



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 58”

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Pastor Darryl R. Curtis

Family Life Baptist Church

909 West Saginaw Street

Lansing, Michigan 48915

Phone: (517) 393-9399

Email: info@familylifebc.com

Website: <http://www.familylifebc.com>

Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 58

John 15:18-25

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.

21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.

23 He who hates me hates my Father as well.

24 If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.

25 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

In the last lesson, I tried to make it clear that the prime directive of Christianity is to love. Loving one another, from a Christian perspective, means to obey God’s commandments as we deal with one another, which will cause us to do the best that we can for one another. Jesus was sent to us to save us from our sins by dying on the Cross, and, by doing so, Jesus showed His love for us as He kept God’s commandment to act to benefit us.

There is a difference between love and indulgence. Many in our society believe that showing love to children means to indulge them by giving them whatever they want. But indulgence is not the type of love of which Jesus is speaking. What is Biblical love for a child? Discipline. How does discipline show love? When you discipline a child correctly, he learns to follow the commandment of God, which allows him to live to the fullest of his potential, just as Jesus dying on the Cross made it possible for the Holy Spirit to come and lead us into all



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truth, allowing us to live to the fullest of our potential. **Proverbs 23:13-14** instructs us:

13 Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.

14 You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.

Verse 13 of Proverbs 23 begins by telling us that correction, not beatings, is that which should not be withheld from a child. There is no intrinsic benefit in beating children, Beating is intended to be a form of correction, not a release of frustration. In the NIV, the “A” portion of **1Corinthians** says:

4 Love is patient, love is kind.

We are to be patient and kind with our children, but beating is God’s plan for correcting willful disobedience. Some parents, however, abuse their children in the name of discipline because they are frustrated with the fact that their children are children and are not as well behaved as they want them to be. A good parent knows the physical conditions, such as tiredness and hunger, that makes their child cranky, and structures the child’s environment so that the child is less likely to be disobedient.

But this sermon is not a treatise on corporal punishment. I only up bring the subject up an example of the type of discernment that is required to show the type of love of which Jesus is talking.

Love is neither a syrupy sweet emotional response nor an indulgent one, but love takes the best interest of the other person into account and responds, with gentleness, firmness or even harshness, with comfort or reproof, with explanation or command, or with whatever response will ultimately produce the best long term solution for the person in the situation. The same Jesus whom God sent because of His love for the world called Peter ‘Satan’ when Peter was on the wrong side of the issue because that was the only way that Jesus could get Peter to really listen to Him. Jesus showed exasperation with the disciples several times when they were caught up in their preconceived misconceptions and just weren’t listening to the wisdom that Jesus was trying to impart.

In our text for today, Jesus shows His ultimate exasperation for the majority of the people in the world that refuses to follow the commandments of His Father. Jesus says, in **John 15:18**:

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

Why would the world hate Jesus? Jesus gives us a good example in John chapter 6. The chapter begins with Jesus healing a great multitude of diseased people. A great crowd of Jews began listening to Jesus teach them the things of God all day, and as the sun began going down, Jesus’ disciples entreated Him to stop. **Matthew 14:15-20** records:

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”



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16 Jesus replied, **“They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”**

17 “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

18 **“Bring them here to me,”** he said.

19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Since Jesus performed the great miracle of feeding five thousand men, not counting women and children, with two fish and five loaves of bread, the crowd returned the next day to hear Jesus teach and especially to receive more fish and bread. This day, however, Jesus was not giving out fish and bread. Jesus discussed the situation with the crowd, in **John 6:26-31**:

26 Jesus answered, **“I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.”**

27 **Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”**

28 Then they asked him, **“What must we do to do the works God requires?”**

29 Jesus answered, **“The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.”**

30 So they asked him, **“What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”**

31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

By referring to the sustenance that God gave the children of Israel as they wandered through the wilderness, the crowd reveals their fixation on the physical fish and bread that Jesus fed them the previous day. But, in the Lord’s miracle, the physical is a sign to lead us to the spiritual, as Jesus continues, in **John 6:32-35**:

32 Jesus said to them, **“I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.”**

33 **For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**

34 “Sir,” they said, **“from now on give us this bread.”**

35 Then Jesus declared, **“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”**



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The true bread of life is eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. To focus on the physical miracles that Jesus performed misses the point. A couple of weeks ago, in our discussion period, we were talking about the place of physical healing in the atonement, and I mentioned that physical healing is a nothing more than a sign to bring people to Jesus, much like the feeding of the five thousand.

