

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, September 19, 2010
Love Obeys

Last week we began a series of messages that are designed to get us to stop and think about how we are living our Christian lives. Living in a culture that is mainly comprised of two income families just to make ends meet, we are hard pressed to take on what we may consider extra-curricular activities. We have enough on our plate with just working and trying to keep up with maintaining our own households never mind adding anything else. The problem with this mindset is that God knew everything about the 21st century when he spoke in the 1st that we were to “... ***go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.***” (Matthew 28: 19-20 NIV) He did not say, “If you can find the time.” He expected us to follow in his footsteps and do what he was doing. Over and over again he said, “***As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.***”

We also quoted Jesus in John chapter 14 when he told us that we would do what he was doing and even greater things than he did because he was going to his father. He went on to say in verse 14ff: ***And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. 15 'If you love me, you will obey what I command.*** Notice that last line. Our obedience would reveal how much we loved him. He repeats this idea in verse 21: “***Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.***” Then he says the same thing from the negative side in verse 24: “***He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.***”

What commands was he referring to when he said that our obedience would reveal our love? Well we have the first thing revealed above when he told us to make disciples of all nations. Then the 2nd thing was that we would be doing what he was doing. That’s where he told us to “***ASK.***” John continues with Jesus’ theme in John 15:1-20 where he quotes Jesus, “***I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-- fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other. 18 'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.*** (NIV) (emphasis mine)

There you have it. We are commanded to love each other. Love cannot watch others perish in the flames without reaching out and trying to rescue those God loves. Let’s do our part and allow the Gospel to truly come alive in us as we reach out and touch the people in our lives with the love God has placed there. How can we sit idly by when the people that Jesus died to save are all around us waiting for the message of hope that has been delegated to us? We must reach out. It will not be in our own strength, but it will be the Spirit of the Living God who is at work in us when we put our hand to the plow. His grace comes in the hour of need and not before. We will prove to the world and to ourselves that we are who we say we are because we are bearing fruit that brings the Father glory. Amen!