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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

IN THE UPPER ROOM

Speaker: Bro. John Ullman

Study #5

It is Expedient that I Go Away

Reading: John 15:11-21

My dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In coming this afternoon to John chapter 15 and verse 11, we notice that there is a slight change in subject. The Lord at this point drops the metaphor of the vine for a short time, because He's going to come back to it, and He's going to give a broad explanation of His earlier words, by repeating some of the principles that He has set forth in chapter 13 and chapter 14. It's not repetition it's reiteration; it's very, very important at this time, because the disciples must get these things firmly fixed in their minds, because their time in the presence of the Lord, is now running out, and they must be equipped for the things that are to follow. And so, He drops the metaphor of the vine at this point, and goes on to deal with their personal relationship with Himself. And then we will see, God willing, that He takes up again briefly, the metaphor of the vine, to bring home some final details, that should be learned from that metaphor, and then He will take the challenge to every disciple upon the question of their relationship to the world. And we will see how these things are dealt with this afternoon.

So, in verse 11 He says, 'these things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full'. It's interesting to note that in the opening expression, 'these things I have spoken', in the Greek text, the words are in the perfect tense, and therefore, they deal with the present results of a past action. And so, therefore, the words are better understood as meaning, 'these things I am in process of speaking to you', in other words, 'don't get confused because everything that I started saying, as recorded for us from chapter 13 verse 1, it's a process that I'm unfolding to you, and my relationship to the Father, and my relationship to you, your relationship to Me, and the parable of the vine'. So He says, 'these things I am in process of speaking to you', and in that way He links together all that's been said right up to this very point in this uninterrupted discourse, which is begun in the Upper Room and our account is from chapter 13 and verse 1. And He says, 'I'm doing this, these things I'm in process of speaking to you, that my joy might remain in you'. And the 20th century New Testament renders this as, 'I have told you all this, so that mine own happiness may be yours, and that your happiness may be complete'. It's a very wonderful and a very beautiful expression, I've told you all this so that My own happiness may be yours, and

that your happiness may be complete', and yet here is a man talking about happiness, and within a matter of hours, He is going out to face death on the stake, in the most cruel way imaginable. And yet, He speaks of His happiness, but do you see what He's really saying brethren and sisters, His happiness lay in doing the Father's will, and that's why He says that My joy or My happiness might remain in you, because you see, for the Lord, the end is now in sight. He has really only hours to go to complete His mission, when He will be able to finally say, 'it is finished', and so therefore, His concern is not for Himself, it is for His disciples. And the joy that He felt was a joy and happiness that is perfectly fulfilling the will of His Father. And sometimes we wonder how He faced the end, how He was so stoical, in a sense, how He as Isaiah says, 'set His face like a flint', unwavering. And this is the purpose and this is the reason, He is fulfilling His Father's will.

And He had no greater joy in life than that, and so in verse 13 He says, 'greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. And you know, one thing that is very, very important and that is, that we cannot possibly, comprehend verse 13 without connecting it with verse 14, because probably over here in this part of the world, as in Australia, the words of verse 13, are often quoted by the world, particularly in connection with some heroic act that someone may have performed, in saving others. We know that every Armistice Day on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, in Australia, when all the war dead are remembered, in variably some blind clergyman, will quote this verse. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends', and they equate men who went away to war, courageous as they may have been, sacrificing as they may have been, and yet men who knew nothing of God and cared nothing of God, who were unaware of the Lord's teaching in John 13, 14 and 15 and 16, and they dared to equate those words with the Son of God, who was the example of that. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, and, 'ye are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you', and that's how verse 13 must be read. It must be read together with verse 14. And again, the 20th century New Testament, provides this wording, 'No one can give greater proof of love, than to be laying down His life for his friends, and you are My friends if ye do what I command you'.

