

## “Promises of Jesus: I Will...Love You”

Scripture: John 14:15-21

Graphics: string around finger, promise, I will

Big Truth: Being a follower of Jesus is a response to the promises of Jesus, as offered and proven by the actions of Jesus. It’s not something we initiate, but something Jesus has already done for us. Jesus promised to love us. Jesus promised to make us fishers of men. Jesus promised to give us rest. Jesus promised to come back for us. Our response is to find what Jesus is doing and join him as we live out our salvation in Him.

Focus Phrase: Jesus promises to love me, so I will love.

### 1. Introduction

#### A. PRAY!

- B. Today, we’re starting a brand new sermon series called *I Will*. Over the next four weeks, we’ll hear four **promises** from **Jesus** to his followers - to US!
- C. We may be more familiar with the I AM statements of Jesus - “I AM the good shepherd...” “I AM the Way the Truth and the Life...” “I AM the Son of Man...” “I AM He that fulfills scripture.”
- D. But what about the **I WILL statements** of Jesus. Jesus gave His disciples around 30 I WILL statements recorded in the gospels. (Maybe this week you will find some time to begin to search for those.)
- E. We’ll look at four of them...and here they are: Jesus said,
  - i. “I Will...love you.”
  - ii. “I Will...make you fishers of men.”
  - iii. “I Will...give you rest.”
  - iv. “I Will...come back for you.”
- F. “I WILL” is a promise. When you and I say, “I will...,” what we mean is that we’re making a promise to DO something...usually for someone else.
- G. Have you ever had someone - or have you ever - made a promise and not followed through? It may’ve been big or small, but when a promise gets broken, we get angry or disappointed. Or we disappoint others. We feel betrayed. It breaks trust.
- H. That’s because **promises have power!**
- I. But what IS a promise?
  - i. Promises aren’t just meaningless words on a page or empty words that come out of our mouths.
  - ii. A promise is a commitment that is meant to be taken seriously.

- iii. Promises are hard work. They may cause us to have to rearrange our schedules or say no to something else in order to fulfill those promises.
  - iv. When we say, ‘I will...’ and then follow through, we’re saying that the other person is of **value**...that we care about them.
  - v. One example of this is when a man and a woman stand before God and a group of people and say, ‘I will have you to be my husband or wife, to live together in holy marriage; to love, comfort, honor and keep him/her, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, be faithful as long as you both shall live?’
- J. ‘I WILL’ is a powerful vow to be carried out despite the challenges.
  - K. Jesus’ I WILL statements to us are powerful, rock-solid promises that have never failed...and will never fail.
  - L. We’re using a background of mountains for this series because Jesus’ promises are like mountains...they endure every age...they last and last and orient us to the faithfulness of God.
  - M. Psalm 119:50 says, ‘This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life.’
  - N. 18th century theologian Isaac Watts said, ‘I believe the promises of God enough to venture an eternity on them.’
  - O. But do we truly understand the promises of Jesus...so much so that we’re willing to stake our entire lives on them?
  - P. C.S. Lewis wasn’t sure. He wrote this: ‘If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.’ (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (HarperOne, 1949, 1976), 4-5).
  - Q. Let’s spend time over the next four weeks not only hearing the promises of Jesus, but allowing them to truly awaken us to the life of Jesus...the life that we’re called to live and lead others into.
  - R. The first promises is from John 14:21, when Jesus said, ‘They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and **I will love them** and reveal myself to them.’
  - S. Jesus said, ‘I will love you.’
  - T. Here’s where we’re heading: *Jesus promised to love me, so I will love.*
  - U. Let’s open our bibles and go back to verse 15 of John 14...

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ John 14:15

- i. Let's stop there and remember that these words from Jesus came during the last week of His life...as He was eating the Last Supper with the disciples. He's washed their feet and now He's taking time to give them critical words about the future.
- ii. Jesus said multiple times that He was going away. He told them that He would be arrested, killed, and raised from the dead.
- iii. In John 14:15, Jesus gave the disciples the first aspect of His love for them. Remember that in verse 21, He will say, "I will love you..." This is first WAY Jesus shows His love: that he has **given them instructions** about what He expects from them now and in the future.
- iv. How is THAT loving? Usually when someone tells me where to go and what to do, I don't feel super-loved.
- v. But, we can all agree that if we're in relationship with someone, one aspect of love is that we **know what the other expects**. Usually, in a marriage or friendship, that doesn't come in the form of commands, but the process of communication - needs, wants, and even likes and wishes are important to meeting those needs.
- vi. For Jesus - who is LORD and SAVIOR - the communication of expectations comes in the form of His **words**. Jesus' words are life to the disciples. Jesus' commands throughout the gospels are what birthed, built, grew, and sustains His church.
- vii. When Jesus said, "I will love you"...it starts with Him giving us His words and actions so that we will know what to DO. **It's the LOVE of expectations and example.**
- viii. Jesus expected the disciples to love Him by obeying His commands.
- ix. Let's keep going in verse 16...

### B. READ John 14:16-17

- i. So, the second aspect of the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to love his followers is the **love of abiding presence**.
- ii. After Jesus left, we know, from the gospel accounts of Jesus' appearance to the disciples, that He gave them the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In just a few chapters, in John 20:22, the resurrected Jesus appeared to the disciples behind locked doors. "When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."
- iii. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was then unleashed on the whole church at Pentecost!

