

Loving Like Jesus (John 13:31-38)
That You May Believe: The Gospel of John
Southern Hills Baptist Church
August 7, 2017

WELCOME

It is good to be back with you Southern Hills. Last week we my family and I were in Indiana, visiting Rachel's family and it was wonderful to reconnect with them. This gave us a chance to visit my brother-in-law's church and see the community he shares life with and pursues Jesus with. That is always special.

Agreeing with Avery

But I'll agree with what Avery told me on Thursday night as we were settling back into our routine and coming out of vacation mode. As we rehearsed the schedule we had with the next few days Avery jumped in and said, "Oh, and Dad, we get to OUR church this week! That is exciting!" I agree, it is exciting to be here.

Hearing from God

This morning, we have a chance to open up God's Word and literally hear from God. My words are not God's Words, but this book is the Word of God so we will come to it with a heart to learn it. Then we will live shoulder to shoulder alongside one another with the goal of living out God's Word. I'm so thankful to be here with you this morning.

INTRODUCTION/CONTEXT: FAREWELL DISCOURSE

With that said, if you have your Bibles go ahead and turn over to John 13. We will pick up in verse 31 in a few minutes.

Preparing for the Turbulent

As you turn in that direction, let me remind you of where we are in our study. We are in what is called the "Farewell Discourse," which is the address of Jesus to His Disciples on the night leading up to His arrest and subsequent crucifixion. It is in this address that Jesus is preparing His followers for the turbulent days that are to come and the calling that will be placed upon them after Jesus completes His earthly ministry.

Teaching Humility and Servanthood

We have already seen Jesus radically teach the Disciples on the matters of humility and servanthood with His own shocking example through the washing of their feet. God in the flesh, Creator, Maker, Designer, Owner, stooped and did the lowly job of a slave and washed the feet of fallen humans, the created, the made, the designed, the owned. While Jesus' words were meek in His teaching His actions here screamed!

Dismissal of Judas

Last week we saw Jesus' dismissal of Judas, so that Judas could go and do the work of traitorous rebellion that he had purposed in his heart. Judas' secret wasn't hidden before the omniscient God of the universe.

Change in Tone

With the ushering out of Judas from the upper room the tone seems to change in the conversation. Almost like when a friend leaves your house and it is just you and the family. The tone of conversations changes when it is just you and your family, right? It gets a little more personal, intimate, familiar, right? There might have been some topics you were holding off on while you had guests in the house, but now that they are gone you can jump into those issues.

Words of Urgency and Centrality

That very much feels like what is taking place here as we pick up in verse 31. Jesus begins to lay some very important teaching on the Disciples. Now, every word uttered by Jesus carries with it great importance as it is the Word of God, but I can't help, but feel that the words offered up here are of even greater urgency and centrality to the life of the Christian.

Both Old and New

Jesus is preparing His Disciples for how to live the Christian life and he does so with **a command that is as old as the Old Testament book of Leviticus, yet at the same time is brand new, as Jesus reinvents it by giving it a new model and pattern to follow, namely the pattern of Himself.** The command that Jesus gives His Disciples is the command to love one another.

Revel in Depths / Challenged to New Heights

I am excited to consider this commandment together as it will give us a great opportunity to revel in the depths and extravagance of Jesus' unparalleled love and at the same time we will find ourselves challenged to love others to new God glorifying heights.

OPENING PRAYER

Before we jump into our text let's pause for a moment and ask God to do a work in our hearts through the power of His Word.

Dear Heavenly Father,

The call to love others as Jesus has loved us **forces us to remember and revel in the rich and perfect love of Jesus.** I am thankful for this.

- Would you **make our hearts glad** as we consider how great the love of Jesus truly is?
- Would **joy fill this room** as we remember how great the love is that we have been shown in Jesus?
- Would you also **grow us to reflect Jesus' glory** to the world around us by loving others like He has?

Jesus loved others in ways that

- Surpass our natural inclinations.
- Drew people to Himself.
- Radically put others first.

Grow us into this kind of love that the world may know that we are yours and that you are our treasure.

We pray these things in His holy name,

Amen.

HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Let's turn our attention to our passage this morning in John 13:31-38. Hear the Word of God...

John 13:31-38

[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. [33]

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' [34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

[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.

Isaiah 40:8

[8] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The heart of this passage is Jesus' reinvention of the old command to love others. This is where we are going to camp out this morning, but before we get there, let's quickly consider what Jesus addresses in the 3 verses.

