

John 14:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Analysis

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. Jesus presents a sobering inverse of the previous verse's promise: those who claim faith but do not obey demonstrate that their love is superficial or absent. The Greek *ho mē agapōn* (οὐ μὴ ἀγαπῶν, "he that loveth not") indicates sustained rejection, not temporary failure. The present tense *ou tērei* (οὐ τηρεῖ, "keepeth not") describes ongoing, habitual disobedience as the pattern of life.

"My sayings" (*tous logous mou*) refers to all of Christ's teaching, not merely isolated commands. The connection between love and obedience is inseparable in Jesus' theology—genuine love for Christ necessarily produces obedience, while persistent disobedience reveals the absence of genuine love (1 John 2:3-6). This is not legalism but the natural fruit of authentic relationship with Christ.

The second clause reinforces Christ's unity with the Father. "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's" emphasizes that Jesus' teaching carries divine authority—to reject His words is to reject God Himself. The participle *tou pemptos* (τοῦ πέμψαντος, "which sent") reminds readers of Jesus' mission and authority. This passage demolishes any attempt to separate Jesus' ethical teaching from His divine person, or to claim love for God while rejecting Christ's commands. Obedience to Christ is obedience to the Father; disobedience reveals hearts that love neither.

Historical Context

This verse appears in the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17), Jesus' final extended teaching before His crucifixion. The immediate context includes the Last Supper, Judas's departure to betray Jesus, and Christ's preparation of the remaining disciples for His departure. The discourse addresses their confusion and grief with promises of the Holy Spirit, assurances of His continuing presence, and instructions for faithful living.

The concept that love for God produces obedience was deeply rooted in Jewish theology (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 10:12-13). Jesus' claim that His words are the Father's words echoed His consistent testimony throughout John's Gospel to His divine origin and authority (John 5:19-30; 7:16-18; 8:28; 12:49-50). In first-century Judaism, such claims were either blasphemous or represented divine revelation—there was no middle ground.

The early church faced challenges from those who claimed to follow Jesus while rejecting His moral teaching or apostolic authority. This verse provided biblical warrant for church discipline and discernment regarding genuine versus false profession. The Johannine epistles (1, 2, 3 John) extensively develop this theme that obedience evidences genuine faith and love. Throughout church history, this passage has guarded against antinomianism (rejecting moral law) while also opposing legalism (obeying without love).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does persistent disobedience in a particular area of life challenge the genuineness of our profession of love for Christ?
2. What is the relationship between loving Jesus and obeying His teachings, and how does this protect against both legalism and license?
3. In what ways does recognizing Christ's words as the Father's words increase the urgency and importance of obedience?
4. How can we distinguish between temporary failures in obedience (which all believers experience) and the pattern of disobedience Jesus describes here?
5. What practical steps can we take to align our lives more fully with Christ's teachings in areas where we have been complacent or disobedient?

Interlinear Text

τοῦ μὴ ἀγαπῶν με τοῦ λόγος μου οὐκ τηρεῖ· καὶ¹
which **not** **He that loveth** **me** **which** **sayings** **my** **not** **keepeth** **and**
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τοῦ λόγος ὅν ἀκούετε οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸς ἀλλὰ τοῦ
which **sayings** **which** **ye hear** **not** **is** **mine** **but** **which**
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πέμψαντός με πατρός
sent **me** **the Father's**
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Additional Cross-References

John 7:16 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

John 14:10 (Word): Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

John 8:42 (Love): Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 5:19 (Parallel theme): Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 3:34 (Word): For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

John 14:15 (Love): If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 5:38 (Word): And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

John 8:26 (Parallel theme): I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

John 8:38 (Parallel theme): I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.