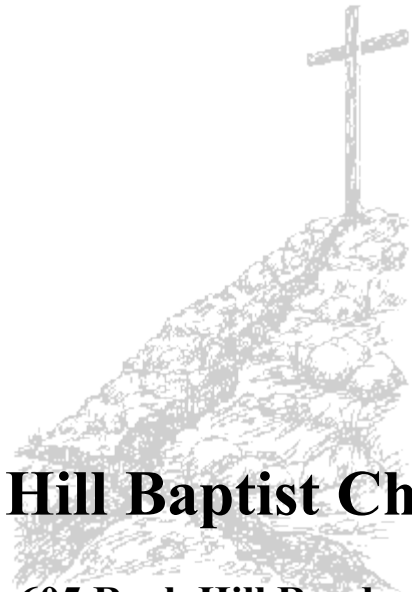


Love: A Resolution That Must Be Lived

John 15:9-17



Rock Hill Baptist Church

605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Brother David Buffaloe
731-845-6104

online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Read Responsively John 15:9-17^{KJV} As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. {10} **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.** {11} These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. {12} This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. {13} **Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.** {14} Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. {15} Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. {16} **Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.** {17} These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Illustration and Introduction In every Gospel but this one - the Gospel of John - we see the account of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. One day our Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain to pray (**Luke 9:28**) and while He prayed He was transfigured into a dazzling, bright Figure. The Bible says "**His face shone like the sun**" (**Matthew 17:2**) and "**His garments glistened, intensely white, more than anything on earth could bleach them**" (**Mark 9:3**). While the very Glory of God shined through Jesus, Elijah and Moses came to Him to talk with Him. Jesus

wanted to share this moment with the three men who would become the leadership of the Church He would die for. Peter, James, and John had to see the shekinah glory of God on Jesus. They had to hear the Father promote Jesus above the two great prophets, Elijah and Moses. They had to hear God say, **"This is My Son - Listen to Him"** (Luke 9:35).

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai it is said that his **"face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him"** (Exodus 34:30). Moses had to coax the people to come to him, for the shine of God's glory through his face was frightening. The Law of God frightens us, showing us how far we are from God. Every commandment given we have forsaken, every law - holy and pure - we quite naturally break it. Moses, cover your face, we cannot stand to see that glow! We are condemned as sinners, destined to fail. We sacrifice animal after animal, and yet we cannot reach You. We do good deed, one after the other, but cannot look on Your Face and live! The glory of God from Sinai frightens. Then we see Jesus.

Though our Lord's Face glows, and though He is as bright as the noon day sun, we draw near to Him. His brilliance warms us. His love overwhelms us. His Light chases away the shadows, and the terrors of the night are gone. Where Jesus is, Love is. When I saw Moses' face I feared God, for I was an alien and not a son. But when I see Jesus' face, I am no longer an alien. I am a child of God by faith in Jesus. It was on the Mount of Transfiguration that He told me that He was going away (Luke 9:31). It was on that Mount that I saw Him first

high and lifted up, crucified in my place, paying for my sin on that terrible tree (Galatians 2:20). Moses said, "Try and live righteous, try and be good, try and live by this Law written on stone tablets." What a terror to see that face - it's glow is poisonous to me! Then Jesus' Face shines and I hear **"if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"** (Galatians 2:21). What a joy this is, dear Jesus - how I love You!

Why is it that John - one of the three who Jesus took to the Mount of Transfiguration - never wrote of the event? I believe it's because John was transfigured by the Love of God that shined through Christ on that Mountain. John was known as the Apostle of Love. The glory of God that shined through Jesus that day had it's source in love, in sacrifice, in the coming Cross of Calvary.

Every year on New Year's day people of all races and religions will make what is called a *New Year's Resolution*. My prayer for God's Church is that we will make a resolution, a decision for Christ. We will see the glorious shine of His loving Face, and will resolve to **"continue in His love"**. Though John did not report on the Mount of Transfiguration his life became transfigured by what he saw that day. I pray that God will transfigure your life. That the love of God will expand in your hearts, that you will understand what it was that Jesus meant when He said **"Continue ye in My love"**. The author **Josh McDowell** made the statement¹ "

"an amazing 91 percent of professed born again, Church attending youth [are] saying there is no

¹ in Dallas Theological Seminary's *Veritas*, July 2005, Volume 5, Number 3, pg 2

absolute truth."

The reason many people do not believe the testimony of the professing Christian is because we do not **continue in Christ's love**. I pray that God will touch your hearts, writing His love in your hearts, in all of our hearts. May God bless you through this Word.

1. Resolved: I Will Rest In The Love of Christ

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: **continue² ye in my love.**

If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you are commanded by Jesus to continue, abide, dwell, or rest in that love.