GLORY IN THE TRAGIC (vs. 31-33)

In these verses Jesus begins to prepare His Disciples for the cross. He does so vaguely, but He is clear in communicating that their expectations were about to be turned upside down.

Preparing for the Unexpected: Leaving

We see this when He tells the remaining 11 that He will only be with them for a little while longer, then He is leaving and where He is going they will not be able to follow. He doesn't specifically mention the shame, torture, and death He is about to face, but He is getting the Disciples ready to face what they don't expect.

Did the Disciples expect Jesus to leave them? No, not in the slightest. They expected Jesus to set up a kingdom there in Jerusalem. They would have wondered, why would the King would leave His Kingdom?

Glory in the Tragic

Despite this, Jesus also told the 11 that now is the time when He was to be glorified. The Disciples would have quickly embraced this truth as they expected Jesus to arise to power and be coroneted as King. But **what Jesus wanted to give the Disciples with this reminder was that in the coming days when Jesus faced shame, torture, and even death, He was being glorified and God was glorified in Him.** This was meant to strengthen the Disciples. Life was going to feel like it was falling apart in the days to come for the 11 and the other followers of Jesus, but **Jesus wanted them to know that this was all part of the plan.**

God-Ordained Enemy Assault

So as Jesus speaks of His glory here, He is referring to the good work of what would appear to be the most awful thing imaginable. Listen to how Peter would later describe the awful beauty of the cross.

Acts 4:27-28

[27] for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Jesus' enemies rallied against Him, but it was never outside of the sovereign and predestined will of God. Jesus' death was a part of God's plan for His glory and this plan had been set before the foundation of the world. Jesus is communicating this to the Disciples in a general way by saying that He is leaving, but not to fear, it is the way in which God will glorify Him and be glorified Himself.

Transition

Now just because Jesus was leaving doesn't mean that mission the Disciples had was over. No, not in the slightest. In many ways it was just beginning, right? The command that Jesus tasks the Disciples with was meant to prepare them for how they should live their lives after Jesus' physical presence had departed. It comes in the form of a new commandment, the commandment to love one another as Jesus had loved them. This is where I want to spend the remainder of our time. I want to dive into this command and consider it carefully.

Let's read it once more...

John 13:34-35

[34] A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

LOVE OTHERS AS JESUS HAS LOVED YOU (vs. 34-35)

Now something that is striking about this commandment from Jesus to love is that He calls it a "new commandment." **It doesn't really sound like a new commandment, does it?** This can't be the first time that we have been instructed by God to love others, right? Right, it isn't. Leviticus 19...

Leviticus 19:18

[18] You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Jesus knows this verse, He already quoted it when asked what the most important command in the Scriptures was. You remember what He said...

Matthew 22:35-40

[35] And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. [36] "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Why is it New?

So this commandment to love others, to love your neighbor, is an old commandment. **Why does Jesus call it new? The calling is old, but the standard, the pattern, the model is new.** Jesus has reinvented this commandment. Notice, in Leviticus we are called to love others as we love ourselves. Jesus ups the ante. He is now calling us to love others as He has loved us. **The standard, the pattern of the love we are to have and show is much higher.** We love imperfectly, we even love ourselves imperfectly. Jesus' love is perfect in every way and we are now called to love like Him.

An Unendingly Expansive Topic

Now, what does it mean to love others as Jesus has loved us? This is what I want to really dive in to this morning. With that said, **let me confess that the love of Jesus is an unendingly expansive topic.** I couldn't possibly begin to walk through every characteristic of Jesus' love, it is just too big.

- Jesus loves people of all skin colors,
- of all socio-economic backgrounds,

- of all ages,
- of both genders,
- His love builds bridges,
- His love never fails,
- His loves never ends,
- His love perfectly holds those who are His,
- His love is forgiving,
- His love is patient and kind,
- His love is gentle and meek,

I could go on and on, but you get the idea. So what I want to do is to look at what I believe are 5 of the most important characteristics of Jesus love. As we look at each characteristic we will...

- Celebrate the goodness of that love. We will celebrate that we get to live under that love.
- Be challenged as to how we can express that love to one another, as this is the new commandment that Jesus gives His followers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS' LOVE

So we are called to love as Jesus has loved. What do we know of Jesus' love?

