

The Gospel of John: That You May Believe Love One Another As I Have Loved You

John 15:12-17

Sunday, September 10, 2017

Introduction

As Jesus is only 24 hours away from the cross He is spending His time preparing His disciples for what is about to happen. He tells them about His going away and His future return and the hope that they can have in Him.

But within this conversation there is one phrase that Jesus keeps repeating: Love one another. As Jesus prepares to go away one of His primary commands to His followers is that they would have love for one another.

As a church, this should be a command that we long to obey. We should desire to love each other well, but it doesn't happen without work. In this message we will again consider the call that God has given for us to love one another.

The Command: Love One Another (15:12a)

This is the second time in the course of one evening that Jesus has given this command to His disciples, and for good reason. As we read the New Testament we are reminded time and time again that this command is at that very core of our faith and it lays the foundation for most every other command (Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 3:14, 4:7-8; 19-21; 5:1)

The Example: Love as I have Loved (15:12b)

The love of Jesus is a love that beyond our ability to comprehend, but if we are going to be faithful to this command, we have to try. We have to consider the incredible love of Christ and how we can follow in His example. He says, love as I have loved you.

The Love of Jesus: A Love that Sacrifices: (15:13)

As Jesus describes His love for the disciples He starts by foreshadowing His own death. He tells them that the greatest act of love is for someone to give their life (to sacrifice everything) for others. And of course that is exactly what He is going to do.

- The willingness of Jesus to die on the cross is not an indication of how worthy we are of love, it's a display of the depth and the magnificence of His love.

- Jesus did not die for us because we somehow deserved His love; He died for sinners as a display of His incredible love and mercy and grace (Romans 5:6-8).
- Jesus was not killed against His will, He willingly laid down His life as a sacrifice (John 10:17-18).
- **Application:** If we are going to love one another as Jesus loves then we must be willing to sacrifice for those around us. We must be willing to see the needs of others and do what we can to meet those needs. We must not only love with words, but with actions (1 John 3:16-18; James 2:14-17)

The Love of Jesus: A Love that Draws Near (Calls Slaves as Friends) (15:14-15)

In this culture the master/slave relationship was very common (and very different from the slavery that we had in the U.S.). In many ways the relationship between Jesus and His disciples was similar to that of a master/slave relationship: Jesus was clearly the leader and His disciples followed and obeyed Him.

But now Jesus reveals a new aspect of His love: He tells His disciples that He will no longer call them slaves, but friends. This does not change the hierarchy, Jesus is still clearly the leader, but in His love He draws near and gives Himself to His disciples as a friend.

- **Application:** As we consider the example of Jesus, we have God almighty being willing to draw near in fellowship with sinful men. Yet how often do we hesitate to get close to those around us. As brothers and sisters in Christ we must learn to humbly give ourselves to one another in love.

The Love of Jesus: A Love that Graciously Saves (15:16)

In verse 16 we see what is arguably the most beautiful display of God's love – His sovereign choice to save sinners. This verse is a reminder that there was nothing that we could do to save ourselves. In His love Jesus chose us for salvation (Ephesians 2:1-5; 1:3-6)

When Jesus saved us He not only saved us from sin, but He saved us to holiness. In His love He gives us the ability to bear fruit (Galatians 6)

The Command Repeated: Love One Another (15:17)