Jesus raised the widow of Nain's son from the dead as they were on the way to the cemetery to bury the boy. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days. Talking about miraculous events that occurred when Jesus died on the Cross, **Matthew 27:51-53** says:
51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,
52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;
53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

The point of these events was not to bring the dead back to life, but, as **Matthew 27:54** tells us:

54 So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

The point of these events was to bring people into the knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Unfortunately, that is also why the world hates Jesus. In **John 15:19**, Jesus tells His disciples:

19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Jesus was not of the world, and His disciples were chosen out of the world. This means that Jesus' focus is not the same as that of the world. Jesus wields the power of God. The people of the world coveted the power of God, but they could not co-opt Jesus to do their bidding, so they chose to hate Him. The Jews of whom we read earlier wanted Jesus to provide them bread, and turned away from Jesus when He offered them eternal life. The scribes and Pharisees were jealous of Jesus because He could heal and they could not. Their jealousy caused them to decide that rather than aligning themselves with Jesus to get closer to God, they should try to destroy Jesus so that no one could be closer to God than themselves.

Jesus says, in **John 15:20-21**:

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.

21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.



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Jesus is closer to God than the Jews because the Jews really don't know God. They know the rituals that God established through their ancestors, but those rituals from the past have lost their meaning because the people performing them do not have a relationship with God.

Jesus left the church with a ritual, which we know as communion. The harmony of the gospels records the ritual in **Matthew 26:26-29**, **Mark 14:22-25** and **Luke 22:19-20**, which read:

As they were eating, Jesus took the bread and blessed it. When He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples. "Take it and eat it," He told them. "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this to remember Me."

In the same way after the supper He took a cup. When He had given thanks, He gave it to them and said, "Drink from it, all of you." And they all drank from it.

He told them, "This cup which is poured out for you is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out on behalf of many people for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you the truth, I will not drink again from this fruit of the vine until the day I drink it fresh with you in the kingdom of My Father."

The physical ritual of communion in our church is nothing more than eating a bit of bread and drinking a bit of grape juice, which absolutely anyone over the age of probably a year old has the physical ability to do. But the point of Communion is not eating and drinking, but for us to remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross and to reflect on the fact that His sacrifice allows us to be saved from the consequences of our sins.

When I was in college, I became acquainted with some very nice people that called themselves "Peace and Justice Christians". They did not believe that the life of Jesus Christ was historically true, but rather aligned themselves with Jesus' teachings on peace and His focus on justice. To them, communion was a ritual that they practiced to show their solidarity with Jesus that people should be against war and discrimination. In other words, their focus was on how Jesus' ministry affected life on this earth, just as was the focus of the Jews that wanted Jesus to either provide sustenance or heal.

The problem is that if your Christian focus has to do with the things of the world, like peace, justice, food or healing, you miss the eternal focus of Jesus Christ described in **John 3:16-17**:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

In **John 3:16**, the phrase, "**should not perish**" does not mean that Christians will not undergo physical death, but rather that Christians will have life



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with God after death. Physical death is just as inevitable now in the days of the New Testament Church as it was in the days of the Old Testament. If you have the focus, as did many of those that brought their sick to Jesus, that the primary benefit of Christianity is Jesus' power to heal, you have missed the point.

If your focus is that the benefit of Christianity is Jesus' power interceding in your life in any physical way, be it providing healing, food, economic security, or any other temporary provision of this world, you have missed the point, and will eventually find yourself disappointed with Jesus. And when people become disappointed with Jesus, they begin to hate him, because they know that Jesus could heal them or feed them or provide them with finances if He chose to. When our focus in our relationship with Jesus is earthly, our disappointment with Jesus is inevitable, and hatred for Him is just around the corner. Jesus points this out to His disciples in **John 15:22-25**:

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.