1. JESUS' LOVE IS SERVANT-HEARTED (John 13:4-5)

John 13:4-5

[4] (Jesus) rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. [5] Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

I am not going to spend much time on this one because we looked at it in great detail just two weeks ago, but I didn't want to ignore it either as it is part of the immediate context of our passage. Jesus instructs His Disciples to love one another as He has loved them and this comes on the heels of Jesus having just radically served the Disciples. **Jesus did the unthinkable when the Messiah, the One of infinite worth, stooped and did the job of the lowliest slave.**

Great Beauty! Creator Serving Creation

What beauty!!! This is the kind of love demonstrated by Jesus. He is willing to go and do the dirty, lowly jobs that others would try to avoid in order to serve and provide. **What is so beautiful about this picture of Jesus' love is that Jesus would have every right to refuse to lift a finger in serving us. He is above us. He is perfect. He is Creator. He is holy. He is Divine. He is owner. He is King. Yet, despite His unrivaled status, Jesus bends to His knees and takes the dirty, smelly feet of His broken followers and washes them clean. What Love!!!**

Served on the Cross

Brothers, Sisters, **Jesus has shown you this kind of servant-hearted love as well.** Jesus' humble service was most notably demonstrated in His work on the cross. It was a work He dreaded, as He knew the

intense suffering it would bring and the untold pain it would inflict. Nevertheless, Jesus pressed on in that work, going low in His service that He might raise us high with Him.

Still Serving You!

To this day **Jesus has not stopped stooping to serve**. We should all ask ourselves the question of the Psalmist from Psalm 8...

Psalm 8:4

[4] what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

And yet, look how we are ever on the mind of our Savior...

Hebrews 7:25

[25] Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Mindful of You Everyday

Jesus saves to the uttermost. Jesus always lives to make intercession for you. We might ask, who are we for God/Jesus to be mindful of us, but what we are seeing here is that Jesus is very mindful of you. **You are on His mind, more than that you are in His prayers as He talks to God. He goes to God on your behalf.** He still serves!

What a joy this is! What a wonder it is to be loved by Jesus, who loves with a servant-hearted love!

Application – A Servant-Hearted Love

Now, as Jesus has commanded you are to love others has Jesus has loved you. There is so much we could say here, but again, we camped out here 2 weeks ago so I won't dwell long.

- Do you look to serve others?
- Do you look to communicate the love of Jesus to others by going low and taking on the tasks that others can't care for themselves or even jobs that others just don't want to do?

If you are going to love like Jesus you are going to have to take on the form of a servant, as our Savior did. This means you can't ever see a task that is "beneath you." If Jesus didn't have that attitude towards stooping to serve you on the cross how could you possibly imagine thinking that way towards anything you will encounter in life?

Transition

I've got to be careful here, I could get sucked into any one of these characteristics of Jesus' love and lose myself. We have to keep moving.

2. JESUS' LOVE IS COMPASSIONATE (Matt 14:13-14)

Yet another defining characteristic of Jesus' love is that of compassion. Let me remind you of a dark time in Jesus' life. John the Baptist, who was related to Jesus and was preaching of Jesus, was murdered. The news was brought to Jesus and we pick up in Matthew 14:13...

Matthew 14:13-14

[13] Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. [14] When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Jesus, John's Death, and a Needy Crowd

Jesus is dealing with the loss of someone He loved greatly. He is looking for some breathing room, some space where He can mourn the evil that has been committed and the loss of His friend and family member. As He withdraws to find a private place the crowds catch wind of Jesus' location and they flock to Him. As the crowd approaches Jesus He looks upon them and is full of compassion. **He sees in this crowd the very brokenness that plagues the world He is mourning.** Rather than carrying on and looking for privacy so He could have some "me time," Jesus spends time with the people, serving and healing them.

He Cares!

Our Savior, Jesus, has a love that is full of compassion. He cares about you.

- He cares about your hurts.
- He cares about your brokenness.
- He cares about your struggles.
- He cares about your worries.
- He cares about your wellbeing.
- He cares about your present and your future.

He Knows You!

You are not just a name on a list to Jesus. He sees you. He knows you. He knows you better than you know you. And He cares about you. His heart is full of compassion towards you.

We are Specs – Ants in my Yard

How amazing is this? We are specs in this universe. It is so easy to forget that. I was sitting in traffic on Friday in a long line of cars on 360 and as I looked at this long line of cars I was reminded of a line of ants I saw walking along my drive way a few weeks back. I saw them, admired their organization, and thought to myself, they have no idea of the larger world in which we live. My yard is their universe.

