** *Period.****”***

 Jesus puts it this succinctly: if you love me you will obey me. If you don’t obey me, you don’t love me. But we protest, “Yes we do Jesus. We love you.” Jesus asks, “Do you obey me?”

 It was Mother’s Day. She had been a good mother. She had cared for her children. They didn’t have everything, but they never lacked food or clothing. She always had time to listen to them. Of course, she sometimes had to lay down the law. Sometimes she had to take away privileges, but none of the children could say they didn’t deserve it. She sacrificed much. Now her children were grown, getting ready to go out into the world, her mission accomplished. And it was Mother’s Day.

 On her day her children said, “You have done so much for us, mother. You lived so that we could have a life. Since that’s what you lived for, that is what we are going to do. We are going to enjoy that life and do exactly what we want. Your opinion of what we do really doesn’t matter, because if you really loved us you would let us do what *we* want to do. You wouldn’t ask questions. And you most certainly wouldn’t suggest that we are wrong. Thank you so much, Mother! See you next year. By the way, here is our address so you can mail checks on our birthdays.” Then her children were gone.

 “Wait!!! What? That’s not how the story ends. Pastor, give me that sermon paper. The mother loved the children. She gave up her life for them. That’s how they are going to be. As she was gracious, they will be. As she loved, they will. That’s how it goes, Pastor.”

 Yes, that’s what I thought too. But that’s not what my sermon paper says. Right here it says they just walked out the door. I know, I know. It is *supposed* to go with that mother just like it is *supposed* to go with Jesus: ***“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”*** But it doesn’t, does it?

 Every failure to obey God’s word is a flashing billboard that we really don’t love God will all of our heart. And not obeying Jesus results in… well, let Jesus tell the story: *“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who… hears my words and does not put them into practice[. He] is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”* (Luke 6:46-49).

 Which words of Jesus do you pretty much ignore? Do you worship weekly? Do you pray every morning? Every evening? Do you steer your family toward God every day? When was the last time you shared the gospel? What percentage do you give to God, to charity? Did you grumble when you look at your tax deductions on the pay check? Were your thoughts pure the last time an attractive person in an suggestive pose appeared on a screen? Do you ever bother to use your leisure time for anyone else? To God, every disobedience screams a lack of love.

 The only thing I have to say is, “Thank you, God, for not letting my life come to ruins.” How often I have loved myself more than you! How badly I need a Savior, worse than I realize.”

 But Jesus has done the most amazing thing ever. Not only did he give up his life for blatant unbelievers. He gave up his life for believers who know better. How wonderful that Jesus continually spreads his grace and forgiveness over me, undeserving us. We have been saved from our sordid, distant pasts, and also for how we lived yesterday, even this morning.

 All of that was in Jesus’ mind as he spoke to his disciples that evening and told them, ***“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”*** When Jesus looked around at that table of disciples he knew he wasn’t looking at perfect men, or who even had the potential for perfection. He saw physically strong fishermen who could talk the talk, but who couldn’t walk the spiritual walk. They would all abandon him in about three hours. Jesus knew that none but one would be by his side while he died on the cross. He knew how insufferably proud and selfish they could be, that they actually argued out loud which of them was Jesus’ best disciple. Jesus was looking at a group of sinners. Yet through his work and the Holy Spirit’s gift, they were believers. That faith was the connection that made them his friends. Through faith, Jesus’ sacrifice for their sins covered their sins and removed their guilt.

 And now he told them to do something that no unbeliever can do. He told them to obey him out of love for him. Not fear of punishment. Not hope for eternal glory. Just because they love him.

**B. God Will Make His Home With You [Period]**

 So Jesus looked at these sinners and focused them not on how to be saved, but what to do now that they were saved. He focused them not on his warning, but his blessing: ***“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.”*** Did you hear the picture language? ***“We will come to him and make our home with him.”***

 I don’t know what you think about camping, but I know that some of you just love camping. And here I am thinking especially, not of tent campers but of people who tow their campers. I especially think of people who go camping with their friends. If you talk to them about camping with friends, you will see a special joy in their eyes. They love camping because when you walk out of the camper there they are, the people you most enjoy sharing your life with. It’s not like being at home where your friends are across town or across the state, and your neighbors might be, well, problematic. Out camping you get to go to live next to your best friends.

 That joy of physical proximity is what Jesus communicates to us. ***“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.”*** I love it. Not only has God put up with me, not only has Jesus saved me, Jesus wants to live next to me, a bad neighbor like me! I love it that God loves me that much. He dwells with us.

 When we face the reality of declining health, God is our confidence that all is and will be well. He is there with us. When the struggle to carry out God’s will meets nothing but opposition, God is your ever-present help in trouble. When you face failure in life and there is no way out, God is there having made his home with humble believers in Jesus, no matter what goes wrong and how the world abandons us. And he is there on those good days too: graduation, weddings, anniversaries. He is always there. He makes his home with us. Always, you will most realize his presence when you turn to study of his word and meditation on it. You will hear God’s reminders to keep your eyes on the goal of your faith. And when we love him, we obey him. And when we love and obey him, he promises, in a little preview of heaven, to make his home with us even while here on earth.

 May that encourage you to love Jesus all the more, to live in loving obedience to him, and to relish and remember God’s presence in your life. Amen.