So you see, we only benefit from Christ's death, if we see it and understand it in the light of the truth, and in the light of the Father's purpose in the Son, and the Son's willing and joyful obedience to fulfill His Father's word and His Father's will. And when we see those things, we become numbered among those who will appreciate the words of verse 13 and verse 14, and of the words in those 2 verses are inseparable. You'll notice that He does not say that He lays down His life for us, because we learn the first principles of the truth, and become baptized and meet every first day of the week with our brethren, to remember the death of our Lord; He says that He lays down His life for His friends, who are those who keep His commandments. Now that's what He says; it's not what we say, it's what He says, and although we know that we will never ever perfectly keep those commandments, because if we did we'd be like the Son of God and equal with Him. For while we know that we'll never perfectly keep those commandments, you see, the Lord is dealing here with a disciple who has a particular disposition, and his disposition is, as we have seen in verse 11, 'that He might share the

joy of the Son, in fulfilling the will of the Father'. It is a disposition, and after all, when we come to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, it will not be a question of our successes in life spiritually, balanced against our failures, because if that was so, the Lord would indeed, be a very lonely man in the kingdom, it will be a question of the Lord measuring our integrity, our honesty in our dealing with God and with His Son. Integrity will be the real issue, I mean, after all, look at the example of David, who had already been told that he will be there to see the glory in the kingdom. He knows that he'll be in the kingdom. But we know something of David's crimes, and we tend to remember David for his crimes against God and against man. But David had a basic disposition that was such, that even when he was a teenage boy, Yahweh said of him, 'that he is a man after mine own heart', so that his heart really was with God. His disposition was God-centred and not self-centred, and that's what the Lord is dealing with here. He lays down His life for His friends, who are those who keep His commandments, and please do not think for one moment that I'm trying to play down the necessity of keeping the commandments, as though saying, 'Well, we know that we can't keep them anyway, so let's just kind of do the best we can, and hope for the best at the judgment seat of Christ'. Because, that reveals a certain kind of disposition, and that's not the right kind of disposition. We shall see in a moment the Lord's words regarding those things that are the most important things in life. You know John remembered this very, very clearly, if we go over for a moment, keeping a hand in John 15, we go over to the first epistle of John and chapter 3 and verse 16, and notice his words here. John's comment upon the gospel of John chapter 15 and verse 13 where he says this in the 1 John 3:16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren'. So there's an extension of the way of studying in chapter 15 of John's gospel, in other words, what the law did, let us do the same. Let us as Peter says, follow His steps, and that doesn't mean that we are required to allow ourselves or to plead with the world, to please nail us up on a tree, so that we might share the same literal death as the Lord. It means death to the flesh, it means putting a death to the flesh that we might manifest the character of the Son of God, and thereby rejoice together and rejoice together with Him, knowing that He rejoices in our happiness and our willingness to strive with every fiber of our being, to please our loving Heavenly Father.

And so, in verse 15 He says, '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'. Earlier that night, in the Upper Room, He had called them servants, chapter 13 and verse 16, now He says, 'henceforth I call you not servants' it's as though He now says to them, 'when you have learned and have begun to practice the things that I have been teaching you this night; when you are changing your mode of thinking, that you are learning to develop a disposition toward God and man, such as My own, when this teaching becomes effective in you, when it begins to work in you, when it produces a power in you that is generated by the Word of God, like a generator working to flood the place with light; when these things work within you, you'll indeed, become My friends, in a very real and very living way, because you will have learned to live before God and live with each other, and to live in relation to the world, according to the divine principles, that I'm setting out for you. How sublime this

is, and how moved we should be by the truths that the Lord reveals in these words, because they are eternal truths. They represent to us the character of the Father in His dealings with men.