You will stand firm in that love, remembering what Jesus said in verse 16 of our context:

FOCAL **John 15:16** **Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**

Jesus Christ chose you to salvation, just as He chose His

2 Aorist Active Imperative of G3306, μένω, menō, men'-o, A primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): - abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), X thine own., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

Old Testament Israel. When He called you to be saved there was nothing in you of worth. There was no value, no merit, no goodness in you. The Bible says that:

Romans 3:23 ... all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

When Christ chose Israel to set His love on her, He did not choose her because she was a mighty nation. The Lord told Israel:

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. {7} **The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: {8} But because the LORD loved you,** and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Christ chose to love Israel and chose to call her to salvation. It was His Eternal Love that drew her out, not her merit, not her goodness, not her size, nor her craftsmanship.

Israel was the least of the nations, and God chose her because God wanted to choose her.

Illustrate Many years ago there was a train that ran between the Rock Hill community and Parsons called *the Peavine*. The Peavine, I understand, was a steam engine. Two people were needed to keep that old train running: the engineer who drove it, and the *fireman* who kept coal shoveled into the engine's fiery belly. The engineer could stand at the control all day long but unless the fireman kept the engine hot in time the train would run out of steam and cease to function. Coal, burning coal, made the engine run! Remove the coal, and you have several thousand pounds of useless machinery.

The Christian does not run on coal, but on the realization of Christ's love for us. We are to *abide or rest* in the fact that He loves us *in spite* of who we are.

Do we have anything to commend ourselves to God? Do we deserve that love which Christ bestowed on us? The Bible tells us:

1 Corinthians 1:26-29^{NIV} Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. {27} But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to

shame the strong. {28} He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are, {29} so that no one may boast before him.

We who are saved are the weak, the foolish, the low, the despised - much like Israel was when God called her. God called you to salvation knowing your limitations, whether you know them or not. The sad fact is, too many of us have begun to think ourselves "... to be something, when we are nothing, deceiving ourselves (Galatians 6:3). We may look mighty on the outside like the old Peavine, but without the coal we cannot produce. If we do not *remain in* the love of Christ we cannot succeed!

The key to active, prosperous Christianity is a healthy realization that *you are loved by God because God chose to love you*, not because you were worthy of that love. Abide in the love of Christ!

There is a *simplicity* in Christ, in the Christian faith. God loves me, though I am not worthy of love! He loves me no matter what.

Illustrate I have heard of the mother who told her child that "I wish you were never born". This is not a mother, but a *monster*! I have seen mothers stand up at the trial of a convicted murderer and beg for the lives of their children. This is how God is! He loves us *in spite of*

ourselves, and bids us come to Him for salvation". Has Christ ever changed? The Scripture says:

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

Jesus is Eternal God of Eternal God. He never changes! He loves you, and it is His love that has saved you if you are saved.

Why do we who are Baptists *reject Arianism*?

The love of Christ is as enduring as God is enduring. It can never grow, nor can it ever decrease. This is one of the main reasons I reject that heretical teaching called Arianism³ that has crept into Christ's Church. Arianism teaches that the salvation of a Christian can be lost through his own actions and, once lost, the believer must regain his salvation by going back to a state of repentance. Hogwash! Jesus told us to *abide or rest* in His love. We do nothing to earn nor deserve our salvation other than to accept it. God's love does not increase nor decrease with what we do. We are saved:

Titus 3:5-7 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; {6} Which he shed on us abundantly through

³ Heretical doctrine taught by Arius that asserted the radical primacy of the Father over the Son, and that salvation could be saved - lost - then regained

Jesus Christ our Saviour; {7} That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

There is an old saying that GRACE is God's Riches At Christ's Expense. This is absolutely true. God chose you, He chose to offer salvation to you. Does your acceptance of what He has done earn a "well done"? Do you merit *anything* from God for what Jesus did on that Cross for you? Absolutely not!

That Prince of Preacher, C.H. Spurgeon, put it this way:

If man's heart be nothing but a source of blackness and sin, admire the grace of God. What should have led the Lord to save such creatures as we have described, if they be indeed such creatures? What but sovereign grace could look on such wretches? Those who give glory to human merit always try to puff up human nature by speaking in its praise, but we who believe human nature to be utterly fallen and debased, we admire the wonderful kindness and matchless goodness of God, that he should ever have set his love upon such unworthy creatures. Paul is in admiration of it when he says, "his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins." A heart full of evil thoughts, and yet he loved me! A heart full of fornication and adultery, and yet he loved me! A heart full of murder, and yet he loved me! A heart that could bear false witness, a heart that could blaspheme, and yet he loved us. O brethren, if we could see ourselves as God

saw us in the fall, we should wonder how the eyes of Infinite Purity could have borne with us, how the heart of Infinite Love could have set itself upon us. You were not loved because of your goodness, you were not chosen because of anything in you that was lovely and amiable, you were loved because he would love you; you were chosen because he would do it for his name's sake.⁴

