

For “Red Letter” Jesus Disciples: A Guide to the Blessed Path to God

Andrii Zvorygin yN-PH2196 mtH2a1 & GPT4
attender of Glad Tidings Fellowship, Tara, ON

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“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28), He set forth a vision of a faith that transcends barriers, welcoming everyone into the embrace of divine love. He emphasized that our faith should be manifested in our actions and love for one another: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). Furthermore, He challenged us with the ultimate spiritual goal: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). As followers of Christ, our journey is about consistently striving to live by the principles and values Jesus exemplified, pushing towards that divine standard of perfection.

3 Trusting in God’s Provision and Taking Active Faith:

Jesus wisely teaches, “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Mt 6:26). He adds, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt 6:33). This doesn’t imply passive reliance; instead, it means actively pursuing God’s purpose and working in alignment with His will. Just as the birds actively seek their daily sustenance, we too are called to actively serve, learn, integrate, and spread His teachings. Jesus emphasizes, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you” (Mt 7:7). By taking such active steps, we align ourselves with God’s will. Moreover, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me... and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt 11:29). Engaging in purposeful spiritual actions under Jesus’ guidance assures us of God’s provision and lightens our earthly challenges.

1 Disclaimer:

This leaflet is designed for your spiritual growth, to help guide you on the blessed path to the right hand of God. On this journey, we draw inspiration from Jesus’ declaration, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). Our quest is enriched by the teachings and parables of Christ, the ultimate beacon of divine wisdom.

2 Introduction:

Jesus began His ministry with a profound and urgent call to transformation: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). This was not merely an invitation for a momentary change, but a call for a lifelong commitment to walk in the path He laid out. It’s in Jesus’s teachings and actions that we find the embodiment of genuine love, kindness, and selflessness. As He said,

4 Recognizing the Divine Within and Through Us:

Across the vast expanse of creation, Jesus’ teachings enlighten us to perceive the breath of God within ourselves and in everyone we encounter. As Jesus stated, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21), reminding us of our innate connection to the divine. He also exemplified the deep humility and reliance on God by saying, “For I did not

speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken" (John 12:49) and "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Every heartbeat, every sigh, mirrors God's ever-present spirit, bringing His words to life: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). This light isn't just external—it shines from within, a testament to His constant presence in our lives. As Jesus mentioned, "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (John 7:38). By allowing God's spirit to work through us, we become channels of His grace and truth.

Our journey through life is not just an external pilgrimage but an inner exploration, guided by Jesus' teachings: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). To recognize the divine within is to truly see God in every person and in every situation, serving as conduits of His boundless love. Through our humble submission and recognition of the divine working within us, we mirror the example set by Jesus, allowing God's love and wisdom to flow through us seamlessly.

5 Service, Respect, and Love: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus

Jesus, in His teachings, emphasizes the importance of humble service and unconditional love. He says, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26). This call to service is a reminder of the higher path to which we are beckoned — a path of selflessness, kindness, and humility.

Recognizing the divine within others begins with respecting their inherent dignity and freedom. Jesus Himself taught, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). This golden rule emphasizes fairness, equity, and mutual respect in all our interactions.

The bond of marriage is sacred, a reflection of divine union. As Jesus declared, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5).

This speaks to the profound connection and unity that spouses share in their journey together.

Family ties are essential in Jesus' teachings. He reiterated the importance of honoring our parents and cherishing familial relationships, saying, "Honor your father and mother" (Matthew 15:4). Yet, His teachings extend this love and respect even beyond familial bounds, suggesting a universal brotherhood.

Furthermore, neighbors, strangers, and even adversaries are all worthy of love and kindness. Jesus taught, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) and further expanded the boundaries of love by instructing, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Our compassion extends to all of God's creation. As Jesus beautifully articulated, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care" (Matthew 10:29). In recognizing the divine breath within every being and every facet of nature, we reaffirm our commitment to care for, cherish, and steward all that God has entrusted to us.

6 Embracing Forgiveness, Love, and Acceptance in Light of Jesus' Teachings:

The Nature of Divine Love: Jesus frequently taught about the profound love of the Father and our duty to embody it. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love," (John 15:9). One of the most poignant depictions of the type of love Jesus sought is revealed in His dialogue with Peter after His resurrection. Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him, using the term "agape" for love—a selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. Peter, in his responses, used the term "phileo" for love—a brotherly, affectionate love. The exchange underscores the depth and nature of the divine love Jesus desires of us. Agape love is not just an emotion; it is an act of the will. It involves choosing to love even when it's challenging, putting others' needs above our own, and loving without expecting anything in return. This is the love with which the Father loves the Son and with which Jesus loves us. He invites us to immerse ourselves in this agape love, making it the foundation of all our relationships and interactions.

Seeking Forgiveness: Jesus' sacrifice on the cross epitomizes the profound depths of forgiveness. He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for

they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34). This call to forgiveness, even in moments of agony, serves as a powerful reminder of our duty to forgive our brothers and sisters.

Duty of Kindness: Christ emphasized the value of kindness and love above all. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34). His words inspire us to display kindness even in the face of adversity.

Love as a Divine Commandment: Jesus summarized the essence of the law with love. He said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-39). These words remind us of the foundational nature of love in our spiritual journey.

The Call to Forgive: The act of forgiveness was central in Jesus’ teachings. He advised, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Matthew 6:14). By embracing the spirit of forgiveness, we mirror God’s mercy and draw closer to His divine presence.

