

Love One Another Just As I Have Loved You

January 16, 2022

John 13:31-38 (ESV)

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³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

We are in this discipleship series called ‘*Preparing for the Cross*’ learning from Jesus’ time with his disciples. Two weeks ago we saw Jesus’ modeling humility and teaching his disciples.

Last Sunday, we saw Jesus was troubled and wounded in his spirit because of Judas. And at the dinner table at supper, Satan entered into Judas. And he left immediately in the night. Judas was consumed and possessed by the devil himself. He just could not stand the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The contrast between light and darkness is very palpable here. Jesus is the light. Satan is darkness and Judas became a child of darkness.

Today, we come to a portion of John’s Gospel where Jesus teaches his disciples to love another just as he loved them.

So, we continue this morning in the portion of Scripture after Judas leaves.

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

Notice, Jesus uses the word “now” as soon as Judas leaves. What does Jesus mean? Why does he say “now” he is glorified?

Well in John chapter 12, Jesus knew that this hour was going to come. This hour is the time when he would be betrayed and then falsely arrested, crucified and killed. There is nothing noble or honorable in the betrayal of an innocent man like Jesus. Here is what Jesus said earlier in John 12.

²⁷ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

So as hard as it was, as much he sensed this heavy burden about this hour, Jesus submitted to the Father’s will. Jesus knew all this suffering and rejection was eventually going to give glory to God. So, even in the betrayal of the God’s Son, God can turn the worst of circumstances into something that will bring God glory. Man meant for evil but God meant it for good.

There are times, like the times we are living in now with variant after variant coming at us. These are some hard and difficult days. But you see, the days of trouble, suffering or pain are not outside of God’s plan. There are included in God’s redemptive plan. Matter of fact suffering or hardship is promised for those who live for the sake of the Gospel. And those who trust in Christ, the suffering will not last forever. Glory will last forever. God is working out all things for your good and for his glory. And how are we to live while God is working all things?

And Jesus spent three and half with his disciples living with them, teaching them, modeling for them how to live in this world. And the time had come for Jesus to leave the world. Before Jesus took on humanity, before his incarnation as a human, Jesus was with the Father. He had come from God and was going back to God.

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Notice, Jesus uses the word children to address his disciples. This is the only time he uses this particular word before he dies. He uses a similar word for children after rises he from the dead. His disciples are all adult men. Why does Jesus address his disciples as children?

Jesus speaks tenderly to his disciples because he knows he will no longer be with them in person. But these disciples are now the children of God. Jesus also said that it requires child-like faith to enter the kingdom of God. These eleven disciples, like children had followed Jesus.

Now Jesus has to leave them, go to the cross, die, rise again and return to the Father. And Jesus knows they will start competing against each other and that would be fatal to the mission.

So Jesus teaches them how they ought to treat each other how they ought love each other. By extension this is really how we ought to live with each other. Not against each other.

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A new commandment I give you. What is new about this commandment? We know that the Law of God is summed up in two commandments – Love God and Love your neighbor.

The newness is that we begin with the inside first before we extend it to the outside world.

Lets look at the commandment that Jesus gives his disciples:

You love one another

Now this command is not very difficult to understand. At a very basic level, you know the love of a mother, a father, a grandmother, a grandfather, a sibling, a child, a friend.

And is this love that Jesus loved his disciples with? Yes it was more than this love.

To understand how you and I must love each other, we must first understand *how* Jesus loved.

No one ever loved like Jesus.

I have seven diagnostic questions to comprehend what God's love is not like and what it is like. Here they are:

Do you love only those who you think might have the capacity to love you back?

Do you love others expecting something in return?

Do you keep score of how many times you love and serve others?

Do you love only to seek attention, to be seen or be affirmed by others?

Do you place limits on how much you love?

*Do you resist or reject those who love you but disagree with you?
Do you have any inclination of hatred for those who persecute you?*

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then that is not how Jesus loved.
The love of Jesus is quite different. It is called 'agape' love.
What can we know by this agape love of Jesus?

Three observations:
The *nature* of Jesus' love:

Agape love is a deliberate action that gives up self-preference for the sake of others. Agape love is costly love, self-giving love it is the greatest love, it is the highest form of love, it is a supernatural love. There's an old song we used to sing when we were kids "there is no love like the like the love of Jesus boundless and pure". One of the famous passage in the Bible which is called the love passage, you see the nature of this love. It is patient.

The *extent* of Jesus' love:
Jesus loved his disciples to the very end. His love is complete love. The word used in John 13:1 is *telos*. Jesus did not hold back anything in loving his disciples. He gave his all. His love was not dependent on their understanding or their response. He loved his own to the very end.
It is a love that gives even when the recipient resists and rejects the giver of such love. It is a love that gives even when it is costly. The love of Jesus put no boundaries or limits even when the one receiving this love is utterly unworthy. Matter of fact no one is deserving of such love.

