



**SPIRIT** IN THE DESERT

### **John 14:15-21**

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 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.”

*Grace and peace to you from the mystery in whom we live and move and have our being*

One day I was having lunch with my friend Randy who was a worship leader for a non-denominational church. We would meet once a week at Las Glorias, eat red chili burros and talk openly about God and all of life’s absurdities.

One day I told Randy there is a bible scripture that really bothers me. It’s where John quotes Jesus saying, “if you love me you’ll keep my commandments.” Randy listened and responded, “Well it would bother me too if I quoted it the way you just did!” I asked, “how else can it be read.” Randy said, “When you quote it, it sounds like a threat. As if Jesus were wagging his finger at the disciples.” I asked, “Ok then, say the words the way you hear them.” He answered with a coy inflection that sounded reassuring, “If you love me...you’ll keep my commandments!”

When thinking back on this talk with Randy, the passage suddenly fit in with the rest of John 14.

“You will know that I am in the father, and you in me, and I in you.

“If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.”

“I am in the father and you in me and I you.”

“He (Spirit) abides in you.”

Why didn’t I see this? Perhaps because my old God who was always waiting for me to get it together, still haunted me. This disappointment in my own humanity seemed to create distance between me and God. I know now that distance was merely an illusion.

One small voice inflection by Randy changed the entire meaning of this passage. It was not a warning but a reassurance that if I am in a state of love, I will find myself doing the right thing!

As a side note if you look at the many translations of this passage you will see some say, "If you love me, keep my commandments" and others say, "If you love me, you'll keep my commandments." A subtle but important difference in delivery. But the key word here is love.

It's God's divine physics. When love enters space previously occupied by hate, self-doubt, resentment, self-loathing, shame, selfishness, greed etc. We will find ourselves keeping the commandments Jesus gave us. To love God and love our neighbor.

Verse 20 says, "On that day you will know..." While we wait for *that day*, we don't realize it's right under our nose. On that day when I awaken from my spiritual slumber, I can experience this radical union.

This behavior is a response to inward love. To a grasping of our oneness with God and the love of Christ. When we are abiding in God and God in us, we will find ourselves sinning less!" Why? Because of love. Love is the mortar between the bricks. It keeps it all together. It connects us with God and with each other. If we allow love to have its way, we can do nothing else but love.

If this is not true than we will no longer operate within God's grace, but in a place of obedience alone. The God of separation does not exist but is a god that somehow got created in our mind and must be fired to make space for the God of love and connection.

There is nothing punitive about John chapter 14. It is a reassurance that the Spirit is in us and that we are one with God and with each other, as expressed by our brother Jesus. He says, "On that day... you will realize." This passage is part of Jesus's farewell to his disciples, spoken with powerful and loving assurance.

Richard Rohr says it this way: "We don't have to discover or prove it; we only have to retrieve what has been rediscovered—and enjoyed again and again—by those who desire, seek God, and love. When we have 'discovered' it, we become like Jacob 'when he awoke from his sleep' and shouted, 'You were here all the time, and I never knew it!' (Genesis 28:16)."

This divine entanglement is so deeply embedded in ultimate truth that even science has had its own "On that day..." experience. It has been observed in what is called quantum entanglement—a relationship between particles in which, even across great distances, the connection remains.

Physicists describe this relationship between particles that defies classical Physics as quantum entanglement. Einstein called it, "spooky action from a distance." It is a mystery to physicists much like divine entanglement Jesus describes is a mystery to religion. I'm not going to get into

the science of it because I'll just embarrass myself, but this is one definition of quantum entanglement.

“Quantum entanglement is a quantum mechanics phenomenon where particles become interlinked, sharing a single, unified quantum state regardless of distance.”

On that day...we will realize there is no distance. The disciples will not have their friend and mentor Jesus in the flesh any longer. But “On that day” they will realize the Spirit breaks through to our spirit that has known deeply and mingles till our restless soul is quieted.

When our egos get out of the way of this phenomenal union, when our faith moves from head to heart, we will see that there is a divine entanglement that was always there.

We can begin to see like the saints and mystics. Like quantum entanglement defying classical physics, so does divine entanglement, Oneness, defy religion. It is a mystery that is experienced.

Identical twins often exhibit shared personalities, simultaneous actions, and even shared pain or health conditions, even when separated.

Attachment bonding causes nervous systems to sync, allowing emotional states or distress to be felt across miles, transcending proximity.

Deeply connected couples often report shared dreams or sensing each other's emotional turmoil.

Even our spontaneously thinking of someone who then calls or messages.

It is all about love as connection.

“I'd like to close with a portion of a letter written by the late Dr. David Daniels, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University. It is entitled, *‘What Really Matters: If This Were My Last Day.’*”

If this were my last day, my only day, then I'd say: there is only love. All there ever was, and will be, is love. Brilliance comes from the development of this inner-knowing. And by love, I mean, the connection of us humans in body, mind, and heart – souls together in harmony with a gratitude for what is. When love is present, everything radiates and beauty abounds. We are not captured and held hostage to our personality structure, to our opinions or our judging mind. We know that the fabric of the universe is a seamless flow until we cut into it, creating cause and effect, conflict and damage. When love is present, no one person is more or less than any other sentient being. We understand the oneness of all. Possibility abounds in love, which, yes, starts with a separate self that can pursue wholeness and therein union with others and the universe. Nothing destroys the essence of love. – Dr David Daniels

Amen