

Christ's Friendship: Its Evidence

Andrew Murray:

Ye Are My Friends, if Ye Do the Things Which I Command You—John 15.14

Our Lord has said what He gave as proof of His friendship: He gave His life for us. He now tells us what our part is to be—to do the things which He commands. He gave His life to secure a place for His love in our hearts to rule us; the response His love calls us to, and empowers us for, is that we do what He commands us. As we know the dying love, we shall joyfully obey its commands. As we obey the commands, we shall know the love more fully. Christ had already said: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.” He counts it needful to repeat the truth again: the one proof of our faith in His love, the one way to abide in it, the one mark of being true branches is—to do the things which He commands us. He began with absolute surrender of His life for us. He can ask nothing less from us. This alone is a life in His friendship.

This truth, of the imperative necessity of obedience, doing all that Christ commands us, has not the place in our Christian teaching and living that Christ meant it to have. We have given a far higher place to privilege than to duty. We have not considered implicit obedience as a condition of true discipleship. The secret thought that it is impossible to do the things He commands us, and that therefore it cannot be expected of us, and a subtle and unconscious feeling that sinning is a necessity have frequently robbed both precepts and promises of their power. The whole relation to Christ has become clouded and lowered, the waiting on His teaching, the power to hear and obey His voice, and through obedience to enjoy His love and friendship, have been enfeebled by the terrible mistake. Do let us try to return to the true position, take Christ’s words as most literally true, and make nothing less the law of our life: “Ye are my friends, if ye do the things that I command you.” Surely our Lord asks nothing less than that we heartily and truthfully say: “Yea, Lord, what Thou dost command, that will I do.”

These commands are to be done as a proof of friendship. The power to do them rests entirely in the personal relationship to Jesus. For a friend I could do what I would not for another. The friendship of Jesus is so heavenly and wonderful, it comes to us so as the power of a divine love entering in and taking possession, the unbroken fellowship with Himself is so essential to it, that it implies and imparts a joy and a love which make the obedience a delight. The liberty to claim the friendship of Jesus, the power to enjoy it, the grace to prove it in all its blessedness—all come as we do the things He commands us.

Is not the one thing needful for us that we ask our Lord to reveal Himself to us in the dying love in which He proved Himself our friend, and then listen as He says to us: “Ye are My friends.” As we see what our Friend has done for us, and what an unspeakable blessedness it is to have Him call us friends, the doing His commands will become the natural fruit of our life in His love. We shall not fear to say: “Yea, Lord, we are Thy friends, and do what Thou dost command us.”

If ye do. Yes, it is in doing that we are blessed, that we abide in His love, that we enjoy His friendship. “If ye do what I command you!” O my Lord, let Thy holy friendship lead me into the love of all Thy commands, and let the doing of Thy commands lead me ever deeper into Thy friendship.