- iv. As Jesus was expressing His love for His followers, He knew that love would be most importantly shown by His presence. And since He would not be physically with them as a human any longer, the presence of the Holy Spirit OF JESUS would be His way of loving them.
- v. There is such a thing in ministry and care for others called **the ministry of presence**. It's a simple concept, really. When someone is in need or hurting, you can simply **be present** with them - sitting by a bedside or nearby. You don't need to be doing anything - or even talking. Simply BE present. That shows incredible love.
- vi. Jesus KNEW that His presence in the form of the Holy Spirit would be a powerful promise of His love for them.
- vii. Let's look at the last couple verses...verse 18...

### C. READ John 14:18-21

- i. In the immediate context of the Last Supper, Jesus told the disciples that He would appear to them, as a group, after the Resurrection. And He DID! Right through those locked doors when they were all together!
- ii. This is the **love of belonging**.
- iii. We each have a desire within us to belong...to belong in our families, our churches, our school or workplace. We have a desire to be known and to know. To be part of a group with a purpose.
- iv. The way Jesus put it is that we don't want to be orphans - out there on our own...and so He will come to us.
- v. Jesus said they would know that He was in the Father and they would be in Jesus and Jesus in them. He said they would be loved by the Father and by Him...and that they would keep His commands to love Jesus in that way.
- vi. We all want to be IN on it, whatever 'IT' is. The disciples were IN ON IT ALL - the truth about Jesus, the teachings of Jesus, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the commandments and building of the church!
- vii. Jesus LOVED them by inviting them to belong to the greatest movement of God for all time!

### 3. Application

- A. And guess what? God is inviting YOU to be loved IN THE SAME WAYS!
  - i. To belong to the greatest movement of God throughout all time!
  - ii. To give you His presence with the Holy Spirit IN YOU!
  - iii. And to give you His words and commands so that you know what to do for Him and in the world!

**iv. All three ways the Jesus prove His love for you.**

- B. Look, the Way of Jesus is not unknowable! The LOVE of Jesus is not all mystery. It may be mysterious, but you CAN KNOW the love of Jesus!
- C. In fact, God doesn't want any of this to be some secret that we can't know. If that's the case, then the responsibility to respond to the love of Jesus is on you and me. And we know how THAT usually works out...
- D. When Jesus speaks the words, "I love you..." you and I, honestly, are not always sure what that means. We may have a concept of love, based on our earthly relationships, but Jesus wants to awaken you to the reality of His love... a divine love that requires a powerful shift in your life... from where you are now, to something more powerful and transforming.
- E. In order to activate the love of Jesus in your life, follow the John 14 plan that we laid out:
  - i. First, **Know the commands of Jesus.**
    - a. I think at one point I preached a sermon that listed out the 70+ commands of Jesus. Know them. Know his words - what he said and what the Father said about the Son.
    - b. To do that, it takes time in the Word. Anything worth doing is worth the time it takes. Remember that promises are hard work.
    - c. It's more than just coming here on Sunday mornings and receiving the word from the Spirit through preaching and teaching.
    - d. It's spending time in the Word in order to find the words and then put them into practice in your life. Jesus is very clear about that... "...keep (obey) my commands."
  - ii. Second, **Be present with Jesus.**
    - a. Let the Spirit fill you with the reality that it's not just you living your life, but the Holy Spirit IN you.
    - b. Jesus is IN you. Let that sink in! He is with you and around you, yes. But the Spirit in you is the very Spirit of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior of the World. King of Kings and Lord of Lord. The Alpha and Omega - the beginning and the end.
    - c. He is **present in you**, so be present with Him in the world.
    - d. There's no other way to do that than to allow Jesus to carry out his ministry of loving you and others THROUGH YOU.
    - e. It's not you doing the work of Jesus... it's Jesus doing HIS work through you and in you. Pray in Jesus' name. Heal in Jesus' name. Speak in Jesus' name. LOVE in Jesus' name.

**iii. And, *Belong to the Jesus movement.***

- a. You can belong to lots of things but the one that will last forever is the one that has Jesus' name on it. The reason I know that is because the things of God are the only (the ONLY) things that last for eternity. Nothing else in all the universe is everlasting but the things of God.
- b. This is your opportunity to **belong**. Forever. To never be left out or excluded. This promise Jesus gives you to be loved is rock solid.
- c. Now, belonging takes a commitment. It takes vows - membership vows, baptism vows, leadership vows, wedding vows. Vows to follow Jesus for life.
- d. Our working definition of a disciple is, "A follower of Jesus Christ for life." To belong and to invite others to belong.
- e. To belong means you are present. If you remove a burning log from a campfire, the log gets cold and the fire goes out. A follower of Jesus who has removed himself or herself from fellow believers in the church will soon grow spiritually cold.
- f. To belong and be present is what keeps the fire of faith burning brightly. It's never too late to press into all the Jesus is up to in the church and in your life.

**iv. *Jesus promises to love me, so I will love.***

- F. There's an old quote that goes something like this: "The more surely you know yourself loved by Jesus, the more you will be compelled to love others."

**4. Conclusion**

- A. Jesus' promises to love us. That promise is like the mountains that rise above the plains of our lives, reminding us that WE ARE LOVED! YOU are loved.
- B. This week, follow Jesus' commands, be present with Jesus, and belong to what Jesus is doing and not what the world is trying to convince you to do.
- C. Say, "I will...love." Love so deeply that you're willing to sacrifice like your Savior.
- D. Jesus loves you. Now that you know, go and do likewise.
- E. **Let's pray.**