

I Will Not Leave You As Orphans

✠ Love treasures Christ's commands (vv. 15-18)

✠ Living in the Father's love (vv. 18-21)

In the name of the Way and the Truth and the Life, dear fellow children of the heavenly Father:

Throughout history tyrants have hated God, persecuting His people. Why not? They crucified God's own Son, the Lord of glory. Jesus said, "***The world hated me without reason. They will hate you too....But be courageous! I have overcome the world.***" (John 15:18-25; 16:33) Getting arrested for worshiping God is nothing new. It happened to the Apostles of our Lord for healing a crippled man in the temple in Jesus' name. (Acts 3) Imagine what a crime – walking and leaping and praising God on legs that never functioned before! How could Christians keep living open joy during pestilence, plagues and famines? Jesus tells us one precious promise still true for us today: **I Will Not Leave You As Orphans.**

✠ Love treasures Christ's commands (vv. 15-18)

"If you love me, hold on to my commands. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he stays with you and will be in you."¹

No doubt, some of you have been paying such close attention that you hear Jesus say, "***If you love me, hold on to my commands,***" and you wonder, what was that in the old NIV84? "***If you love me you will obey what I command.***" New NIV11? "***...you will keep my commands.***" More literally? Yes! Jesus says, "***...guard and treasure my commands.***" This is not slavish obedience asking, "How many times do I *have to* go to Communion each year?" Or, "How much money do I *have to* give to the church?" Or "How much do I *have to* volunteer?" All the "*have to*" disappears in a flood of sincere love for Him who loved us first. **Love treasures Christ's commands** – like: "***Love your enemies.***"

There's a great illustration of this in a pastor about to be arrested. Word came of soldiers on the way, but all his friends pleading could not make him flee. He waited, then went out to meet the arresting officers and invited them for dinner. While they ate, he prayed and prepared himself for what lay ahead.²

The Roman governor demanded the pastor curse Christ and sacrifice to the Emperor. His famous answer still rings across the ages: "Eighty and six years have I served him and he has done me no wrong. Can I revile my King that saved me?" "I'll throw you to the beasts!" shouted the Roman. Polycarp told him to bring them on. "I'll have you burned," the man warned. John's student replied, "You try to frighten me with fire that burns for an hour and you forget the fire of hell that never goes out." They prepared to nail him in place, but Polycarp said God would strengthen him to stay. So they merely tied his hands as he treasured God's Word more than life itself. An hour later his body was ashes, his soul with Christ.³

None of us can love God's Word or treasure it until we hear how far short we fall of the glory of God. Stay-Home orders have revealed great impatience in our hearts and homes. The very people we want to love most often receive the worst from us. Likewise for Jesus from family members who did not believe in Him until after He was crucified and risen. The Holy Spirit later came as promised to be their **Counselor** too. They finally checked out the ancient Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament, seeing how

¹ EHV ~ Evangelical Heritage Version (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2019. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

² <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/polycarp/> - Some details are Roman Catholic propaganda. [M.C. 5/16/2020]

³ Morgan. *On This Day*. © 1997. (Thomas Nelson, Inc.) DailyReader © 1999-2001, Wheeler, Rairdin. www.Laridian.com .

Jesus' words and life all fulfilled God's promises. Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior not only for the Jewish people, but for all nations, as Moses, Isaiah and all the Jewish prophets foretold. The dear Holy Spirit inspired them to write about the coming Christ. Here we find sweet forgiveness from God who separates our sins from us ***“as far as the east is from the west.”*** (Psalm 103:12) Though ***“all our righteous acts are like filthy rags”*** and our ***“sins like scarlet,”*** God's forgiveness in Christ makes them ***“as white as snow. Though they are red as crimson, they will be like wool.”*** (Isaiah 64:6; 1:18) The better you get to know God through His Son Jesus Christ, the more eager you are to give sincere thanks however you can, in whatever ways please Him. **Love treasures Christ's commands** because God keeps all His promises!

Living in the Father's love (vv. 18-21)

“I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will see me no longer, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. The one who has my commands and holds on to them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him and show myself to him.”

Is Jesus only talking about Judgment Day? Most English translations sound as if Jesus is only saying, “I will come to you.” (NIV84 & NIV11, ESV, KJV, NASB95) But really it's, ***“I am coming”*** every day of your life. In His Great Commission, marching orders for His Church, Christ commands His Christians to ***disciple all the ethnic groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to guard and treasure all things as many as I commanded you.*** Then Jesus promises: ***“Surely I am with you all the days to the gathered goal of the age.”*** (Matthew 28:18-20 TPA) ***“All the days,”*** every day without fail Jesus keeps us **Living in the Father's love.**

To ***live*** means to enjoy God's blessings. Jesus promises: ***“Because I live, you also will live.”*** In the Good Shepherd Chapter, Jesus says, ***“I have come that they may have life and have it in overflowing abundance.”*** (John 10:10 TPA) You get to really ***live***, to enjoy life with God for time and eternity, because Jesus keeps coming to you every time you remember God's Word, read and study God's Word, hear it preached, recall your Baptism, and receive the blessed Sacrament of the Altar. God's gives the Good News of free and full forgiveness for Jesus' sake – in the Gospel you hear and in the Gospel you see in the sacraments of Baptism and Lord's Supper. These simple tools, the means of grace keep us in God's love.

When life is so hard that you don't have any generosity left in your soul, it is Jesus alone who supplies it. Who else do you know that died for you? Maybe you could name some military hero, some first responder who literally gave it all to rescue you. Not likely, but possible. But who else besides your Good Shepherd laid down His life then took it up again? Only our Lord Christ could and did. But He still wasn't done. He used that same resurrection power to raise you from the death of sin and by that blinding glory of His resurrection to give you new life. 24/7, 365...every hour your heart is beating...until your last breath. And then? He's just getting started because God's got plans of bliss and glory for you with Him in heaven. Never a whisper of merit in us. Christ earned it all for you – pure grace and glory for all who believe that God cannot lie. Promise: ***“Because I live, you also will live.”***

Tyrants have only one breath, one heartbeat – if God gives it. Some die by their own hand like Hitler under Berlin rubble. Other “survival of the fittest” dictators like Stalin in terror to meet their Maker. The real question for each of us: ***Are you prepared?*** Absolutely, yes! As long as you trust in Jesus. And how will your faith show? By guarding and treasuring His commands. Jesus worshiped every day and made worship His habit on weekends. Don't worship your treasure; **Love treasures Christ's commands.** Take Bible study for granted? Miss sermons, prayer and praise? How, when you're **Living in the Father's love?** The unbelieving world cannot grasp the Good News. But grace grabbed your heart so that ***“God works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*** (Philippians 2:13) Jesus wraps it up today: ***“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, and do not let it be afraid.”*** (John 14:26f EHV) **Not as orphans...** Amen.

For *The Preacher's Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net . New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife . 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126