**Remain in Me**

**The Word**

John 15:4-12

**The Big Idea**

In the midst of the challenges of this life, Jesus calls us into his joy and reminds us of our intimate connection with him. As we walk in his life-giving commands, we learn to live in his love and offer his love to one another.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Prior to Sunday’s message, if someone asked you, “How do I remain in Jesus?” what answer would most immediately come to mind? How did Sunday’s message change or supplement your understanding?

2. Jesus tells his disciples that his desire is for his joy to be in them and for their joy to be full because he knows many things would compete for their joy. What is competing for your joy of late? How might you experience Jesus’ joy more deeply in the midst of that?

3. Consider the idea from Sunday that Jesus’ commands are directions on how to find love. Are there any commands in Scripture that don’t feel to you like directions on how to find love? Are there ways to reframe those commands in terms of love?

4. On Sunday we were encouraged to “lead with the body and open the heart.” Can you think of a time when you chose to lead with the body even when your heart wasn’t there, and Jesus transformed your heart over time?

5. Are there ever times when it’s appropriate to disengage in an otherwise healthy practice because “my heart’s just not in it right now?”

**Sermon Outline**

I. The Why: Joy

A. Jesus tells them why he wants to share what he’s sharing with them: Joy

B. “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” He wants his joy to mature in us.

C. There are many things competing for our joy

1. Trouble: “Don’t let your hearts be trouble” I will come again

2. Loneliness: He tells them he is sending his Holy Spirit so they won’t feel like orphans

3. Persecution and not belonging: He tells them they are his friends

4. Uncertainty and anxiety: He tells them he has overcome the world and will give them his peace

5. He tells them he will send the Spirit to be even closer to them which will be the root of their joy

II. The Invitation: Remain in me, remain in my love

A. The word “remain” gives a picture of love that is a place that we can stay in

B. The word is particularly ironic, for Jesus has been talking about going away, but apparently this physical absence will make no difference.

III. The How: Remaining

There are actually two remainings in this passage

A. Remaining #1: His remaining in us

1. “I am the vine, you are the branches.”

2. This is perhaps the most organic image of our relationship to Christ for it is hard to know where a vine stops and a branch begins. They are not the same thing, but they also can’t be separated.

3. We have been grafted into the vine, Jesus.  Not stapled, not taped, not hammered, but grafted. This is an intimate image.

4. The New Testament writers beautifully depict this connection/union with Jesus through the Holy Spirit

a. 2 Corinthians 4:y treasures in jars of clay

b. Galatians 4:19: until Christ is formed in you

c. Romans 8:10: Christ is in you

B. Remaining #2: Our remaining in him through obedience

1. “If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love”

2.  This sounds conditional at first glance, so we need to keep in mind the first remaining.

3. What do you hear in the word command or obedience? Pressure? Guilt? Anticipation of failure?

4. For Jesus, the commands are directions on how to find love. They are not just arbitrary do’s and don’ts.  They are meant to complete our joy.

a. All the commands are summed up in the one command to love your neighbor as yourself

b. So the remaining in Christ’s love, is a remaining in this love with one another.  And the commands point the way.

IV. How do we obey faithfully?

We lead with the body and open the heart.

A. Lead with the body

We step out, we let a command turn us in a direction, and we start walking even when we’re not feeling the love or the joy. We let the command point us in the right direction and we just start walking/

B. Open the heart

1. As we lead with the body and move in the direction of the command, we open our heart to Jesus, talk to him about where we’re at, our complaints, frustration, etc. As we do his compassion begins to change our hearts.

2. We can pray the Ephesians 3 prayer

3. Consider the example of Corrie Ten Boom