

Lesson 22 YE, EVEN AS I

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 - John 15:10

I. Introduction

- a. Several times during this series we have spoken of the perfect **likeness** between the vine and the branch in nature, and therefore, by analogy, in the Christian life.
- b. In this verse, Christ no longer speaks in a parable, but tells us plainly from the experience of His **own life** how He serves as the exact model for us.
- c. He had said that it is by obedience alone that we can abide in His love. He now tells us that this was precisely **the way** in which He abode in the Father's love.
- d. As the Vine, so the branch. His life and strength and joy exists in the love of the Father; but it was only by **obedience**, He tells us, that He abode in it.
- e. We may think that we have our life and strength and joy in His love all the day, but likewise, it is **only by** obedience like His that we can abide in it.
- f. It was by obedience that Christ as Vine honored the Father as Husbandman; it is by obedience the believer as branch **honors** Christ as Vine.
- g. Perfect **conformity** to the Vine is one of the most precious lessons of the branch that we can learn in this series.

II. The Obedience of Christ

- a. *Obey and abide*-That was the law of Christ's life as much as it is to be the law of ours. He was made like us in all things, that we might be **like Him** in all things. *Heb 2:17-18 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. KJV*
- b. By His earthly example, He opened up a path in which we may walk even as He walked. He took our human nature to teach us how to **wear it**, and to show us how obedience is the first duty of the creature. *Heb 10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. KJV*
- c. He demonstrated that the only way to abide in the favor of God and to glorify Him is to live by the power of the **Spirit** who directed His path. *Luke 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. KJV*
- d. Through the power of the Spirit, which he had without measure, He accomplished His great act of **selfless** obedience in the offering up of himself to God. *John 3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. KJV*
- e. As He modeled obedience in this verse, He now **instructs** and encourages us, and asks us to keep His commandments, even as He kept His Father's commandments and abides in His love. *Heb 5:8-9 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; KJV*
- f. As our heavenly vine modeled a selfless obedient life, He instructs us to so live our lives **in Him**.

III. The Vital Connection

- a. It is clear to anyone who examines this connection between obeying and abiding, and between God's commandments and His love, **why** this is such an important part of one's relationship to Christ.
- b. It is chiefly because God's will is the **very center** of His divine perfection. Whatever the will of God is for anyone at any time can not be improved upon; it is perfect and complete.
- c. God is the first principle, his work is perfect. As he is the cause of all things, he must be **infinitely** perfect; and consequently all his works must be perfect in their respective kinds. *Deut 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. KJV*
- d. As the will of God reflects His perfect intention for us, any **deviation** from that perfect intention would be less than perfect. *Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; KJV*
- e. As revealed in His word, **conformity** to His will keeps the believer on the path which will result in growing into His likeness. *Ps 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. KJV*
- f. In accepting and doing His will, we rise into a unique **fellowship** with Him and we become one with Him as His desires become our desires. This is what Christ modeled for us. *John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. KJV*
- g. This intimate level of fellowship was what man had lost in the **Fall** by his disobedience. This was what Christ came to restore to all who believe. *1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. KJV*
- h. This is what, as the heavenly Vine, He asks of us and imparts to us, that even as He by keeping His Father's commandments abode in His love, we should **do His will** by keeping His commandments and abiding in His love.

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IV. The Key to Knowing His Will

- a. There are at least **three** aspects of our lives that ought to be responsive to the will of God.
 1. With regard to our **conduct**, we must know His commands.
 2. With regard to what we **believe** we must comprehend His doctrines.
 3. With regard to our external **circumstance** we must be alert to His foreseeing care and guidance (providence).
- b. Doing the will of God means that in whatever aspect we encounter it, and in whatever way it may be **made known** to us we are positively disposed to doing it without reservation. *Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. KJV*
- c. The word "good" here is not an adjective agreeing with "will," but a **noun**. In essence, it reads: "That ye may find the will of God, that good thing which is acceptable."
- d. Whatever is good will promote the **honor** of God and His interests. It implies that that thing which is good is his will; or that we may find his will by finding what is good and perfect and do it.
- e. The believer does not err in his ways who **seeks** His guidance, and who, not leaning on his own wisdom, but upon God, commits his ways to Him. *Ps 25:9 "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way."*
- f. **Perfect** means free from defect, stain, or injury. That which has all its parts complete, or which is not disproportionate. Thus the perfect will is completely harmonious with the character and nature of God.
- g. Applied to our faith in Christ, perfect means what is **consistent**, which is carried out; which is evidenced in all the circumstances we face and in all the relations we have with others.
- h. **Acceptable** refers to that which will be pleasing to God, or which He will approve.
- i. The main difficulty with determining the will of the Father for the believer **does not lie** in whether it is His will for one to go to China to be a missionary or some such thing. These kinds of decisions God will make providentially obvious. *Acts 16:7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. NIV*
- j. Rather, the main difficulty in doing the will of God revolves around the more **mundane** things like our moment by moment conduct and separation from the world system in general.
- k. If all believers were truly **renewed** in their minds, they would lose their relish for the things of this life, and for doing the things which keep us from doing the will of God. *Col 3:1-2 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. KJV*
- l. We would then keep His commandments and in doing **all His will**; abide in His love.

V. The Same Life

- a. *Ye, even as I*-The branch cannot bear fruit except as it has exactly the same life as the Vine. Just imagine the result to a branch of a natural vine wanting a sap that is **different** from that of the vine to which it is attached.
- b. Our life is to be the exact **counterpart** of Christ's life: obeying and abiding. It can be, just in such measure as we believe in Him as the Vine, imparting Himself and His life to His branches.
- c. "Ye, even as I," the Vine says: one law, one nature, **one fruit**. Let us be instructed and take from our Lord the lesson of obedience as the secret of abiding.
- d. Let us contemplate what it would mean to us to be "*even as the Lord Himself*" in terms of our **desire** to do the will of the Father and thus enjoy the abiding in His love

VI. Application

- a. *Ye, even as I*. Even as Christ drew His life and likeness from the Father by His obedience and thus abode in His love, so are we to do likewise and abide in His love.
- b. Since obedience is the link between Christ and me, to what extent am I obedient to His will for me:
 1. In my words and behaviors?
 2. In my study and belief in His doctrine?
 3. In my daily external circumstances which reveal His providential dealings?
- c. What stands in my way and limits my obedience to His will?