We are pretty similar to those ants as we sit in our lines of traffic and scurry from one errand to the next. In the grand scheme of the universe we are less than ants. We are miniscule. We are beyond tiny.

God Gives Thoughts to These Ants

Now I gave no thought to the well being of those ants. In fact, I won't name names, but someone in my household wreaked havoc upon them with some pesticide. But again, I gave no thought to their plight. Though we are far smaller and more insignificant in comparison, Jesus, the God of the universe, cares about us. Individually. By name. How marvelous!!!

He doesn't only care, He acts as well. His love is a servant-hearted love as we already discussed.

Application – A Compassionate Love

Jesus' love is full of compassion. Jesus calls you to love others as He has loved you.

- Do you have your eyes open to the hurts, needs, and wellbeing of others?
- When you see others suffering or struggling do you walk towards them or away from them?

Jesus walked towards others. He walked towards you in your brokenness. You are called to do the same.

Believer, go love others as Jesus has loved you, with a heart full of compassion and care for all.

3. JESUS' LOVE IS TRUTHFUL (John 6)

Another defining characteristic of Jesus' love is that it is truthful. **A temptation that all of us face when reaching out to others is to soften the hard blow that truth can often bring.** We want to skate around some of the more difficult or condemning teachings of the Scriptures in fear that we may see people walk away. Jesus' love was one that never compromised truth because **Jesus understood that it was unloving to give someone something less than the truth,** even when it is hard or heavy.

Running Crowds Away with Truth

How many times in our study of the life of Jesus have we seen Jesus amass a large crowd, only to make a hard statement and see that crowd turn from Him? Countless.

John 6 Crowd

Do you remember our study of John 6 where Jesus feeds the huge crowd of people with just a few fish and a few loaves of bread? The next day the crowd went looking for Jesus. They wanted more food. Jesus begins sharing that He is the food they should really be looking for because He can bring eternal satisfaction and nourishment that their souls desperately need. The crowd is struggling to get on the same page with Jesus and in order to cut through the conversation Jesus uses a vivid and difficult image to express the necessity of faith, when He tells the crowd that they must eat of His flesh and drink His blood to be His Disciple. Again, this was a call to faith, not cannibalism. This wasn't what the crowd wanted to hear though so the thousands that had come seeking Jesus left.

Could Jesus have had held on to the crowd had He smoothed out some edges and given a more palatable message? Sure, but Jesus loved these people too much to feed them half-truths and lies to scratch their itching ears. Jesus loves us enough to give us the truth, even when it hurts.

Untrusting World – Fake News

Brothers and Sisters, how good is this? **We live in a world where we don't know who we can trust, right?** The news media is in shambles right now as it has lost a great deal of credibility with the people for allowing its agenda to direct its reporting. The term, "Fake News" was one we didn't have just a couple of years ago, but now both sides on the political spectrum use it of one another and frankly it feels impossible to know what is really going on.

Jesus is the Truth

Can we be thankful that we have a **Savior who has proven over and over again that He will never compromise the truth?** For that matter, let's rejoice in the fact that **Jesus is the truth!** We will hear more on this next week from John 14. **Truth finds its origin in Jesus. Jesus doesn't just share the truth, He is the truth. We can trust Him!** He has told us who He is, who we are to be, what is right, what is wrong, and what is to come. We have all we need in Jesus and we have every reason to believe Him because He love is one that is truthful.

Application – A Truthful Love

And Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us. We are to love others with the truth. As I mentioned earlier we often find ourselves tempted to go lite on truth in order to spare hurt feelings. There is plenty of

external pressure on us these days to keep our beliefs to ourselves when they go against the mainstream message our culture is trying to force on us. In many ways it would be easier to go lite on truth, but it wouldn't be loving. Love calls us to warn people of the danger of sin. Love calls us to share that sin has infected all of us. Love calls us to share that we all stand guilty before a holy God. Love demands that we share the hope that Jesus offers in His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection.

Are you faithful with the truth or does it become expendable when it makes situations uncomfortable?

Truth in Love: Truth is a Medicine, Not a Weapon

Something else to consider, as we strive to love truthfully as Jesus did, is that the truth that God has given us isn't a weapon, it is a medicine. We shouldn't wield it like a sword, but like a syringe that needs to deliver an antibiotic. Here is how Paul speaks to this...

