

**John 14:23-29** <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. <sup>24</sup> "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. <sup>25</sup> " These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. <sup>28</sup> "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

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A teenager says, "I love you, Mom" and slips out the door. She leaves not to go to her friend's house where she has told her mother she is going but rather heads to the party which her parents have forbidden her to go.

A husband gives his wife a kiss and says, "I love you, hunny" as he leaves the house. But he is not truly headed back to work for a special meeting as he told his wife. Rather, he goes to his mistress's house.

A Christian says, "I love you, God" throughout the service on Sunday morning and then goes out of the door. He leaves not to go out and serve God and neighbor as they have promised, but rather go out to live their lives according to their will even in place of God's.

It has often been said that actions speak louder than words. And indeed in all of these cases, that is certainly the case. The words, "I love you, Mom" are squelched by the teenager's action of direct disobedience to her parents' wishes. The words "I love you, hunny" are quieted by the husband's adulterous actions. And yes the words of "I love you, God" spoken on Sunday are silenced by the Christian's failure to live the truths confessed on Sunday throughout the rest of the week.

Jesus says in our gospel lesson for today, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word." These are very simple yet condemning words when we examine our lives. It is easy to confess our love for God in words, but certainly much harder to show forth that confession in our own lives. But Jesus says very clearly that love for God should shine forth in our obedience to Him and His Word.

Even though this is the sixth Sunday of Easter, it is still the truths that we confessed Easter morning that bring us to understand why our love should be more than words. We are called to go back to Easter morning and realize again why Easter matters so much to right now in our lives. Indeed Easter is the assurance of our salvation that leads to heaven. But it also is our assurance that a new way of living is possible for us right now as we journey on our way towards heaven.

That assurance was delivered to each of you on the day of your baptism. Indeed, Paul tells us that on the day of your baptism, your old sinful self was drown in the waters of baptism. Your sins were forgiven. And your bondage to sin was destroyed. Jesus smashed the shackles of sin that were around you hands and feet with the stone that was rolled away from the tomb. In Baptism, He gave you His Holy Spirit. And now that you have His Holy Spirit, not only can you confess your love for God, but also live that same love for God. Your actions can amplify what you mouth speaks. This is the glorious freedom that Easter morning offers to us right now. Just as surely as we can say that Jesus is risen from the dead, we also through God's work in Baptism can proclaim and live a new risen life as well. God alone has given us the power for our faith to be more than words.

Unfortunately, however, we have not always allowed that power to take hold in our lives. Today we must to search our lives for evidence of sin that we might take it to our Lord Jesus for forgiveness. We must look for areas where our lives have not shone forth what our mouths have confessed. Have we confessed to love one another but then treated one another in ways that seem to contradict the words we have spoken? Have we confessed that we wish all would come to know our Lord through Baptism, and then failed to witness to anyone that that might happen as the Spirit works? Have we confessed to love God's Word and then refused to study it at church or in our homes during the week?

Indeed, at different times and in different ways, each of us has confessed to love God and yet have not followed His commands. So today we must again admit our sin to our Lord. But thankfully we confess our sin to a Jesus who not only said He loved us but to One who did something about it.

Oh, Jesus could have said He loved us and just sat in heaven while the world wasted away. But He did not. His love compelled Him to act. He left his rightful place in heaven to come and be with us. His love took

Him all the way to cross. Indeed, His love found perfect and total expression as He hung on that cross for our sins. He said, "I love you" with the scars on His feet and hands, with the hole in His side. And He said, "I love you" as He left His tomb empty tomb. His love indeed was more than words.

And today again, that forgiveness that He won by His actions on the cross He delivers to us. He forgives us for each time when our lips and our lives have not agreed with one another. He forgives us and restores us to our place as His forgiven, redeemed, and renewed people. He once again gives us His Spirit than our faith might be more than words.

A teenager says, "I love you, Mom" and slips out the door. She leaves not to attend a forbidden party but rather to plan a surprise party for her mom's birthday.

A husband gives his wife a kiss and says, "I love you, hunny" as he leaves the house. He sneaks out to plan a very special weekend to just the two of them.

A Christian says, "I love you God" throughout the service on Sunday morning and then goes out of the door. They leave with sins forgiven and spirit renewed. They leave to serve God each day in loving service to their neighbors.

It has often been said that actions speak louder than words. And indeed in all of these cases, that is certainly the case. The words, "I love you, Mom" are proved true by the teenager's special plans. The words, "I love you, hunny" are evidenced by the weekend the husband will plan. And yes, the words of love toward God spoken on Sunday are amplified by the faithful and obedient life of a Christians. For love is more than words. Our Jesus proved it, and we are blessed to live it. Amen.