And so we remember that a bond slave was one who had no rights or privileges, except the responsibility to work for his master. And the real play on words here, is that the flesh is such a master. And the world is such a slave driver. This expression is leading us into what He is going to say a little later on in this chapter. The flesh is such a master, it gives us no rights and no responsibilities, no obligations, no freedoms; we are totally owned and chained by the flesh, as long as we allow it to rule over us and to reign over us. And the world is the same, and tragically brethren and sisters, a lot of us don't realize that. But we have more to say about that in a few moments time. But, that is the way of life we will have, if we do not accept the friendship and the affection that Christ offers us. He offers us the way out of all that, he offers us the way out and the problems we have with the flesh, by showing us the means whereby we can come to grips with the evil propensities of the nature that we bear. He shows us the way out of our problems and our relationships with the world about us. He's got the key to it all; all we have to do is to listen to it, and so He says here in verse 15, 'for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth', we need to consider that phrase well, 'the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth'. Do we really ever understand the environment of the world about us, and how it will destroy us, apart from what Christ teaches us, to avoid that? Go to the world outside, to the politicians, to the dedicated businessmen, to the university students, to the academics, all those who know not Christ and are ignorant of the things of God, and ask them if they understand how they are slaves to a system, that will lead them to their everlasting destruction, ask them? For all their brains and their knowledge, and their know how and their ability, and their brilliance, ask them if they understand that? And they don't, but the Lord gives us the means of understanding Him, and the reason why they don't understand it, is because they are slaves to the flesh, and they do not understand that the slave knows not what his master doeth. **THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE FLESH, AS A MASTER, IS TO DRAG ITS MEMBERS DOWN TO DEATH.** That's the grand hope of all those in the flesh. And so those who lack true knowledge and true perception, can't come to grips with this. Why should we be no longer slaves to the corrupt and godless systems of the world? Simply, because Christ says 'all things that I have heard from My Father, I have made known unto you', so, therefore, we have no excuse for not being able to discern these things, and have the perception for how we should handle everyday affairs of life, whether in our own lives personally, in our families, in our ecclesia, in the world about us. And you see, in contrast to one who is a slave, a friend is invited to share in the development of another friend's purpose. A purpose in which the friend has a personal and intimate interest. So that Christ's friends are fully in sympathy with Him and His cause, because they are friends, and because they understand the cause of their friend. And because they are such close friends, we as His friends, are intimately committed to His cause. So in a sense, when we become the friends of Christ, we are being invited to join our lives in partnership with Him. Have you ever thought of that? The true friendship is really a partnership; it's a caring for one another and doesn't that remind us, that the scriptural word for 'fellowship'

means precisely that. It means a partnership and a sharing, and that is something that we cannot do, if there is a sharp divergence of aim and objective between Christ and ourselves. So you see, already in these words He is starting to draw us toward a line of thinking, which will be developed in some of the verses to follow, in which we are placed with the ultimate decision, as to whether our real friendship lies with the world or with Christ. And here He's laying the foundation for that, but He states the positive first. If we have the true friendship of Christ, and we are numbered among His true friends for whom He has died, there will be no divergence of aim and objective, between Christ and ourselves.

And so He says there, 'you are no longer servants in that sense, I've called you 'friends'. And this of course, does not conflict with what Paul says in the epistles, when he points out that we have been bought with a price; where Paul himself defines himself as a 'bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ' and calls upon us to be likewise. There's no conflict there, between what Christ says here, and what we read later in our scriptures. For the simple reason, that Paul and others like him, have voluntarily accepted the responsibilities and obligations of being bond slaves, that they might be sold forever to their own Master, so that He might never dispense with them or their services. So then, we have the great honour of being two things; we are indeed the friends of Christ in a very real sense, but it is by voluntarily giving ourselves that we become His bond slaves. Not by force of circumstances, not because of compulsion; that's a voluntary thing. We choose to do that, and so the Lord is telling us here, in this 14th and 15th verse, that we come from slavery to the flesh, to be brought to freedom in Christ. And without this freedom, we are slaves of the world; slaves to its aims, its objectives, its pleasures, and indeed, the whole environment of worldly living and thinking, and it is only through the Lord Jesus Christ, that we can break 'free' from those ties of the flesh and the world, even as He Himself did. But, let us remember, brethren and sisters, that that 'freedom' is given to us, as the friends of Christ. Not to do with as we like, we're not free to do whatever we like; He has freed us from the shackles of sin and death, and He has given us a 'freedom from our obligations and ties to the flesh and the world', that we might exercise that freedom to please God. And that's the purpose of that freedom, so He emphasizes again in verse 15, 'for all things I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you', and it is those things which can bring us freedom from the oppression of the flesh and the slave-like loyalty that the world demands from us. And that's the only kind of freedom that really matters.

And so in verse 16, He points out that this is not something that we should feel proud about, because in verse 16 He says, 'ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit'. 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you', that is true, but doesn't it carry also an implied invitation? That if He has chosen us, should we not respond by voluntarily choosing Him? You see, He's putting it back on us, He says, 'you haven't chosen Me, not yet, you haven't chosen Me; I've chosen you', but doesn't that leave the way open for us to say, 'Yes, Lord', and we appreciate that more than we're going to say or put into words, but because you have chosen us, we choose you for our friend. For our greatest friend, who's known the weaknesses and infirmities of the nature that we carry around ourselves. Who's been

through it all and who's conquered it all. You're the only one Who ever has; we choose You as a Friend. So to love Christ and His Father is not something that we attain to through compulsion; it's not compulsion the deep conviction which only the truth can form within us, will cause us to make that choice. It is a choice arising out of a conviction and not out of compulsion. As we've said to many audiences of Christadelphians in many parts of the world, God is not going to take us by the arm in a stronghold and drive us forcefully into the kingdom of God. We will go into the kingdom of God if we go willingly, joyfully, with a desire to please our Lord and His Father, and to give our lives in service to them and their cause. No one will be 'compelled into the kingdom of God', and yet a slave is driven to conform in fetters of iron. But, a friend is warmly invited to participate in those things which delight the One, Who is extending the invitation. And friends are in sympathy with one another, and they share a bond of personal affection that is based upon mutual respect, and a warmth that comes only from a real and very wonderful friendship.