As we progress in our journey, we are reminded of Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25. He speaks of the time when the Son of Man will come in His glory and separate people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Those on His right, the “sheep,” will inherit the kingdom prepared for them. For as He declared, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40). This emphasizes the gravity of seeing and serving Christ in others, and it reinforces our commitment to love, acceptance, and forgiveness. By embodying these teachings, we move closer to a place at the right hand of God and to the heart of Christian faith.

7 Embracing the Wisdom of Jesus: Navigating Through Divine Love and Understanding

The Gospel Above All: The teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels stand paramount. He declared, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Mt 24:35). All interpretations and teachings must always be in harmony with Jesus’s words. Jesus also warned us to be mindful of our words, as they are a reflection of our inner selves: “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” (Lk 6:45). Therefore, we must carefully consider

whether our words and actions align with the heart of Jesus’ message. In doing so, we ensure that our lives reflect the truth and love that He embodied.

Continuous Search for Wisdom: Jesus, emphasizing personal connection with the scriptures, mentioned, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me.” (John 5:39). Every believer is encouraged to continuously immerse themselves in the teachings of Jesus.

Apostles and Disciples: Jesus emphasized the importance of his teachings being spread, instructing, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20, YLT). Furthermore, He imparted wisdom regarding respecting individual free will and choices: “And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet,” (Matthew 10:14, YLT). This underscores the value of direct teachings from Jesus, the role of his immediate disciples, and the need to respect individual choice in accepting the Gospel.

Avoid Blind Allegiance: Jesus frequently highlighted the importance of genuine faith and relationship with God over mere religious rituals or human-made traditions. He stated, “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” (Mark 7:8). He also cautioned about those who might outwardly appear devout but lack a genuine connection: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” (Matthew 7:21-23). Here, Jesus warns about the dangers of lip service and the perils of becoming “workers of lawlessness.” Genuine faith goes beyond mere words and actions; it involves a sincere heart and a true relationship with God. He also encouraged active seeking and said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7). While church teachings and traditions provide guidance, individual spiritual exploration and a genuine connection with the Divine are essential.

Discerning the Spirits: Jesus issued stark warnings against deceitful prophets, declaring, “But, take heed of the false prophets, who come unto you in sheep’s clothing, and inwardly are ravening wolves,” (Matthew 7:15, YLT). He as-

sured His followers of the indispensable guidance of the Holy Spirit, stating, "and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and remind you of all things that I said to you," (John 14:26, YLT) and "and when the Comforter may come, whom I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth, who from the Father doth come forth, he will testify of me;" (John 15:26, YLT). The gravity of staying connected to this Spirit of Truth is emphasized in Jesus's words: "Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in the coming one," (Matthew 12:32, YLT). In discerning spirits, one must not only test their alignment with Jesus's teachings but also that they come from God and testify of Christ. True spirits from God will unequivocally affirm and testify of Jesus Christ's teachings and divinity. This process of spiritual discernment, deeply grounded in the teachings of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is fundamental in navigating our journey in love, truth, and kindness.

Role of Church Leaders: Church leaders, guided by the Holy Spirit, provide direction and shepherd their congregations. Their teachings, deeply rooted in the Gospels, serve as illuminating guides for the faithful. Emulating Jesus's own example, leaders are reminded that true greatness lies in service and humility. Jesus proclaimed, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve," (Matthew 20:28, YLT) and taught about the significance of humility, saying, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:12, YLT). Additionally, Jesus emphasized the reversal of worldly hierarchies: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant," (Matthew 20:26, YLT) and, "Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first." (Matthew 19:30, YLT). While church leaders play a significant role, their teachings and actions should consistently point believers directly to Christ, underscoring the importance of a direct relationship with Jesus and embodying His teachings of humility and service.

Unity in Christ: Jesus prayed for the unity of his followers, saying, "That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." (John 17:21). Despite varied interpretations across denominations, the central teachings of Jesus are a uniting force for all believers.

In conclusion, the teachings of Jesus, abundant in divine love and wisdom, guide believers on a path illuminated by God's eternal love. Grounding oneself in the Gospel and always seeking to align with Jesus's teachings allows believers to fully embrace the essence of Christian

faith.

8 Conclusion: Embracing Agape Love and Grace in Anticipation of the Kingdom of Heaven

Awareness of Mortality: Jesus reminded us of the temporary nature of our earthly existence when He said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26, YLT). Each passing day brings us closer to our appointed time, when we shall meet our Savior and witness the Kingdom of God in its full glory.

Continuous Preparation: The essence of wisdom lies in those who carry the Kingdom of Heaven in their hearts and live its values every day. As Jesus taught, "Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming," (Matthew 25:13, YLT). Moreover, he warned of being misled about the coming of the Kingdom, saying, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you," (Luke 17:20-21, NKJV). This underscores the inner transformation and spiritual connection we must cultivate. This vigilance is not just about actions but the state of our heart — a heart saturated with grace, love, and compassion until our final breath.

Facing Our Personal Day of Reckoning: Through the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus emphasized the paramount importance of always being prepared. He illustrated that the wise virgins kept their lamps alight with sufficient oil, signifying their personal relationship and connection with God (Matthew 25:1-13). This oil, symbolic of God's grace and the streams of living water, cannot be borrowed or shared—it is a gift that each individual must seek and receive from God Himself. As we traverse life's journey, are we ensuring that our hearts remain illuminated with this divine oil? The critical query for each of us is whether, at this very moment, we are ready to step into God's embrace, with hearts brimming with agape love. Our ultimate aspiration is to hear Jesus's commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your lord," (Matthew 25:21, YLT).