

Our Conditional Love of Jesus

by Vic Zarley, given by Vic at Otter Creek RV Park, summer, 2006

God's Ways Declared in Isaiah

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have love, pity, and mercy for him, and to our God, for He will multiply to him His abundant pardon.

Isa 55:8 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord.

Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts (higher) than your thoughts.

Let us rejoice in the facts. The facts are that we do not think as God thinks and I'm glad of it. I would not want my God to have to come down to the level of my thinking. His Holy Spirit is able to reach us on our level and help us mightily, but the ways and thoughts of God are not in, nor of our earthly, temporal thoughts and circumstances and conditions. As Isa 55:7 says, we must forsake our ways and thoughts and return to the Lord and His ways so that God can have love, pity and mercy for us as well as His abundant pardon.

The logic I want you to look at, here, goes like this: We are wicked and unrighteous BUT if we come to the Lord, He will impart His love, pity and mercy on us, as well as His abundant pardon. The reason we need to come down a peg or two is because we have inflated ourselves, our worth, if you will, and have reasoned that we are fine just as we are. This is not true. We are not of much value on our own BUT if we will humble ourselves and ask Jesus Christ, God's Son, to permeate our whole lives, we are then subject to God's ways and God's thoughts. We come into God's higher realm.

Bread to the Eater

Isa 55:10 For as the rain and snow come down from the heavens, and return not there again, but water the earth and make it bring forth and sprout, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, [*II Cor. 9:10.*]

Isa 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void [*without producing any effect, useless*], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Further reading of Isaiah reveals this wonderful bit of news. As rain comes down and waters the earth, causing plants to grow and seed and, indirectly, give us bread to eat, so does God's word come forth, not returning void. Instead it will accomplish that which it was sent forth to do. Yay! Amen! God's word HAS gone forth and it will accomplish what it went forth to accomplish!

Jesus, the Bread of Life

- Joh 1:1 IN THE beginning [*before all time*] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. [*Isa. 9:6.*]
- Joh 1:2 He was present originally with God.
- Joh 1:3 All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.
- Joh 1:4 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.
- Joh 1:5 And the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [*put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it*].

God's Word (that was talked about in Isaiah in which it was mentioned that His word does not go out void but WILL accomplish what it was sent out to do) is Jesus Christ. In Him is the Life and Light of men. His Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has NEVER overpowered it.

- Joh 6:33 For the Bread of God is He Who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.
- Joh 6:34 Then they said to Him, Lord, give us this bread always (all the time)!
- Joh 6:35 Jesus replied, I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will never be hungry, and he who believes in and cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me will never thirst any more (at any time).
- Joh 6:36 But [*as*] I told you, although you have seen Me, still you do not believe and trust and have faith.
- Joh 6:37 All whom My Father gives (entrusts) to Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out [*I will never, no never, reject one of them who comes to Me*].
- Joh 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will and purpose but to do the will and purpose of Him Who sent Me.
- Joh 6:39 And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but that I should give new life and raise [*them all*] up at the last day.
- Joh 6:40 For this is My Father's will and His purpose, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in and cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up [*from the dead*] at the last day.

Jesus is the Bread and Water of Life that we must accept in order to never be hungry or thirsty again. Of course this doesn't mean we will never have to eat or drink water again because what God is speaking of here is that when we take Jesus into our hearts and let Him be our Lord and Savior, we will not have the deep hunger and thirst that comes to those who wander the earth aimlessly. The lost are not sure who to follow and are not satisfied spiritually by any of the gods they bow down to. When we humble ourselves and make Jesus our Lord, there is a sense of fulfillment and a deep satisfaction that cannot come from anything of this world. In fact, all the world does is say, "Try this" (failure), then "Try this" (failure), well, "Try this" (and more failure). When will we

learn? God is all we want. God is all we need. The world did not satisfy us in the past, it cannot satisfy us now, and it will not satisfy us in the future. Jesus said that although we have seen Him, we would not recognize that it is Him we need. That sure is true, isn't it? Of course, we didn't live during the time period that Jesus was actually here, roaming among the hills of Jerusalem. We don't see Him today...but we hear of Him through the Gospels and we hear of how wonderfully He affects people's lives today. We should ask, if we don't currently have Him as our Savior, can He affect my life in this good way? Does He still relieve burdens, even today? Can He relieve my burdens?

For those of us who have accepted Jesus as our Savior, is it possible we are not loving Him as we should? Jesus gave us a condition of our love for Him. He said, "If you love me, you will keep My commands." Doesn't that make it a rather high priority that we should follow His commands? Shouldn't following His commands be number one on our "To Do" list?

Jesus gives us the condition of our love for Him.

Joh 14:15 If you [*really*] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.

Joh 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever--

Joh 14:17 The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see Him or know and recognize Him. But you know and recognize Him, for He lives with you [*constantly*] and will be in you.