Ephesians 4:15

[15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Love is to flavor the truth that we speak. When we are talking with someone who disagrees with the truth of the Bible we need to be very careful to make sure that love saturates the message that we are delivering. Our goal in talking to others about the Gospel shouldn't merely be to be right, but to be loving in our presentation of the truth. Truth can't ever waiver and neither should the loving way in which we present it.

This is loving like Jesus loved.

4. JESUS' LOVE IS GRACIOUS (Luke 15:1-2; John 13:21-30)

One of the most defining characteristics of Jesus' love is that of grace. Look at how it is displayed in His life...

Luke 15:1-2

[1] Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. [2] And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

The tax collectors, who were hated by the Jews as they were thought of as traitors to the Romans, and the sinners, those that society had cast out, they were all drawn to Jesus and we read that Jesus received them and ate with them, meaning that He didn't look past them or try to avoid them. He welcomed them into conversation and spent time with them in social settings. **Jesus didn't care who saw. He wasn't trying to maintain a high and mighty rep before others, He was trying to love broken people.** So He reaches out to those everyone else discarded.

Loving Judas at the Table

We saw a very similar picture in our passage last week and Jesus dismisses Judas to go betray Him. Matthew pointed this out last week, but Jesus served Judas first as He broke the bread. This was a sign of respect. **Jesus was treating His traitor, the man who would stab Him in the back, with great love and respect only moments before He would leave to sell Jesus out!**

The Wonder of Jesus' Far Reaching Love

I love these pictures of Jesus. Does it make your heart glad to see Jesus loving people this way? He loves those that the rest of our society or culture dismisses or casts out. He loves those that religious communities look down on. How wonderful is this? **Those who seemingly have the least to offer Jesus, who are seemingly the least worthy, are welcomed by Jesus.** This is the kind of Savior that we worship! **His love is gracious as He, in His infinite worth, pursues empty-handed, backstabbing, dirty rebels.** He loves those that would be considered hard to love. He caught flack for loving these people, but that didn't stop Him.

My Hope

It is pictures like this and **gives me hope for I am an empty-handed, backstabbing, dirty rebel.** If you know yourself well, you know you are too. And you know what, that is ok. It isn't ok because God will overlook your sin and rebellion. It is ok because Jesus loved us enough to purchase our salvation. His love is a gracious love.

Application – A Gracious Love

Now, you are called to go love like Jesus loved. Is your love characterized by grace?

- Are there people that you avoid because they are too far gone?
- Are there people you don't invest in because they would be too much work or would be too hard to love?
- Are there people you don't pursue because they are beneath you and you want to run with a certain type of crowd?

If we are being honest we have all felt that way about different people at different points in our lives.

A Story about an Unlovable Fella

I remember a story that was told to me that really helped shape my perspective on how we ought to view others.

The Situation

There was a missions team that went overseas for a 6 week period to help a ministry. The team was made up of 10 people. When you go on a missions trip with a team you wind up living very closely with that team. You share meals together, sleep under the same roof, do all your activities together, and of course work together. You get to know each other pretty well. What this team learned within the first couple of weeks was that one of their team members was hard to share life with. This team member, Chris, was very critical of everyone else. No one did anything right according to Chris. He was constantly correcting people and speaking down to them. Chris was also a pretty big slob. He left big messes everywhere he went, both at the home they were staying and at the various places they worked. Chris also didn't carry his weight while at work. He had plenty to say about what others were doing, but did little to nothing himself. He would disappear when work started and reappear as things finished.

Decision Point

At the 3 week point the team, minus Chris, got together to talk about the obvious. This wasn't working. He had disrupted the unity they had hoped to have. He caused more work when there was already plenty to do. He was the source of fighting and bickering that was going on. Chris wasn't open to feedback or correction. Was it time to ask Chris to go home? That was the question at hand.

Realization: How We Treat God and God's Love

As this was discussed one of the members of the team chimed in by saying, Chris is one of the hardest people to work with that he had ever been around, but as he thought about Chris' pride and selfishness,

his carelessness and combative spirit, what he realized is that the way Chris was treating the rest of the team was pretty similar to how we often treat God.

- We are often proud, thinking we know best.
- We are selfish, not wanting to give up our desires for others.
- We struggle to obey.

As hard as Chris is to love, we are harder to love from God's vantage point. We have rebelled in a far more serious manner against the perfect and holy God of Creation. **We are all Chris and yet Jesus had pursued us in love.**

Opportunity to Show God's Love

As the team talked about this truth what they realized is that having Chris there was going to give them all a chance to demonstrate the gracious love of God in a very real way. So rather than asking Chris to leave they decided to love Chris even harder.