This is the coal in our engine, that God loves us! His love is unchanging, and therefore we *abide or remain* in that love. We cease to look at what others are doing or not doing, and look at Christ Who did for us. Oh my

Beloved, a Church that has lost its understanding of the love of Christ is a Church that, though it has great size, like the locomotive of my illustration has lost its fire. God loves you, and He has proved it by Christ. You were unlovable, and yet He loved you still. You were the least of humanity, and yet He careth for you.

You were nothing, but the God of everything made you the heir of Heaven. My heart sings when I think of that love:

**O how He loves you and me,
O how He loves you and me;
He gave His life, what more could he give?
O how He loves you, O how He loves me,**

⁴ THE HEART-A DEN OF EVIL, NO. 732, DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 27TH, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

O how He loves you and me!⁵

What shall separate me from the love of Christ? Nothing! Jesus commanded that I *abide in His love, not in my abilities*. That is not to say that I am not to work for Him - I am to work for Jesus - but not *to be accepted, but because I love Him*. We who are Christians understand that we were unworthy of His love but He bestowed it anyway. Now that this love is given, what shall separate me from it?

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. {37} Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. {38} For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you are saved by faith in Christ, then **Abide** in that love, **Rest** in that love, **Stand fast** in that love. Your salvation is settled in Heaven, you need not labor for it. The foundation for happy, joyous Christianity is that Christ set His love on the undeserving, and we accepted that love.

⁵ Composer: Kurt Kaiser - ©1975

2. Resolved: I Will Tell Others About The Love of Christ In Me

FOCAL John 15:9-10 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue¹ ye in my love. {10} If ye keep⁶ my commandments, ye shall abide⁷ in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

In verse 9 Jesus told us to *remain, dwell, or abide* in His love, now in verse 10 Jesus uses the same Greek word but in a different context. He literally says,

**If you guard My commandments,
you shall remain, dwell, or rest in my love**

There are those who will go off into tangents, trying to twist this verse in such a way as to make it support Arianism. Again, this is hogwash! Jesus uses Himself as an example in this text when He says:

**"... even as I have kept my Father's commandments,
and abide in his love. "**

6 Aorist Active Subjunctive of G5083, τηρέω, tēreō, *tay-reh'-o*, From τηρός *teros* (a *watch*; perhaps akin to G2334); to *guard* (from *loss* or *injury*, properly by keeping *the eye* upon; and thus differing from G5442, which is properly to *prevent* escaping; and from G2892, which implies a *fortress* or full military lines of apparatus), that is, to *note* (a prophecy; figuratively to *fulfil* a command); by implication to *detain* (in custody; figuratively to *maintain*); by extension to *withhold* (for personal ends; figuratively to *keep unmarried*): - hold fast, keep (-er), (ob-, pre-, re) serve, watch., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

7 Future Active Indicative of G3306 μένω, menō, *men'-o*, A primary verb; to *stay* (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): - abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), X thine own., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

The *proof* that Jesus is the Eternal Son of God is that He kept His Father's commandments. Which commandments? Are we talking about the Ten Commandments? No, we are talking about *family ties*. Jesus proved Himself to be the Son of God to all who were around Him by *walking in love toward others*. The Bible says, **God so loved the world**, so Jesus loved all who came in contact with Him. As the Scripture says:

**2 Corinthians 5:19 ... God was in Christ,
reconciling the world unto himself, not
imputing their trespasses unto them; and
hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.**

God was in Christ, and God was Christ. Jesus submitted Himself to the Father for our sakes so that we could be saved. Everything the Father asked the Son to do, He did it! God was and is in Christ!

If God is in You then you are commanded to submit your lives to God just as Christ did. Jesus kept the commandments of God not because He wanted to *retain His status in Heaven*, but because God was in Christ.

Those who belong to the Family of God have God in them, and for this reason we work for God. As the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 5:14-15^{HCSB} For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: if One died for all, then all died. {15} And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

Christianity is not a *merely spoken faith*, but it is a *lived faith*. God is in you *because of Christ*, if you have believed in Jesus. You are no longer **in the flesh**, that is, a child of this world, but you are **born again of the Spirit of God**.

Hear His Words:

Romans 8:8-11 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. {9} But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. {10} And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. {11} But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

A professing Christian who does not attempt to love as Christ has called us to love is an aberration, an oddity, and may not be saved!