Joh 14:21 The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [*really*] loves Me; and whoever [*really*] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [*too*] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him. [*I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.*]

Joh 14:22 Judas, not Iscariot, asked Him, Lord, how is it that You will reveal Yourself [*make Yourself real*] to us and not to the world?

Joh 14:23 Jesus answered, If a person [*really*] loves Me, he will keep My word [*obey My teaching*]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him.

Joh 14:24 Anyone who does not [*really*] love Me does not observe and obey My teaching. And the teaching which you hear and heed is not Mine, but [*comes*] from the Father Who sent Me.

Joh 14:25 I have told you these things while I am still with you.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [*in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf*], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.

Joh 14:27 Peace I leave with you; My [*own*] peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither

let them be afraid. [*Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.*]

What are the commands that Jesus tells us to obey so that we can express our love for Him, as He requested?

Jesus tells Peter “Feed or tend My Sheep” Three times

Joh 21:14 This was now the third time that Jesus revealed Himself (appeared, was manifest) to the disciples after He had risen from the dead.

Joh 21:15 When they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these [*others do--with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father*]? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [*that I have deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend*]. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

Joh 21:16 Again He said to him the second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me [*with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father*]? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [*that I have a deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend*]. He said to him, Shepherd (tend) My sheep.

Joh 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me [*with a deep, instinctive, personal affection for Me, as for a close friend*]? Peter was grieved (was saddened and hurt) that He should ask him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You [*that I have a deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend*]. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

We must feed His sheep when they put us down!! We must feed His sheep when they disrespect us! We must turn the other cheek when they hit us, we must give them our shirt, if they've asked for our coat, we must walk with them two miles if they've asked us to walk with them one mile.

Mat 5:11 Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous--with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward conditions) are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account.

Mat 5:12 Be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward in heaven is great (strong and intense), for in this same way people persecuted the prophets who were before you. [*II Chron. 36:16.*]

We must feed His sheep when we have become discouraged and lost our will to do so!!

Mat 5:13 You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste (its strength, its quality), how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men.

We must feed His sheep by KNOWING who we are in Him!! When we really know who we are, in Him, we will not be as affected by the put downs and we will be able to love those who are mistreating us. The only respect we should ever want is God's. We should not give such a high priority to pleasing mankind. Remember, many of them do not get it, yet, that God's ways are much better. In fact, they resent God's ways and often want to take that resentment out on us—because, you see, they can't take it out on God. He's invisible. No, do not attempt to please mankind, but please God and earn His respect. We get that respect through Jesus Christ by following His commands, even though they are the hardest commands we will ever try to follow. He will exalt us (if we are humble enough to grab hold of our thoughts and make them go His way—which is higher than our ways—remember?) Jesus would not have asked us to think His way, if thinking His way came naturally. He would just let nature take its course. But, when nature takes its course, the world's ways of thinking happen, not God's. Do not just let things take their course. Deliberately go God's way. Remember...

Mat 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Mat 5:15 Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a peck measure, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.

What are more of the commands Jesus told us to follow so that He knows we love Him?

Here they are:

Matthew version:

Mat 5:43 You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy; [*Lev. 19:18; Ps. 139:21, 22.*]

Mat 5:44 But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [*Prov. 25:21, 22.*]

Mat 5:45 To show that you are the children of your Father Who is in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the wicked and on the good, and makes the rain fall upon the upright and the wrongdoers [*alike*].

Mat 5:46 For if you love those who love you, what reward can you have? Do not even the tax collectors do that?

Mat 5:47 And if you greet only your brethren, what more than others are you doing? Do not even the Gentiles (the heathen) do that?

Mat 5:48 You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. [*Lev. 19:2, 18.*]

Luke Version:

Luk 6:27 But I say to you who are listening now to Me: [*in order to heed, make it a practice to*] love your enemies, treat well (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest you and pursue you with hatred,

Luk 6:28 Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [*who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you*].

Luk 6:29 To the one who strikes you on the jaw or cheek, offer the other jaw or cheek also; and from him who takes away your outer garment, do not withhold your undergarment as well.

Luk 6:30 Give away to everyone who begs of you [*who is in want of necessities*], and of him who takes away from you your goods, do not demand or require them back again.

Luk 6:31 And as you would like and desire that men would do to you, do exactly so to them.

Luk 6:32 If you [*merely*] love those who love you, what quality of credit and thanks is that to you? For even the [*very*] sinners love their lovers (those who love them).

Remember, the world is not going to reward you for treating good, those who treat you bad. The world will laugh at you if you do that. They will goad you to seek justice and they will press you to take revenge. Don't fall for its ways. The world will not provide any answers that cause us to raise our heads above this glittering carnal world, glimpsing eternity. The world seeks only to keep our noses buried in the dust of carnality and present rewards only. It never seeks eternal rewards, but current gratification only.