Look at the friendship between David and Jonathan. After Jonathan's death, David described that friendship as being a relationship above that with women. And he didn't mean that Jonathan was better than women; that men are better than women, he meant that there was a special kind of bond between those two men, that could not be equaled in any other way or any other form. This was a special bond, and one which we believe, will be renewed, to its fruition, having been cut short so tragically during this lifetime, to be renewed joyfully to its fruition in the kingdom age. Remember, Jonathan resigned his right to the throne, a tremendous act in itself, since he was next in line after his father Saul. And remember when he took off his royal garments and put them upon David, and he said, 'thou shalt be the king, and I shall be the next under thee'. Jonathan meant these words! I can't think of many men in this world, in a position that Jonathan was in, who would do that. They're incredible words; they're words of love, they're words of a deep bond and of a deep affection, for they never realized, 'thou shalt be the king, and I shall be the next under thee', but I think there is one thing that we can feel sure of, that God will not deny Jonathan that sacrifice and the fulfillment of it. Because, whatever great honour David will have in the kingdom, and sometimes we have had the thought, and it's been expressed within the brotherhood, that possibly David, since he prepared with such joy and such delight, all the services for the temple worship, even before he died, and before the temple even became a reality, that possibly, when the kingdom is established and the temple is there, it may be that David, that David may be made responsible and in charge, for all the temple services, and Jonathan next under him.

So you see, this is friendship and this is where friends are in sympathy with one another, and so here the Lord says, 'I have chosen you', we know of course, that that primarily refers to the eleven that were left there with Him, walking now through the streets of the dark city, toward the garden of Gethsemane, but surely by extension, it must apply to all who come into Christ, and who strive to make His commandments, the basis of their life. What an incredible statement it is, 'I have chosen you', and when we look at those words, here is Christ saying to everyone of us, 'I have chosen you'. And we look at the words and then we think, what are we that He should choose us? What

are we, weak, sinful, helpless, unworthy creatures, every single one of us, to be refused an invitation like that, from the Son of God? We'd have to be stupid, wouldn't we? We'd have to be foolish beyond measure, because, for our own part, we would have no chance whatever, of ever becoming, the intimate friends of the Son of God. EVER! how can we reach out and touch Him, in that sense? But He says, 'I have chosen you', we remember Paul's words that 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly'. While we were yet sinners, what have we ever done to desire the goodness of God or the friendship and the companionship of the Lord Jesus Christ? So, if we really learn to count our blessings in the truth, we'll not abuse those blessings. We will treat those blessings with reverence, with the utmost respect; we will handle those blessings carefully because we are handling holy things. THE THINGS OF GOD; we will become more humbled, we will become more dependent upon the Father and His Son, and in our relationship to this great KING AND REDEEMER. He has taken the initiative; He comes to us through the words that He has spoken, and He summons us to 'follow Him'.

So He says in the 16th verse, 'and I have ordained you.' In their foolishness, the clergy make great fellows of themselves by 'ordaining one another into office'. They take this word 'ordain' and a man becomes 'ordained' as a priest, by the friendly bishop laying his hands upon him, and allegedly transmitting the power of the Holy Spirit to the newly ordained priest. How lovely! and how irreverent and how ungodly such action is. You see, the words here mean, 'and have appointed you', I have appointed you, so you see, He's starting to go now, toward our responsibilities. And it's not all just simply an armchair ride to the kingdom of God. After all, did the Lord Jesus Christ have an arm chair ride through life, to the final great gift of His Father and eternal life and divine nature? Should we expect that we should have an arm chair ride to the kingdom of God? He says, 'I've chosen you' and in that you can feel a great honour, that the Father has allowed this to happen, but as well as that, I have appointed you, 'that you should go and bring forth fruit'. You see the words there, 'should go'; the Lord is standing here, He says, 'Look, you go, you'll not always stand in My presence, you'll not always be here surrounding Me as a little group. You've got to go and get on with the things that God has committed you to; you've got to go, get on your way, brethren, and bring forth fruit'.