The *peculiar* love of Jesus:
Jesus' love is a discriminating love. What do I mean? Jesus says to his disciples "just as I have loved you". Jesus wasn't there to teach them without loving them. They felt Jesus' love very intimately in his service. Jesus called them, Jesus defended them, Jesus all his attention to to them. Jesus washed their feet. Now Jesus going to die for to redeem them from sin.
In one sense, the universal love of God is seen for all creation – God makes the rain to shine on the wicked and good, the unjust and the just, the poor and the rich.
But there this is a peculiar kind of love that once you have experienced, it will change your life forever. Ephesians 2:4 "*because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ*".
This is a love that is really understood by those who have only experienced it. This is love that goes beyond the best motherly love. Isaiah described this love for the rebellious Israel this way "*Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you*" Isaiah 49:15

I was reading an article about a dear lady in England who recently completed one hundred years. And she wrote about how the peculiar love of Jesus changed her life.
Hear her own words from the article

*"After the war, I married Geoff, whom I had first met when I worked as a telegraphist at the Head Post Office in Birmingham. I knew that he was a practising Anglican and I admired his values, but I did not fully understand or share his beliefs. In fact, my brothers and sisters were sceptical about the Christian faith and some of their scepticism had undoubtedly rubbed off on me.
In 1966, we moved from the North of England to South Wales. The years went by and I continued to be busy with our two children as well as becoming involved in community life, which included taking up the position of secretary to the local girl guides. I also cared for my father-in-law, who lived in our family home. When the children were teenagers, he had a severe stroke and it became a great challenge to look*

after him, despite the support I received from Geoff. For the first time in my life, I felt crushed by my circumstances and realised that I had exhausted my own resources.

During that period, an invitation came that would change my life forever. The Bible class which my daughter enjoyed so much held a special evening for mothers in the leader's home. In that meeting, the speaker, Mary, shared the amazing news of Jesus bearing all our burdens. ..It was not long before I began to attend church each week with my daughter's Bible class leader. I was stunned by the joyful singing and could not understand how the pastor knew so much about me. He seemed to be speaking directly to me, as if he had a personal file on my life!

After reading Basic Christianity by Rev. John Stott, a book which I later gave to my son, I finally understood that I could not win my way to Heaven by hard work or duty. Forgiveness of sins is a free gift that I gladly received and the love of God filled my heart and transformed my life".

And then she later writes about an experience she had.

"I remember on one occasion I was cycling through the peaceful seaside town of Penarth thinking about the nature of God. Suddenly, I experienced an overwhelming sense of God's personal love for me."

To this, I say "Amen" because I have experienced this extravagant love of God too. This is a love every born believer must experience.

This is the love of Jesus. The love that forgives the guiltiest of sinners.

Now our love does not redeem others from sin the way Jesus' love does but we ought to love one another just as Jesus did. And it is impossible to love like this unless you experience the love of Jesus yourself.

And this display of love for each other really becomes the witness of the church. If we are to be the light on the hill, a candle in the dark, a place of hope for those who don't this love of Jesus, Jesus tells his disciples in verse 35.

³⁵ *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Now, Peter gets very emotional when Jesus says that he is going away and that they cannot follow him.

³⁶ *Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward."* ³⁷ *Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."* ³⁸ *Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*

You see Peter was making a huge claim *not* knowing that he will fail miserably. He will fail in his love for Jesus. You and I must love like Jesus. And our love may fail. But the thing is Jesus will never fail you. His love never fails.

Two questions as I close.

Do you want to grow in love?

Jesus tells us Luke chapter 7 when a sinful woman came and anointed his feet and kissed his feet. And Jesus said, that woman loved much because she was forgiven much. He who is forgiven little, loves little. See how much you have received.

Have you experienced this marvelous of Jesus? If you have not, Jesus invites you to trust in him.

John 8 ²³ He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

What keeps you from trusting in Jesus? Repent and throw yourself at the feet of Jesus. He will forgive and make you whole.

----- Discipleship Questions -----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Love One Another Just As I Have Loved You John 13:31-38

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Read verse 34 – "*Love one another just as I have loved you*"? How did Jesus love his disciples? Go around and share at least three observations.

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. In what way do you believe that Jesus has loved you and died for you? Share how you have experienced the love of Jesus in your life. Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:2
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: In light of Jesus's love for you, what will you do to grow in your love for others? Is there anything that comes in your way of loving like Jesus? Luke 7: 47

31 Therefore when he left, Jesus said to them, now has the Son of Man been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him.

32 (if God is glorified in Him), and God will be glorified in Himself, and immediately will glorify him.

33 Little Children, I am still with you a little longer you will seek me and even as I said to the Jews that where I go you cannot come also I say to you

34 A new commandment I give to you, in order that you all may love one another, even as I loved you all in order also you all may love one another

35 By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love in one another

36 Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied to him 'where I go you are now not able to follow, but you will follow later'

37 Peter said to me, Lord, why am I not able to follow you now, I am ready to lay down my soul on your behalf

38 Jesus answered will you lay down your soul? Truly, truly I say to you the rooster will not crow until you deny me three times