Joh 14:11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the sake of the [*very*] works themselves. [*If you cannot trust Me, at least let these works that I do in My Father's name convince you.*]

Joh 14:12 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father.

Now, scripturally, we have established quite a lot of amazing information. We have seen that God's word does not come back void. It DOES accomplish what God sent His word to accomplish. We have next, seen that Jesus Christ is, indeed, God's Word made manifest. He, too, does accomplish what God sent Him to accomplish. He draws all men unto Him! He gave His life for us on the cross. He paid for our sins. This has been accomplished, we need only accept it—and, in doing so, accept Him into our hearts. Now we must ask, since Jesus says, "If you love me, follow my commands," if it is okay to try to change our thinking and think another way. Is it okay to assert our will IF GOD SAYS WE MUST ACT AND THINK A CERTAIN WAY? We know it is possible to assert our will and do whatever we please, ignoring God's will. However, many times people get caught up in taking on the attitude, "Not my will, but God's will be done." Then they promptly deny their will, asking only that God's will be done in their lives. People, please understand that God proclaimed what His will was in the Word. He told us what He

wanted us to do, now we must do it. And we must be very assertive in doing God's will. Why? Because this world would snatch God's will away from us and tell us, instead, to cower before its power, totally ignoring the power of love and the power of our Almighty God, Himself.

Is It Really Okay to Assert My Will for God?

Yes! Read the parable of the dishonest manager.

The Parable of the dishonest manager

- Luk 16:1 Jesus said to his disciples: A rich man once had a manager to take care of his business. But he was told that his manager was wasting money.
- Luk 16:2 So the rich man called him in and said, "What is this I hear about you? Tell me what you have done! You are no longer going to work for me."
- Luk 16:3 The manager said to himself, "What shall I do now that my master is going to fire me? I can't dig ditches, and I'm ashamed to beg.
- Luk 16:4 I know what I'll do, so that people will welcome me into their homes after I've lost my job."
- Luk 16:5 Then one by one he called in the people who were in debt to his master. He asked the first one, "How much do you owe my master?"
- Luk 16:6 "A hundred barrels of olive oil," the man answered. So the manager said, "Take your bill and sit down and quickly write 'fifty'."
- Luk 16:7 The manager asked someone else who was in debt to his master, "How much do you owe?" "A thousand bushels of wheat," the man replied. The manager said, "Take your bill and write 'eight hundred'."
- Luk 16:8 The master praised his dishonest manager for looking out for himself so well. That's how it is! The people of this world look out for themselves better than the people who belong to the light.
- Luk 16:9 My disciples, I tell you to use wicked wealth to make friends for yourselves. Then when it is gone, you will be welcomed into an eternal home. (See the message, below)

From the Message:

Luk 16:9 I want you to be smart in the same way--but for what is right--**using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival**, to concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you'll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behavior."

Often we Christians are wimps when it comes to changing our thinking and doing stuff in a different way. We simply do not want to rock the boat. But God rocks boats. The world has been doing things the same old way for eons and look what it has gotten us. Pain and misery, as we bow to our god, death. God does not promise the end of pain, because it is painful to shift gears. And it is painful when the Lord dislodges false foundations within that do not belong to God's kingdom. Yes, it is painful, but it is a

different kind of pain—a pain that is leading to relief and immense joy, eternal joy, a not-of-this-world joy.

To sum this chapter up, then, we must remember that God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (but, through Christ, they are). When God's word goes out, it goes out with a purpose and it accomplishes that purpose. His word never comes back void.

Jesus is the Word made manifest. He is the Bread of Life. No one comes unto the Father except through Him. We must accept that He paid for our sins through the blood He shed on the cross for us. He also told us that if we loved Him, we must follow His commands. In addition, He also said that if we didn't love Him, we wouldn't follow His commands. Therefore, we love Him because He gave His life for us and, in order to show Him we love Him, we must follow His commands. What are those commands?

We must feed His sheep. We do this by doing good to them when they do evil to us. Praying for those who persecute us. Other commands that Jesus gave us are offer up the other side of our faces if someone hits us on one side. Walk two miles with someone if they ask us to walk a mile with them. Do not worry about getting back your money if you loaned some to someone. These are pretty hard commands to follow. Is this something we should spend our time on?

Indeed it is. Jesus said that the only way we can show Him we love Him is by following these commands. It seems we ought to step out of the comfort zone for Him, that we ought to be willing to "be different" and accept that, more than likely, people won't understand why we are acting so differently and they may come down on us as well.

Is it okay to assert our will and make ourselves think and act differently? Does God approve us taking such control of our thinking and actions? It is more than okay. He condemns the children of the Light for being too wimpy in the parable of the dishonest manager, and not asserting their will for Him. He wants us to take care of the eternal matters (like loving His Son, Jesus as He asked us to love Him), and not be so wrapped up in the temporal things, like getting the approval of man.