And the same message comes home to us today, and so we notice the words as He returns to the parable of the vine, and in doing so He tells us that life in the truth is not merely clinging to the vine for our own good and our own protection, but it is a matter of pursuing the interests and the purpose of the vine, and that is, to bring forth fruit. To be branches that are active and alive and developing and growing! and producing the fruit of the Spirit to the glory of God, as we saw yesterday, when He says, 'that your fruit should remain'. And if it is the fruit of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, then that lives and abides forever, and will go onto eternal life in the kingdom of God.

And so, in verse 17, He now has this to say, 'These things I command you, that ye love one another'. These things I command you, that you love another. Now we know, don't we, that the world today, speaks, writes and sings of love. You can't turn on a radio without hearing a song about love; you can't pick up a newspaper or a

magazine without reading about love. But the love that the world writes and sings and talks about, is a love which is little more than the 'pursuit of lust and self-gratification', and that's the world's idea of love. But this love, as described in these verses of John, is the exact opposite of that, it is 'the love of sacrifice and self-denial'. And you may care to note that verse 17, is an extension of verse 13, so that again, here is a commandment which can never be forced upon men and women, in a spirit of compulsion. We can't make anyone love somebody else. You can't make people do that; you can educate them to do it; you can train them to do it, as you do with your children in your own family. When you bring up your own children, and they're tiny little children, you tell them this whole family has got to be surrounded with love. That it is a loving family in which every member of the family must express and feel a warmth and a love and a feeling of self sacrifice and denial for all the other members of the family. This is a family built upon love, is what we teach our children. It's built upon love of God above all else; love of the Lord Jesus Christ; love of the Word of God and love for one another. You can't compel that; it can't be forced upon men and women; it is not the product of compulsion; it is the product of conviction, a knowledge of what the truth is and what it really requires of us.

And this is what John means in his first epistle. When in chapter 4 and verse 7 he says 'everyone that loveth (and we will paraphrase that by saying, in the biblical sense) 'everyone that loveth (in the scriptural sense) is born of God', so they are born of the 'Word of God' and that is strictly what John means. And so here in verse 17, 'these things I command you, that ye love one another'. And you know the word 'that', I think we mentioned it the other day, so very often these little words in our bible, really have a very profound meaning. And this word 'that' is the Greek word 'ina' and of that word, Boulanger says in his Greek lexicon, the emphasis is on the 'purpose, design and result'. Doesn't that make it a very beautiful word? The emphasis is on the purpose of that love, the design of that love which is from God, and the result that will be produced in another person, by the showing of that love. So the Lord is really saying, 'these things I command you, to the end that ye love one another and that the purpose of God in that love, might become a reality, in each one of you'. So it is only by receiving and practicing these principles that have been set down in these chapters, that we will be able to truly love one another, in the true spirit of the truth.

We need to remember these things very carefully, brethren and sisters, because you know, when we make friends of our brethren and sisters because we enjoy a good time together, in a social type atmosphere, that's not the love that Christ is speaking of here. There's nothing wrong with enjoying one another's company; there's nothing wrong with celebrating things together, so long as it's in accordance with the principles of the truth, and we do not behave in our socializing, in a way that degrades the things of Christ, and in a way that we, perhaps feel ashamed, if in the midst of our socializing and our little out-of-hand partying or whatever it might be, we should suddenly find the Lord Jesus Christ appear in our midst, and know full well that He would not approve of that conduct. We're not going to that extreme, although we have to above all else see, that that is not the kind of love that Christ speaks of here. The love He speaks of here, is when people are truly united together as friends in the principles of the truth. When we make

friends of our brethren and sisters, with the object of helping them and us, into the kingdom, by creating a spiritual basis for all our relationships with one another.

Now, let's see how that works; how the Lord has already dealt with this back in Matthew chapter 22. I want you to look at these words which you will say, 'well, we know these words very well', and we don't doubt that for one moment, but we want to have a look at them just the same. In Matthew 22 and verses 35 to 39, remember when the lawyer came to the Lord, and asked Him a question tempting Him, whenever we read that, let's always remember the motive of the questioner. Here is someone, who really doesn't want an answer, unless it's a answer that will trip the Lord up hopefully, from their point of view. 'I don't want to know the truth, I just want to put some key questions, that might find the Son of God, in a weak spot'. 'Tempting Him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' And the Lord's reply contains none of the ten commandments. Which is the great commandment in the law, Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment', (as it can be rendered). 'And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'.

