**It’s Thrive Time Podcast Teaching Notes**

**Teacher:** Minister Rachel Howard

**Series:** Determined and Intentional Thriving In Perilous Times

**Lesson** 4: Determined and Intentional in Loving Others as Christ Loves Us

**Text:** John 15:12-14

KJV: This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

NLT: This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

1. **The Progression (starting at the beginning of the chapter)**

* We are first commanded to **abide in Christ** - This is where it begins. We can’t go any farther if we aren’t first abiding. Every other command in this chapter cannot be followed without abiding because it all flows from the Vine (Jesus Christ)
* We are then commanded to **let His Words abide in us** - Without His Word in us, we don’t know who He is (His character, attributes), we don’t know His commands and we don’t know His promises. He is the Living Word. His Words should “abide” (be at home at, continuous, be vitally connected).
* We are then commanded to abide in **abide in His love** - We cannot love people with a Christ like love if we don’t abide in the One who IS love. To abide in His love means that He infuses into us His love which then allows us to demonstrate the attributes of His love (the character, the works, the attributes that we see in I Corinthians 13)and obey His commands.
* We then see that **we are to love one another “AS I HAVE LOVED YOU”** - it is the “as I have loved you” that takes it to another level. How does Christ love us? Let’s look at the context: The crucifixion of Christ is very near. He knew the suffering that horrific day would bestow upon Him. His focus could have been inwardly (and who could have blamed Him??). Instead He set aside His will, His feelings, in order to prepare His disciples for His death, giving them instructions and encouragement and as we see in John 17- He was praying for them and for us the night before His crucifixion. 2.  **How does Christ love us? Submission-Servant-Sacrifice**
* By dying to self for the benefit of others, and giving glory to His Father
* By serving them - He bent down to wash their feet! His reason for coming to earth was to serve mankind (part of that serving was dying!
* Matthew 2:28(NLT). For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many.)
* Christ spoke the truth in love
* Christ saw the people and had compassion- He saw them as sheep without a shepherd
* Christ set the example- He loved us like His Father loved Him and we continue that by loving others like Christ.

Christ Like Love Is Costly!

4. **Is This Command Given to Us Even Achievable?** **YES! YES! YES !**

There is no command that Jesus Christ gave to us that is not achievable!. When we are abiding then the “sap” that is flowing through Jesus Christ is fed into the branch (the believer) by the Vine (Jesus Christ). The power that flowed through Christ will flow through us by Holy Spirit making it possible for us to obey any command given to us by God.

5. God gets all the glory - Jesus Christ gave His Father all the glory for all that He did, and we must do that same. When we look at an orange tree and see and taste the sweet and juicy oranges, we do not find ourselves bragging on the branch, we brag on the tree and the one who watched over and cared for the tree in every way, causing that fruit to be so good and plentiful. We can take no glory for the fruit that comes forth in us. We are merely the branch fed by the Vine and cared for the Vinedresser.

5.  **He calls us friends** - The Promise (and the Prerequisite to the Promise). - What is the benefit we receive by our abiding? Jesus calls us His friend! IF!

There is a prerequisite for every promise. This one is our OBEDIENCE. We see Jesus tie love to obedience, we see Him tie true friendship with Him to our obedience to His commands.

**WARNING TO ALL OF US -** We can fake it for a while with people BUT NEVER with God. We can break off from the Vine and then on Sundays at church or a small group, or a ministry in which we serve, we can “tape” ourselves to the Vine and we may do it so well that from afar and at a glance, everybody thinks we are truly abiding. Will we be found out? We will be fruitless, having no fruit that truly remains. Yes!, by our fruit we are known. Most of the time, can’t judge hearts or motives. God looks at the heart. However, we are called to be fruit inspectors in this one verse- knowing people by their fruit.

Examination Time:

I encourage us to take this teaching and allow the Holy Spirit to examine us and correct any areas that may need to be corrected. Would Jesus call us His true friend?