23 He who hates me hates my Father as well.

24 If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.

25 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'

As we read in the earlier lection of John chapter 6, Jesus both did miracles and explained the purpose for the miracles. Those that were caught up in the miracles rejected the explanation and developed hatred for Jesus when the miracles stopped, like the temper tantrum of a child whose rattle was taken away. Jesus Christ came to bring us eternal life, but if our focus is on this temporary life, we miss the point and hate the Lord for not sharing our focus on the mundane things of the world.

How can we maintain our focus on the things of Heaven while living in the world? Jesus explains to us, in the next verse, **John 15:26**:

26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

The Spirit of Truth that proceeds from the Father is the Holy Spirit, whose initial intervention in the New Testament world is recorded in **Luke 3:21-22**:

21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.

22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

It was at Jesus' baptism that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and it was by receiving the Holy Spirit at His baptism that Jesus Christ began His ministry and took on His vocation, which was to die the sin of the world. Jesus



had the most powerful ministry in the history of the world, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to resist the pull of the world and the power that He had in the world, and give Himself to the mission of the Cross.

The Holy Spirit is here, in part, to keep us on task. Our task began the second time that the Holy Spirit came. **Acts 2:1, 3-4** records:

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they, [the disciples] were all with one accord in one place.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The second mighty descent of the Holy Spirit was on the Day of Pentecost, when the power of God came in Person and spoke through the disciples. The record says that they who heard were devout Jews from every nation under heaven, and the great miracle is stated in **Acts 2:7-8**:

7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

8 And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?

As soon as Jesus Christ was glorified, in the decrees of God the fullness of time was reached when the Jesus Christ, on whom the Holy Spirit had descended as a dove, ascended to the right hand of the Father and sent forth the mighty Holy Spirit.

In Genesis 11, at the tower of Babel, God caused confusion of tongues; in Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost, God caused a fusion of understanding by the tongues of fire, the manifestation accompanying the personal coming of the Holy Spirit to the individuals saved by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It was a far-reaching, mighty testimony to the fact that sin had been judged on the Cross.

It is one thing to believe that the Holy Spirit is given individually, but another thing to receive the revelation that the Holy Spirit is here, in our lives. The Holy Spirit is here in all of His power, but His power will only work as a manifestation of what Jesus Christ has done. The Holy Spirit works only to glorify Jesus Christ. Anyone who receives the Holy Spirit receives life from the glorified Jesus, and receives also an understanding of the teaching of Jesus and eternal security, provided he abides in the light the Holy Spirit sheds. **1John 1:5-7** says:

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.



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How can we abide in the light of God, as John commands us? Jesus gave the answer to a ruler of Israel, a man who understood the things of God, as **John 3:1-3** records:

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Receiving the Holy Spirit is the same as a new birth. The change in our lives when we receive Him is as profound as the change that we experienced when we moved our domicile from the womb to the outside world. Being born again is a profound change in thinking, and the concept confused Nicodemus, who asked Jesus, in **John 3:4**:

4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

The phrase “born again” was not new to Nicodemus, for the Jewish rabbis spoke of a convert from heathenism as being “born again”; but the application Jesus made of it was that we must be recreated spiritually—not developed, not educated, but “born again”—meaning fundamentally made all over again, before we can see the kingdom of God and enter into it.

Remember, Jesus is not talking to one whom men would call a sinner, as there is no mention of sin; Jesus is talking to a religious man, to “the ruler of Israel”; it is to him Jesus says, “You must be born again.” If you define sin as external wrong doing, you miss out this class of men, men like the rich young ruler, who said “Master, all these laws have I observed from my youth”; men like Saul of Tarsus, who testified of himself, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”—men who do not need saving from external wrong doing, because they are not guilty of any.

Talk about going to the slums to save men and women, and every one’s sympathy is with you; but Nicodemus was not an outcast of society; he was a cultured Pharisee, an honored member of the Sanhedrin. Here stands Jesus, a young Nazarene Carpenter and says to him, quietly and calmly, “You must be born again.” Nicodemus was absolutely bewildered—“I can understand how by education, religious and otherwise, I can make myself a little better; how by careful training I can keep the ugly things in my disposition out of sight; but what you say about being made all over again, I cannot understand at all.”