Now we're dealing with John 15 and verse 17, but I want you to notice very carefully, that it is exactly the outworking of what the Lord has taught here in Matthew 22. Let's look carefully at Matthew 22, at verse 37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God (or as it is in the Hebrew scripture, Yahweh thy Elohim), with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind'. Now, if we do that, what's left? The answer is nothing. If you've given it all to God, what's left? NOTHING! Certainly nothing for self. Now wait a minute, that raises a problem, because what about verse 39? The second is like unto it, and this is what the Lord is dealing with now, in John 15 verse 17, 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. But notice the difference between the two commandments. The first commandment requires all our heart, all our soul and all our mind. We don't find the word 'all' in the second commandment, 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. What does it mean? Well, it doesn't mean that the second commandment is unimportant, because it is the second greatest of all commandments. Why doesn't the Lord include 'all' there? Well, because He can't. You can't give it all to God and then all to your neighbour as well, and that leaves only one explanation for verse 39. The second is like unto it, 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', you see what it means? It means verse 39, 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' must come out of the fulfillment of verse 37. If we are going to give our 'all' to God, then what we give to our neighbour is part of what we give to God. GOD COMES FIRST and our loyalty to God, our love for God, our sacrifice for God, is all, so therefore, if our love for our brethren and sisters does not come upon that basis, then it is a mere fleshly relationship. But, if out of giving all our love, all our heart and all our mind, all our might, all our endeavours to God, out of that we will love our neighbour as our self, especially our brother and sister in Christ, then it is out of our love for God. And that helps us to balance things in the right way, and that is what the Lord is saying here. And on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets; everything depends upon our relationships with God and upon our relationships with one another. Perhaps this is what caused John to remember again and to say in his first epistle chapter 4 and verse 20 and 21 that, 'If a

man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar', you see how beautiful, absolutely beautiful, that comment of John hangs upon Matthew 22 and verses 37 and 38 and 39. If a man say I love God as outlined in Matthew 22, 'yes, I love God with all my heart, all my mind, all my soul, all my might and endeavour, I give to God yet he hates his brother, John says he is a liar, because he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also'.

Do you see how beautifully this all comes together and here it is in John chapter 15 and in verse 17. To love one another is to love God, if it is done upon the basis of the principles of God's divine revelation to us, so God has given us the example and the inducement to 'love' in a godly way, by freely giving His own Son's life, that we might live. And the example and the inducement is continued in what the Son did for the Father, and what the Son did for us. So, to love one another is to love in the same way as the Father and the Son have loved us. And that is the spirit of the denial of self in the service of others.

And so in verses 18 to 25, we come to a section where the Lord now turns from the question of the relationship between Himself and His disciples, to the relationship between the disciples and the world. And here we are going to learn, and we've seen that already He has laid a little foundation for this section, here we're going to learn that the disciple is prepared to sacrifice himself or herself to the point, where he will accept Christ's teaching, in these first 17 verses of John chapter 15, he will find that the world will react against his changed way of life. When he comes into the truth, knows the truth, understands the truth, and the truth becomes the motivating force and power in his life. The Lord is going to tell us, that we will find that the world will react against our changed way of life. You know why? He's already told us in chapter 14 and verse 17 where He speaks of 'the spirit of the truth' coming to help the disciples and then He adds 'whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not. The WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE, the world cannot receive the principles of the truth as embodied in the life, the ministry, the teaching and the sacrifice of the Son of God, so that the warm and intimate union between Christ and his disciples will mean that Christ's friends will find themselves 'in conflict with the world' because at chapter 14 verse 17 it says 'the world cannot receive the truth'. And if we ask 'why not'? it's simply because their minds don't work that way. And they don't want them to work that way. Remember how Paul says to the Corinthians, in the first of Corinthians chapter 2, 'that these things of the Spirit cannot be discerned by the natural man. They can only be spiritually discerned. How do we come into the truth? There's only one way that it can be done, and that is to subvert our natural minds even though sometimes we fight the truth, until finally we've got to surrender to it. We subvert our natural minds to the overriding influence of the spirit word, and we have to say 'well, that's right; I believe in God, I believe there is a Creator, and if God says that in His Word, it's got to be right and my thinking beforehand has all been wrong, so I've got to take my thinking, wrap it all up in a plastic bag and put it out to the garbage. And from now on, my thinking has got to be dominated by and generated by, the love and the power and the compassion and the enlightenment of the Word of God'. The world doesn't want to do that. There are those in the world