Unity Found

The unity that was missing in the first 3 weeks of the trip suddenly came alive as these 9 team members displayed a love of strong grace and they all rallied to live out Jesus' love in a hard spot.

We Are All Chris

Something we need to realize is that as we stand before the God of holiness, we are all Chris, a million times over. We are hard to love. Even after Jesus gave up His life for us, we still rebel and fight to go our own way. We need to be careful not to look at others and think down about them, but to remember that they are **fellow strugglers just like we are. We are all in need of grace.** Then we ought to go and strive to show them glimmers of the greater grace we have found in Jesus.

5. JESUS' LOVE IS SELF-SACRIFICIAL (John 15:12-13)

Let's look at one final characteristic of Jesus' love, the characteristic of self-sacrifice. We have seen that Jesus was willing to go low in serving others, which requires sacrifice, but the greatest expression of Jesus' love was seen when He sacrificed everything on the cross in the ultimate expression of grace.

John 15:12-13

[12] "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [13] Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus tells us that the greatest expression of love is that of self-sacrifice. No one sacrificed more than Jesus.

2 Corinthians 8:9

[9] For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Yeah, He is Rich

Paul lays out the sacrifice very clearly here for us. Jesus was rich. That is a bit of an understatement, right? He is Creator. He owns everything. It is all His. All things are His.

- All power is His.
- All control is His.
- All might is His.

- All wisdom is His.
- All truth is His.

So yeah, sure, He was rich.

Leaving It All

And He gave up everything, leaving His throne in Heaven, the **perfection** of Heaven, the **comfort** of Heaven, the **glory** of Heaven, to come live in a world that is broken by sin, that was in rebellion to Him as Creator, a world marred by sadness and suffering.

Laying Down His Life, Taking Our Sin

Then, in an act of defiance and hate by His own creation and in an act of self-sacrificial love, Jesus laid down His life that He might buy the eternal riches of Heaven for any and all who would put their faith in Him. In this act, He took on the sin of the elect, standing in their place, under the wrath of God that they wouldn't have to face that just punishment.

Nothing characterizes the love of Jesus more than the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. It is Jesus' self-sacrificial nature that gives us hope. We would be beyond saving without it.

Radical... God Sacrifices for Us???

How radical is it, that our God sacrifices for us? The gods of this world demand that their followers sacrifice for them, our God has sacrificed for us! Glory be to God for the person of Jesus. What a joy it is to be His!

Application – A Self-Sacrificing Love

Brothers and Sisters, the call upon you this morning is to love others like Jesus has loved you. Do you display Jesus' love in the way you sacrifice for others? **We are often concerned with our rights and what we are entitled to, but Jesus calls us to love others in such a way that we give up what we are entitled to for the good of others. Are you willing to give up what is yours to see others blessed?**

Praise God that Jesus was.

LOVE: THE MARK OF A BELIEVER (vs. 35)

Jesus closes out verse 35 by telling us that this love that we are being called to will serve as a distinguishing mark or external evidence of our faith.

So this calling isn't a "nice to have" in the life of a Christian, it is proof of your faith. If you are not loving and striving to love others like Jesus you truly have to question the authenticity of your faith according to Jesus.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

I think what I find so encouraging about this command to love one another is that **we are empowered to love one another out of the love that we have been shown and experienced in Jesus.**

- We are called to love with the heart of a servant. **Our Savior was the greatest servant who ever lived** going to depths that we can't even fathom.

- We are called to be compassionate in our love, **caring for the needs and hurts of others. Jesus has met our greatest needs and healed our deepest wounds.** We are now to go and do likewise pointing others to Jesus.
- We are called to hold up truth in our love. **Jesus is truth and it is His truth that sets us free.** The truth we are to hold up is truth that will liberate others from the bondage of sin.
- We are called to be gracious in our love, **caring for the rejected, outcast, overlooked, and lowly.** We were once empty-handed rebels so we should know how to go and pursue others.
- We are called to be sacrificial in our love. It is through Jesus' sacrifice that we have been given all that we need. **It is through Jesus' sacrifice that we are free to sacrifice deeply in this life, knowing that this life is, but a vapor and eternal glory lies ahead of us.**

Praise God for Jesus' rich and extravagant love. We can and should spend our lives digging deeper into this love. It is an endless reservoir from which we can pull. **As we mine from it may it lead us to love others more completely to the glory of our Savior and for our joy.**