Jesus Christ’s salvation deals not only with the outcast and downtrodden, it deals with clean-living, upright, sterling men and women. Immediately, when you present the Gospel as Jesus presents it, it is this class with whom you clash.

Jesus Christ came to do what no man can do for himself, that is, alter man’s disposition.



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“How can a man be born when he is old?” By receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to do *in* him what Jesus did *for* him. The mighty sovereign power of God can re-make a man from within and readjust him to God. The Holy Spirit is God Himself working to make the Redemption effective in human lives.

And when, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we share God’s perspective, we are changed from being haters of God to being lovers of God. Our perspective is no longer how we can get God to do that which we want Him to do for us; our perspective changes to acknowledging our sinfulness, and accepting that we need the ministry of Jesus Christ in our lives.

The haters miss the point. Jesus says, in **John 3:6**:

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The haters are focused on the flesh, and perceive the things of the Spirit as unimportant, but, in **John 3:5**:

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Since I am born again, my competition with Jesus Christ is over.

Since I am born again, my desire to set the agenda has changed.

Since I am born again, my focus on the things of this life has been changed to a focus on pleasing God.

Jesus was so focused on pleasing God that He gave His very life, on the Cross of Calvary, to do so, because God so loved us that He sacrificed His Son Jesus Christ to save us from the consequences of our sin and separation from Him. For us to have eternal life in the next world required Jesus to give His life in this one. But the world doesn’t care, as **Lamentations 1:12** tells us:

12 “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has been brought on me, which the LORD has inflicted in the day of His fierce anger.

Back in the days of the Great Depression a Missouri man named John Griffith was the controller of a great railroad drawbridge across the Mississippi River. One day in the summer of 1937 he decided to take his eight-year-old son, Greg, with him to work. At noon, John Griffith put the bridge up to allow ships to pass and sat on the observation deck with his son to eat lunch. Time passed quickly. Suddenly he was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He quickly looked at his watch and noticed it was 1:07—the Memphis Express, with four hundred passengers on board, was roaring toward the raised bridge! He leaped from the observation deck and ran back to the control tower. Just before throwing the master lever he glanced down for any ships below. There a sight caught his eye that caused his heart to pound into his throat. His son Greg had slipped from the observation deck and had fallen into the massive gears that operate the bridge. His left leg was caught in the cogs of the two main



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gears! Desperately John's mind whirled to devise a rescue plan. But as soon as he thought of a possibility he knew there was no way it could be done.

Again, with alarming closeness, the train whistle shrieked in the air. John could hear the clicking of the locomotive wheels over the tracks. That was his son down there—yet there were four hundred passengers on the train. John was trained; he calculated the cost of not closing the bridge and saving his son at 400 lives, and being a disciplined controller, knew what he had to do. John buried his head in his left arm and pushed the master switch forward. As that great massive bridge lowered into place over the Mississippi and crushed his son, the Memphis Express began to roar across the river. When John Griffith lifted his head with his face smeared with tears, he looked into the passing windows of the train. There were businessmen casually reading their afternoon papers, finely dressed ladies in the dining car sipping coffee, and children pushing long spoons into their dishes of ice cream. No one looked at the control house, and no one looked at the body of his son crushed in the great gear box. With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out at the steel train: "I sacrificed my son for you people! Don't you care?" The train rushed by, but nobody heard the father's words, from: "**Is it nothing to you, all who pass by?**"

The Apostle John summarizes our lesson for today, in **1John 2:15-17:**
15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

He that chooses the things of the world over the things of God will show his hatred for God once God denies him something that he wants, just as a spoiled child throws a temper tantrum when he does not get his way. But that is where discipline comes in. Just as the disciplined controller chose to sacrifice his son, and Jesus chose to make the ultimate sacrifice for us, we can choose to serve God and not focus on the things of the world like spoiled children. We have the ability to yield to the teaching of the Spirit and focus on the things of God. The miracles of Jesus Christ were simply signposts to salvation, not the purpose of His ministry. Let us not focus on the signs, but on the content of the ministry to which Jesus points us, which is leading men to eternal life with God.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis
Family Life Baptist Church