who do that, but let us remember, that when the Lord here speaks of the world, He's not speaking of individuals. So, here is not an outright condemnation of everyone that is not a Christadelphian; the Lord's not talking about that. He's talking about the world as a vicious, evil, ungodly system of the flesh. That's what we're dealing with here, and those who are part of it, act their part in it and want nothing else, so He tells them in verse 18, 'if the world hates you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.' So in addition to the flesh of every individual saint being in the arena in which the conflict against sin has got to be fought, the world also becomes an arena of conflict in which the struggle for supremacy, between truth and error, righteousness and wickedness, has got to be fought and it's got to be decided. So therefore, what the Lord is telling us in verse 18, is that the power of the truth at work in our lives, will separate men and women from the world. That doesn't mean that we all throw out our jobs and decide that we will go and live on government relief, it simply means that, intellectually and thinkingly and morally and spiritually, there becomes a gulf now between us and the world. We're different; we're different because Christ has made us different, so therefore, the truth must separate men and women from the world. And if it doesn't do that, it's not Christ's fault because He's done everything right; and it's not the Word's fault because we cannot fault the Word of God. If it doesn't work that way, it's because the Word is not working in us. Notice where He says in verse 19, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own', and the word rendered 'love' there, is the word 'phileo' because the world does not know the meaning of the word 'agape'. The world doesn't know that. Well, it's all right it's quite true that the word 'phileo' is used in our relationships with one another. We must 'phileo' love one another as well as 'agape' love one another. That is a commandment of Christ. We cannot disagree with that and we would not desire to do so. All we are saying is, that in the world's capacity for 'love', the system of the flesh which the Lord Jesus Christ's definition is 'the world', is a system which can never ever get beyond a purely emotional or affectionate form of love at the very best. The world does not know the meaning of 'phileo' love, and that's why in verse 19 the Lord switches from 'agape' to 'phileo'. The world has no conception of the sacrificial Christ-like 'agape' love, but it's got many, many ideas about how you can interpret 'phileo' love. Even by such immoral practices as 'living together', which use to be at one time called 'living in sin'. Never hear that expression now; do you know that in one of the better middle class suburbs in the city of Perth, a couple of years ago a survey was done by the real estate institute, and this is not a rag-tag area where you expect all sorts of evil things and wickedness in every form. Driving through the streets of the suburb you would think to yourself 'what a nice area this is; wouldn't it be nice to live there?' Well kept lawns and gardens, nice homes, nothing up in the million dollar class, oh! yes there are indeed, come to think about it, plenty of million dollar homes in that area, but just a nice upper middle class area, is the way the world would describe it. Do you know what the real estate institute found ? They found that more than 50% of the couples, living in that suburb were unmarried. More than 50% and yet you would class it, to look at it, as a respectable suburb. That's the world today; but the world would say, ah! that's 'phileo' love. You see, they love one another. Marriage? What's marriage? What does it matter? Don't have to marry; and if they 'fall out of love' and it doesn't work anymore, well, they can always end it all and they can go off somewhere else, and what does it matter? That's an interpretation that the world today

places upon 'phileo' love. And since we deny those ungodly things in our own lives, and we will oppose them if we are asked for our opinion regarding those things, in verse 18 the Lord tells us 'therefore, the world hateth you'. And let us remember that He's not talking about every individual man and woman, who doesn't know the truth. He's talking about the world as a collective organization or system.

And so here we learn that the Lord does not allow for disciples to be partly for Christ and partly for the world. Nor does He allow for the world to be partly for Christ and partly for the world. It is one or the other. His definitions are absolute. Let us see that, brethren and sisters, and let us recognize it, and let us side with our Lord, because we must make that choice. He has offered us His friendship; He has offered us our hope of eternal salvation. We must take great care that we do nothing to displease Him or to discredit His Name or that of His Father, and that we order our lives in such a way that He will rejoice together with us, not only now but in the wonder and the glory of the kingdom of God, knowing that we have chosen to separate from the world as a system and all that it offers, and to choose the friendship of the Son of God.