Just as the Father was in Christ (**John 14:9**), and those who saw Christ saw the Father, the Christian is called to let God work through his or her life. We who are saved **abide or rest in His love** when we **guard Christ's commandments**. And what are His commandments?

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. {35} By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

There are so many who profess salvation in this world today, who profess to know Christ as Savior. Are you saved? Then Christ must be in you! Do you know you will go to Heaven? The **abide or rest in His love** by exercising love towards others.

The foundation of a Church is not its building nor its size, the foundation of a Church is its Christ-like love expressed among its members and toward the world at large.

The Apostle told the Church at Ephesus:

Ephesians 3:17-19^{HCSB} and that the Messiah may

dwell in your hearts through faith. **I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, {18} may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, {19} and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

and told the Church at Philippi:

Philippians 2:1-5 ^{HCSB} If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, {2} fulfill my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, sharing the same feelings, focusing on one goal. {3} Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. {4} Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. {5} Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus

What a joy it is to pastor Rock Hill, for this is a loving Church. But Beloved, we must not cease to love! If God is in you, if you are saved, then resolve to love the way

that Christ would have you love. Jesus Christ put God the Father and His Church before Himself - we can do no less.

We abide in Christ's love by reaching out to those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior and by warning them of judgment to come.

We must work together to extend our missionary outreach for Christ. Those who come into this Church must be embraced, and we must continue to work together in love so that others can be reached for Jesus. Our Lord Jesus Christ was never lazy in telling others about salvation by faith in Him, and we must not be lazy!

The goal is to win souls for Christ! Stop putting off telling others about Jesus. Dwell in His love, trust in His love, abide in His love, believe in His love.

If that co-worker whom you call "friend" dies without Jesus, do you believe that he or she will not go directly to hellfire? If your child whom you profess to love dies without having Jesus in his or her heart, don't you know that *your faith* will not save that child? If your friends at school who do not know Jesus Christ die without calling on Him for salvation, don't you understand that they will spend forever in that Lake of Fire?

Oh my Beloved, if you are saved, there are two commands you must keep:

1 John 3:23-24^{NIV} And **this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. {24} Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them.**

And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

The Bible is very specific that **those who obey His commands live in Him.** We live in Jesus, and Jesus lives in us.

We know that we abide in His love because He lives in us, and compels us to tell others about Him. That is the *proof of life, that Life dwells in us.*

Jesus tells us:

FOCAL John 15:11-14 **These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. {12} This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. {13} Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. {14} Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.**

The proof of salvation, the proof that we belong to Jesus, is that Jesus is at work in us **loving one another as He has loved us.** The proof that we belong to Him and that *we are His friends* is in the fact that we **do what He has commanded us to do.** We do not work our way to God, but once we are saved God works in us!

Is God at work in you? Unless we **abide in Christ and Christ in us** we cannot have *fullness of joy*. The late **Adrian Rogers** of Bellevue Baptist Church stated:⁸

Now, **God's plan for you, are you listening, is that you have joy, but not ordinary joy, full joy, constant joy, conspicuous joy, contagious joy, God's plan is that you have fullness of joy. Now, if you're saved and you don't have joy, there's something very wrong. A joyless Christian is a contradiction in terms. God has intended that you have joy, consistently, for the bible says rejoice in the Lord always and you're not to have inferior joy, you're to have joy unspeakable and full of glory. I don't know everything about you, but this I know about you, you want joy. I know that about you. You want joy and it is God's plan that you have joy. And how important joy is to the Christian life. Folks, "First of all, joy is important in bringing people to Jesus Christ. Did you know the most attractive quality of our life in order to bring people to Jesus Christ is the joy that we have. The people that you work with, if they can see that joy in you, the people that you go to school with, the people that you worship with, that's the reason I want our services to**

be services that are marked by joy and enthusiasm and happiness. I'm not talking about cheerleader enthusiasm. The real meaning of the word enthusiasm is in God, in theos, God in you and you in God and there ought to be that enthusiasm. And by the way, if you worship without enthusiasm, don't you look down your nose at the drunkards or the cultists. You're doing more to hold back the power of God perhaps than he is. We ought to worship the Lord with gladness, with gladness. And there's, you see, listen, evangelism is as much caught as it is taught.

There is no joy for the Christian if he or she is not serving Christ. This is something that you cannot fake! If you are saved, Christ is in you. If Christ is in you, then Christ will work through you. If Christ works through you, you will have love toward God and love toward others.



Oh, that God would shine through us. Oh, that Jesus would burn through all that is me! May God touch our hearts with these words!⁹



Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, TN 38351

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